

BACCALAUREATE,

BY

ANDREW WYLLIE, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF INDIANA UNIVERSITY,

ADDRESSED TO THE SENIOR CLASS,

AT THE LATE COMMENCEMENT,

SEPTEMBER, 1845.

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BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA.

C. DAVISSON, PR.

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MDCCCXLV.

GRADUATES.

J. I. ALEXANDER,  
J. A. CAMPBELL,  
JNO A. MILLEN,  
R. Q. ROACHE,  
W. E. SIMPSON,  
B. W. WILSON.

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STOCKING

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YOUNG GENTLEMEN:—One, who along with you commenced that course of study which you have just finished, is not seen among you on this occasion. He is no more on earth. That delicate form which once lived and moved among you is a tenant of "the house appointed for all the living;" and that kind and gentle spirit which animated it has gone, we doubt not, to enjoy the bliss of that kingdom which flesh and blood cannot inherit. He to whom I allude was loved and respected by you all, for his sweet and amiable temper and child-like innocence, united to a sound understanding and a high sense of moral rectitude. He was indeed a most lovely youth. He remembered affectionately his class-mates and teachers, even in his last moments: and, though that Overruling Power to whose will it becomes us to bow, has denied us the pleasure of meeting him here, we take a mournful satisfaction in cherishing his memory. While we live let us cherish it.—It will do us good to contemplate that rare excellence of character which is associated with the name of George A. Hauser.

Having paid this tribute of respect to our departed friend, we hasten to our subject. We would be pleased to linger a while longer, as it were by the side of his humble grave, but the audience, to most of whom he was unknown, would not participate in our feelings. Other reasons might be given. This, however, may suffice; and I have assigned it because it leads me at once to the subject which I am about to propose for your consideration, and which is—COMMON SENSE.

The phrase, though often used, is not very well understood. This must be my apology for making those distinctions which I am about to make and which, though they may seem to some, childish and trifling, are necessary to a clear understanding of the subject.

The word common, as it is to be understood in this phrase, common sense, does not properly mean that which is usual among men, that degree of good sense which people generally have: for, though it sounds

*Proper Name,*

like a contradiction, it is nevertheless true, that common sense is rather a rare thing in this world: but it means the joint use of that sense which is called common, as being a thing which a number of persons use or exercise in common; not every one for himself, but every one in connexion with all the rest, and as a part of the whole.

In this sense of the word there is no one of those, which are commonly called, The five senses, which is, or can be common. Every one who is not blind has the use of the sense of seeing; but it is for himself alone, and not for others that he sees; nor can he be at all affected immediately by the use of this sense in others: he sees with his own eyes, and they with theirs; and the impressions and the information they get in the use of this sense are not common, but particular: and no one among them can tell what it is that is conveyed through the eye of another to his mind. A number of persons may, at the same time, be engaged in looking at the same object; and they may correctly judge that all see it alike; but they do not know this to be the case from the sense of sight, nor from any thing of which they are conscious in themselves while looking at the object: it is an inference derived from the communication they have had by means of words with others in similar cases before.

What has been just said respecting the sense of sight will apply to the four remaining senses.

They are particular, not common.

But there is a sense, which, though there is no organ of the body belonging to it, as there is to sight, hearing, and taste, acts in each individual as if he were not a separate being, with distinct consciousness of his own, but a part of a larger being, made up of himself and as many others as are in connexion with him in this mysterious unity; or, as if, by some influence more secret and powerful than that of Mesmerism, the thoughts and feelings of one mind were made to pass into another without the use of signs or any outward means of communication. The word common is used in this same sense, in other connexions.— Thus, property is said to be common which belongs to a number of persons conjointly; that is called common prayer which is offered by a whole congregation uniting in the use of the same words; and that is called the Common Law in which all have an equal interest, and which applies to all alike.

As to the word sense, every one knows what it means when it is used to designate the sense of hearing, or any other of the external senses, which are exercised by the instrumentality of bodily organs. But there are other senses which seem to be exercised by the mind itself, without the use of any bodily organ. I say, seem to be: for whatever subserviency that great organ of thought, the Brain, may have in this matter, we know it not by these senses. In the case of the external senses there is an organic impression, of which we are immediately conscious, whenever any one of them is exercised. If for example, a sapid body be taken into the mouth, we have not only the sensation which is proper to it, but we know by the manner in which the organs of taste are affected that these organs are somehow instrumental in conveying the sensation to the mind: so much so, indeed, that I suppose it is commonly thought that the sensation is in fact in the organ and not in the mind. In the case of the internal senses there is no such organic impression. So, if a man feels remorse, the anguish is in the conscience, which has been not improperly called the moral sense; and there is no part of the body particularly affected by it.

