

## FRENCH AND ENGLISH.

## SIXTH PAPER.

## XIII.

VARIETY IN THE INDULGENCES OF SENSE  
AS A RESULT OF INDIVIDUALITY.

ONE of the commonest artifices of international malevolence is to attribute some vice or defect which is often met with in a foreign country to *all* the inhabitants of that country, as if there were no differences, no exceptions, no variety of character resulting from individuality.

This artifice is constantly successful, because it answers to the common habit of thinking about the inhabitants of a foreign country as if they were all exactly alike. For the untraveled French "*les Anglais*" are so many copies of one type; for the untraveled English "the French" are copies of another type.

The persistence with which an illusion of this kind can maintain itself may be shown by the common French belief that the English are all of one physical constitution, that they have all fair complexions and sandy hair, that they are invariably tall and ungainly. Half an hour in a London street ought to convince any Frenchman that this type is only one amongst several different English types; that brown hair is more common than red, and black not very rare. He might also notice that many Englishmen are of mediocre stature, and not a few are diminutive.

I once happened to meet with a Frenchman who differed from the majority of his countrymen in not being the slave of preconceived ideas. He visited London, made use of his eyes, and told me how surprised he had been to see that the Frenchman's Englishman,

*l'Anglais*, was so far from being prevalent in the real living population of the capital. He had watched the current of people stream past him at different points, and had corrected his general impression by the only sure and trustworthy method, which is the observation of individuals, one by one.

The observation of moral characteristics is not quite so simple a matter, but if faithfully carried out it leads to the same result,—the conviction that there is a very great variety, and that to ignore this variety willfully can only lead to error and injustice.

Everybody is aware that there is great variety of character amongst his own countrymen. No Englishman ever believes that Englishmen are all alike; it is the Frenchman who fancies that *les Anglais* are all alike. Those who live in a country are compelled to see the variety; they could not, if they would, be blind to it. At a distance, even at a little distance, this kind of voluntary blindness becomes much easier.

When our knowledge of a nation is the knowledge of living individual persons, we do not think of *it* in the abstract, but we remember the persons and think of *them*. The simplicity and decision of our opinions on a foreign country are wonderfully enhanced by not knowing anybody there.

What happens when we *do* know the people may be made clear by a reference to some family amongst our friends. If the reader would please to think of a family in this way, where every individual member, with his peculiarities, is known to him, what would be his opinion of me if I were to affirm, for example, that every member of that family was drunken, or immoral, or had a

scrofulous taint? He would say that I had no right to attribute defects without a knowledge of the persons. And yet this is exactly the way in which the large families that form national communities are judged by the malevolence of foreigners.

What happens usually in a family