This difference is sufficient to mark the distinction between the external senses and that other class of senses of which Common sense is one; and which, for this reason and because their objects are not of the material world, may be called internal. They are a sense of honor, a sense of shame, a sense of justice, a sense of fitness, a sense of the beautiful, of the sublime, of the ridiculous; and such like. By these senses it is that we learn what is that which we call honor, justice, beauty; and so on: and, were any one to be born without them, he could not be made to understand the meaning of such terms, any more than one born blind could be taught to distinguish colors. But by these senses we get not only the cognition of what is justice, honor, beauty and the like; but have the mind affected in the contemplation of them, in a way that cannot easily be explained in words. We call it sentiment and feeling. But these words convey but a faint conception of what takes place in the mind when these internal senses are in a state of intense activity. They can either raise it into the highest transports of delight; or plunge it into the darkest depths of disgust and horror; impart to it a firmness of purpose which neither terrors can daunt nor sufferings subdue, or paralyze its strength, so that existence itself shall

become a burden: they can tranquilize it by a peace within which the storms of adversity cannot disturb, or make it like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. They occupy that part of the soul which we call the spirit, the region wherein are generated those notions towards good or evil which determine the character.

Common sense is one of them. In dignity it is among the lowest of their number: the influence which it exerts is nevertheless very great.

It belongs to that part of our nature which is social. Some parts of the human constitution are evidently intended for the use of man as an individual. They are the charter of the Creator defining to every one severally that part of himself which, under God, he is permitted to hold as his exclusive property, the territory over which he is to rule, and which he has a right to defend against all aggressors. He may not manage his territory well and wisely; but it is his own, and no one has the right to meddle with it or concern himself in any way about it,—unless, indeed, he can produce a warrant for so doing from the Author of nature.

Now, what I have chiefly here to remark is, that it is the province of Common Sense to trace out the boundary of this peculium, this lot, this private domain which belongs to every man in particular, and sacredly to observe it, so as neither to transgress it to the injury of another, nor to allow another to transgress it in detriment to himself.—And this office it is well fitted to perform, being endowed with a nice instinctive power of discrimination, resembling the external senses in this, that it is not only delighted with what it is proper for it to choose, but offended with whatever it is the design of nature that it should reject.

The only additional remark of a general kind that I shall make on the nature of Common Sense, is that, of all the powers and capacities belonging to the nature of man it is the most susceptible of improvement and also the most liable to be perverted and led astray by the influence of circumstances: so that, except in things indifferent, we ought never implicitly to follow its dictates. I shall illustrate this remark in a few examples,

The first is taken from that class of persons of whom there are none in this country, persons who by birth and fortune are raised above the ne-

cessity of following any kind of business for a livelihood. These people spend most of their time in social intercourse among themselves.— Their cares are expended in making this intercourse as agreeable as possible. To this end a code of laws has been provided. It is made up of a great number of rules and ceremonies, which are studied and practised with more than religious zeal and exactness; so that, by showing himself ignorant of etiquette a man would incur greater loss of reputation, than by violating any precept of the decalogue, or, indeed, all of them together, provided it were not done in a vulgar way. Now these rules are for the most part founded in common sense; that is, the common sense of that class of people who have agreed to be governed by them. The many minute forms and modes, in regard to dress, language and behavior, which these rules prescribe, are so many ways in which it has been tacitly stipulated that they will manifest, towards each other, deference, respect, kindness and good will. Now every man knows by his own consciousness that these sentiments, manifested towards himself, are very agreeable; but it is common sense that teaches him that they are equally so to others. It follows, therefore, that not to comply with these rules proves a man to be deficient, either in benevolence, or in common sense, or in both.

Yet there is something essentially and radically wrong in the manner of life which these people live. It is frivolous, and the farthest possible from yielding that kind of satisfaction which is most proper for rational beings; to say nothing of that high obligation which rests chiefly upon those on whom Providence has bestowed great riches. When this is taken into view, their conduct and way of life seems fairly to be pictured in the Parable, which shows us a splendid mansion full of luxury and gayety within, while at the gate lies a sufferer to whom no office of kindness is shown, except by "the dogs." Leaving out of view, however, such high and solemn considerations as these, and regarding the matter in that point of light only in which it is presented by our subject, we must say, to spend one's life in cares about the frivolities of etiquette in regard to dress, balls, ceremonious, and half-ceremonious visits, evening parties, and I know not what, which go to make up that ceaseless round of petty cares and anxieties, which, under the name of amusement, make up the course and tenor of fashionable life, is surely beneath the dignity of a rational being, and tends to degrade the mind, by subjecting it to the domination of Fashion, the

most arbitrary and capricious of tyrants. What, then, is a wise man to do? If he is cast by birth or fortune among that class of people which I have described, he must obey the dictates of common sense and do as they do; or, following the dictates of his own individual reason, he must pursue such a course as will cause him to be excluded from what is called the "best society." I leave you however to answer this question for yourselves, while I remark that the instances are indeed rare, in which, in this matter, men, and especially women, are not found to choose according to common sense and not according to reason. It is a case, indeed, in which common sense is perverted by circumstances and becomes too strong for reason.

The next instance that I shall adduce is one in which, on the contrary, it is too weak. The instance is taken from a state of things with which we are better acquainted than we are with that from which the case just mentioned has been adduced. I shall therefore be in no danger of misrepresenting or of being misunderstood. Let the one instance suffice for that whole class to which it belongs, and which is usually denominated rudeness and ill manners. There is a man about to enter his neighbor's house: observe his movements. There is a scraper before the door, and a rug, or what is better, a plat of green sward. He pays no attention to them, but goes strait on, making two or three oblique movements with his feet upon the steps, leaving on each one a quantity of the clay with which his boots are encumbered. The doorsil and entry receive a portion. A chair is offered, and no sooner is he seated than he begins to feel, first with one heel then with the other, for a place on the front round of his chair where his feet may rest: and having disposed his lower limbs, like the two sides of an equilateral triangle, and thrown himself back, with the upper parts of the chair infringing against the wall, his sinciput resting against the same, he is prepared to open the matter of his visit, discussing, the while, a large quid of tobacco. His dog, no less studious of comfort has in the mean time knowingly disposed of *his* huge bulk; and lies, all along with nose thrust out between his fore paws, in an attitude inviting sleep.

Now I find it written, in a book called "The Ladies' Science of Etiquette, by an English lady of rank," among the rules which, it seems, regulate, in England, the behavior of people of rank, in what is called "half-ceremoneous visits," that it is necessary to leave one's dog in

the ante-room. In regard to visits of ceremony the law is more strict; since it prohibits dogs—and children—altogether. So that, as to the matter of the dog, we see that the conduct of our visiter is not so very far from *the ton*.

After he is gone, the maid, or rather the mistress of the family herself;—for as things are with us, *she* has generally to perform the office of maid, as well as those of nurse, cook and laundress—has no little trouble, with shovel, broom, mop and suds, to restore things to some, thing like the condition in which they were before he entered. *He* the good honest man, never thought of all this. Why did he not? Clearly, because he was deficient in common sense. The least grain of sense in common with the mistress of the house, would have apprised him what would be *her* state of mind in the premises.

Other instances similar in kind might be readily adduced: but my object being rather to give a general view of the subject than to illustrate it in any particular, application, I proceed to present it under another aspect.

St. Paul, in describing charity, says “it doth not behave itself unseemly;” and Aristotle, whose scheme of ethics is constructed on the principle that Virtue is the means between extremes, (that is to say, vices,) places the quality to which, as I suppose, the Apostle refers, (a positive being intimated under two negatives—“*not unseemly*”) in the middle between *Authadeia*, which means a certain arrogant moroseness, or self-sufficient, self-pleasing temper, on the one hand, and *Areskia*, which implies too much of the disposition to please others, on the other. He calls it *Semnotes*. Though the Apostle uses different terms, his meaning is the same. I know not how better to describe it in general terms (for I know of no one word in our language into which it can be exactly translated,) than to say, that it denotes that Delicacy of common sense which characterizes the true gentleman, and which chiefly manifests itself in those cases where the person acting is, in certain important respects, in a situation different from those who are to be affected by his conduct, whether effectively by some influence exerted upon them, or merely as spectators. In such circumstances it is a nice point to perceive what a man owes to *them* and what to himself. Besides there are situations in life in which the sensibilities of our nature may be tortured by unskilful attempts to soothe them. Let the great Port of human nature furnish us both an instance and the philosophy of it.

Hero, the only daughter of Antonio, is dead of a broken heart (as the unhappy father supposes) when on the eve of being worthily married; and, what is worse, her character is blasted by an accusation so artfully formed that her intended husband and her father himself are compelled to believe it. A friend attempts to check the father's grief, and he replies:

"I pray thee, cease thy counsel,  
Which falls into mine ears as profitless  
As water in a sieve, give not me counsel;  
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear,  
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.  
Bring me a father that so loved his child,  
Whose joy of her is overwhelmed like mine,  
And bid *him* speak of patience—

The whole passage is too long to be here quoted. The conclusion is, however, so exact to my purpose, that I cannot but repeat it.

No, no; 'tis all men's office to speak patience  
To those that wring under the load of sorrow;  
But no man's virtue, nor sufficiency,  
To be so moral, when he shall endure  
The like himself: therefore give me no counsel  
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

*Much Ado about Nothing.* ACT. V.

What most soothes the heart crushed by the stroke of such a calamity, is the silent sympathy of friends—not lectures.

Common sense, if it wants delicacy, does not perceive this.

The same delicacy, in a still higher degree, is often requisite in the sufferer himself. Deep feeling is never noisy, or boisterous; whether it be of joy, or grief. The latter especially seeks to hide itself from the public gaze. There are griefs, too, which all are not prepared to understand; and which consequently they can not respect. The sufferer, owes it to himself to hide such griefs, as far as possible, from the view of others. Before the bar of Pilate the accused Savior of mankind answered nothing: for he knew the court had previously resolved to give him up to the will of his accusers. It would have been unworthy of his innocence and dignity to make a defense against such accusers or before such judges. His conduct on the occasion was such, therefore, as became him—"not unseemly:"—it was—"Semnotes."

Public servants are liable to be accused to their masters, the People: and it requires sometimes a nice adjustment between the claims of com-

mon sense and those of one's own proper sense; in other words, between the consideration which is due to the people and their interests, on the one hand, and that respect which every honest man owes to himself, on the other, to enable the person accused to determine on the course he ought to pursue. If he have a strong party to back him, he may do as Jefferson did, treat all such accusations with silent contempt. But if not—he may still do it, if his accuser conceals himself behind the hedge, shooting his poisoned arrows—poisoned, but harmless—except to the archer:—for the people have common sense enough to make the case of the accused their own, and, to a certain extent, to make common cause with him who is thus basely assailed. The case in which common sense is most at fault is that in which the people themselves have become so divided into parties, each party eager to advance itself on the ruins of its antagonist, that, even in matters of great importance and of public notoriety, it is exceedingly difficult, unless for those who have not only capacity but leisure and opportunity, to find out what is the truth. He must be a great simpleton who believes whatever is said by a partizan, even though he find it in history; since there is no period of the past in which there have not been parties on all those subjects in which are involved the great interests of human nature. Hence the propriety of the rule, which requires that we look at both sides of every question, and consider the statements of both parties, before making up a judgment:—“*Audi alteram partem.*”

After all, there is wanting, in such cases, some thing more than common sense—namely a high philosophy. Common sense is good at the scent, but the ground has been so run over by all manner of animals, crossing and recrossing each other's tracks, and traversing the field in all possible directions, that by sense alone the traces of Truth cannot be followed.

The farther persons are separated in character and condition from one another the greater delicacy must be used in their intercourse, and especially by those who in these respects are superiors. For, as it is by common sense that people understand the feelings of each other, and as the greater difference there is between them in these respects the fewer the points of contact through which it can act, its power of discernment and feeling, that is to say, its delicacy, must be proportionally increased to produce its proper effects. Take the case of the young

and the old: the one cannot readily enter into the feelings of the other; for though the old have been young, yet it requires a higher degree of common sense than it seems some old people possess to keep them in mind of this fact, obvious as it is; and as the young know not by experience what it is to be old, they can have but little insight into that state of mind which age produces. The same holds true of certain other distinctions, which, in proportion as they prevail, separate every community into classes. Such are the rich, the poor; the learned and ignorant; the polished, and the rude; the good, and the bad; those who command, and those who obey. To these may be added the classes into which people are divided according to their employments; as farmers, mechanics, lawyers, physicians, teachers, and so on. In addition to all these we may notice that grand distinction which nature has made between those two classes into which the whole of the human species is nearly equally divided, the distinction between male and female.

Here opens an immense field of observation which we have not time to enter. A remark or two, in passing, is all that can be allowed.

It is a dictate of reason as has already been intimated that in proportion to the distance between any two of these classes, so should be the delicacy and condescension shown by those of the superior class in their intercourse with the inferior: and so in return should be the deference which should mark the conduct of the inferiors towards their superiors.

There are some, I am perfectly aware, whose blood boils at the mention of these words, superiors and inferiors, and there are others who affect such a style and put on such an air and deportment in their intercourse with their fellow citizens as are intended to intimate this as their opinion, that there are really no just grounds for such distinctions among men as these terms imply: though in truth they themselves entertain no such opinion, but on the contrary feel in their hearts the profoundest contempt for those whom they flatter.

There are some, also, and even among those who write books, who we think, are altogether sincere in this opinion, being silly enough to believe any thing. One of these dealers in that kind of stuff which the English call twaddle breaks out in the following *sensible* style:

‘How happy will be the day when there will be no such thing known as two classes of persons in families, a higher and a lower—jailors and prisoners—but when all the family, however numerous and how little

soever united by ties of consanguinity, will be equal and free, dwelling together, eating and drinking together, and whether of one nation or another, always uniting around the same domestic altar. How happy the time when no restraint will be necessary to keep children from mixing too much with those who would degrade them or lead them into temptation:—

He might as well have exclaimed, how happy will be the day when there will be known in families no such classes as male and female; when children will be as old as their parents; and when there will be no such thing as temptation in human life.

It is often a nice point to determine how far persons of a superior class ought to carry their condescension in their intercourse with their inferiors; and equally so to decide how far inferiors should manifest deference toward their superiors. The rules of etiquette are in this matter, as well as some others, very questionable. For instance, if you write to a person of distinction, it is required, according to these rules as they obtain in England, to pay the postage of your letter; while you are forbidden to do it, if writing to a person who is poor.—In the first case it is required as a mark of respect; in the second it is forbidden, because the doing of it might seem like a reflection on the humble condition of the poor, which would be painful to him and ungenerous in you.

Again, common sense evidently requires that such as undertake to give instruction should suit themselves to the capacities of those for whom especially the instruction is intended. Hence it has come to pass that, of the good books and the pretty books for children and ladies, so many are utterly worthless.)

Supposing the authors of such books capable of furnishing better matter, they seem to me to commit two mistakes. First, they *condescend too much*. Children and ladies are not *quite* so silly as these authors seem to think them. (Secondly, if they would really instruct *they must go before* those whom they instruct; and it is better that they should be *sometimes* out of sight to their scholars than to have them *ever* treading on their heels.) When at the age of puberty, I read Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, with more intense delight than I had felt, several years before, in the perusal of Robinson Crusoe or the Pilgrim's Progress:—and that was certainly not a little. But of Locke I understood almost nothing at first. But by reading his work again

Thos. Grog.

and again, pausing and thinking as I proceeded, I mastered it at last. And, I believe, that the most of young persons might, if they would, accomplish the same achievement, at the expense of little more time and study than they generally bestow upon those light and frivolous productions which, while they inflame the passions and stimulate the imagination, tend rather to mislead and corrupt the judgment and the heart than to enlighten and purify them.

A similar mistake has originated the rule of etiquette which has been mentioned. People of fashion—and it is they who make the rules of etiquette—are very sensitive to any thing which seems to convey an imputation of poverty, which they regard with feelings of shame, as if it were a crime or a disgrace. But the honest poor man has no such feelings. He is sensible only of some of its *inconveniences*, one of which perhaps is his inability to pay the postage on his letters. People of fashion forget that, were they in his circumstances, they should feel as he does: did they reflect upon this, they would probably establish a different rule. Their error lies in supposing the poor man to be equally sensitive as themselves in a point where he is not.

In this country it is more common, especially for foreigners, to fall into the mistake of attributing too little rather than too much intelligence to the common people. This is proved in the numerous failures which are made by such as seek to advance their interests with the public by flattery and calumny, the arts of the sycophant. Instances do now and then occur of persons raising themselves to consequence by such means; but they are rare; and the popularity which is gained by them is apt to be transient. Common sense is not, it is true, always able of itself to distinguish between the unostentatious claims of real merit, and the empty plausibilities of the mere pretender; since it proceeds, in forming a judgment, by signs which are sometimes found to deceive; but when some experience and observation of the ways of men are added to that native sagacity which Common Sense implies, it seldom fails to form a right estimate of character.

I have said that Common Sense proceeds by signs in forming its judgment. The power to do so is mysterious in its mode of operation; but the fact of its existence is undeniable. The infant, “muling and puking in its nurse’s arms,” shows that it can enter into the sentiments which she expresses by means of those signs, in the looks and voice, which nature has connected with them. And thus it is that the charac-

ter of the future man begins to be formed in the first moments of his existence. As time conducts the infant up to man's estate, he becomes acquainted with innumerable other things, which common sense places in the rank of signs. They are partly natural it may be; or they have become established by custom, which is a second nature; originating, one cannot tell how, in the common course of things. These taken together constitute what we commonly call APPEARANCES. They are of some use even to the wise in determining their opinions of men and things. To common sense they are the ground of judgment; and by them common people are governed entirely. By common people I mean, not the poor, as distinguished from the rich, nor yet the unlearned as distinguished from men of letters, but all, whether rich or poor, whose minds are undisciplined.\*

In the faculty of construing appearances women are naturally more shrewd than men, and when it is exercised and sharpened by long and various intercourse with the world, it is a keen instrument, very formidable to all such as practice the arts of imposture. Like instinct it is instantaneous in its decisions and next to infallible in cases which fall

\* APPEARANCES.—The following anecdote I received from the late Dr. Jno. Anderson of Washington Pa.

A preacher from the city of Charleston S. C. had been out into a remote part of the country, and had preached to a congregation there. After the sermon Dr. A., who was then a youth, noticed that the good people were earnestly engaged in discussing the question. 'How one *who had no religion* could preach so pious a discourse as *that*,' to which they had been listening. That the preacher had no religion was not the question: it was plain enough from his dress.

That the indication of character afforded by dress was somewhat surer, in the case I am about to mention, will, I suppose, be pretty generally admitted. Though not apt to notice people's dress, my attention was drawn to that of a young man who was on board the same boat with me last fall, descending the Ohio. His *profane* way of talking first caused me to fix my eye upon him. His bosom was full of ruffles, which were soiled and shabby. He had rings and other jewelry about his person in profusion, which however, were such as seemed to suit very well with his ruffles. His air and manner were affected; and though he tried to appear at his ease there was, when one looked upon him, a certain confusion discernible under an outward show of impudence. A young gentleman who slept in the same room with me told me, one day, that *his surtout was missing*—an excellent one, just new, which had cost him forty dollars. In a moment it occurred to me that the fellow in ruffles was the thief; and I advised the young gentleman to apprise the clerk of the boat of the matter, and to watch appearances at the next landing. The boat having, the next morning, stopped at Portsmouth, the chap in ruffles went ashore, and, after a short time there came on board a black boy sent, as he told the clerk, for a surtout which a gentleman had left, but which the boy, after searching as directed, could not find. After the boy repeated to the clerk the directions, (which the boy himself did not exactly understand,) the clerk went and found the surtout secreted behind some of the fixtures about the pilot's stand. So the true owner got his coat. But the thief—the ruffled gentleman,—sneaking at the hotel the boy returning without it, followed by one or two others, and not liking the appearances, made off and escaped by a back way.

within its proper province. But, as there are states of the atmosphere wherein, according to the proverb, all signs fail; so there are states of the popular mind in which this common-sense-faculty of judging from appearances is utterly at fault: so that the most that we can say of it and of such as are governed by it, is just what Horace has said near two thousand years ago: "Interdum recte vulgus videt: est ubi peccet." One of the greatest advantages which the civilized world has gained by the dear-bought experience of the many generations that have lived, acted and suffered, between his day and ours, is found in that Institution to which is intrusted the decision of those matters of grave importance in which are involved the character, property and life of individuals, and the peace and good order of society at large;—an Institution which proceeds, not merely by common sense looking at appearances, but by the higher and more discriminating principles which Reason employs to arrive at Justice. In this Institution there is assigned to common sense its proper sphere, by a provision which gives to every man the right of being tried by his peers; with accuser and witnesses face to face, in open court. But it is a sad and evil day, when common sense takes the whole into its management, and this noble Institution is degraded into an instrument of the popular will.

The whole community is resolved by the operations of common sense into smaller societies, within which the cordiality and good feeling is greater or less in proportion as there is a greater or less similarity of character among those that compose them. Where the similarity is complete, there is that communion of souls which we call friendship — On the contrary where it is the least, as between the virtuous and the vicious, common sense is confined within a very narrow scope. Society between such cannot amount to intimacy, without disgust; which is apt to show itself first on the part of the vicious. The reason seems to be, that the virtuous can better understand the vicious, than these can, those. There is not in human nature, however sunk and corrupted by vice, a disposition to hate virtue for its own sake. The difficulty is that the wicked cannot *see* it—till it is with the dead. There is not, perhaps, on earth, a greater puzzle than that which a pure and upright mind, in the living man, presents to the view of one that is thoroughly corrupt.—Department, conversation, motives, every thing is seen, not as it is, but as it is painted on an imagination which draws its colors from *within*—from the subject and not from the object. This, I do not think, will, of

itself, to count for the very remarkable fact, that so few of the poets and other writers of fiction have succeeded so well in drawing portraits of virtue, as of vice; for I should be loth to think that in such a case their experience aided their invention: but that it has something to do with the fact there is reason to believe. In Shakspeare, we have Iago, Shylock, Richard, and Aaron—which last, however, is a character overdrawn; not a man but a devil;—these, and I know not how many more each in his sort the very personification of wickedness: while of the opposite class there is not one. Even Milton has done better in his description of Satan and the bad angels, than when he undertakes the good: though Eve is finely drawn. I am almost ready to make an exception in favor of Eugene Sue, when I look at those exquisite creations, Fleur de Marie, Morel the Lapidary, and Rigolette!—but Farrand and Roden and Bras Rouge and Morok and Maitre d' l'Ecole—and that horrid female group glare out upon me, like so many fiends—and I am forced to arrest the compliment. Among Homer's heroes there is bravery enough on both sides: with the Greeks, cunning more than enough. Penelope is chaste, and Nestor wise. Examples of political virtue there are. Of moral virtue almost none. On the other side, what a picture! His very gods are a pack of immortal villains, and his goddesses no better. With Byron I am not familiar; but, so far as my memory serves, I cannot give him credit for one virtuous character. Virgil one can love as well as admire in some of his characters; and Sir Walter Scott still more.

In the preceding remarks I have considered common sense in its actings towards the living. It connects us also with the dead, and with the whole of nature, animate, and inanimate. In its wilder and more extravagant movements, it attempts to go along with Faith into the region of things invisible. In these connexions it may afford a theme for useful reflection, on some future occasion. At present, I conclude with this general remark, that the more we extend our acquaintance with mankind, in all their diversities of condition and character, the more will our common sense improve itself, and the more we shall have the opportunity of freeing ourselves from whatever unseemly peculiarities may be attached to our character. The Belvidere Apollo is not the copy of any individual human form, but the perfect type of the species, the concentration of what surpasses in every individual into

the idea of faultless beauty and manly strength. It is by studying many minds, in their many ways of thinking, that we learn to correct what is amiss in our own. We may derive advantage in this way even from the vices and follies of men: for if we contemplate them aright, we shall see, mixed up with them, the elements of good, which may be separated from the evil. But it is to the contemplation of what is lovely and grand in human nature that I would have you chiefly to direct your thoughts,—to men who have distinguished themselves by their virtues—to such, still more especially, as being cast into the midst of a corrupt system and a misguided age, had not the aid of common sense and the sympathies of the world on their side, but against them,—the heroes and sages, that worked their way to the accomplishment of great and lasting good to the human race, while they bore the scorn of contemporaries, because they were not,—as it was impossible that, by such men, they should be—understood:—the

Pauci, quos æquus amavit  
Jupiter *et* ardens evixit ad æthera virtus  
Dis geniti.

Impressions upon your character received from the virtue of such men will exalt you to a place in their communion, by sympathy with whatever is great and pure in human nature, so that you shall feel the great heart of humanity beating within your bosoms.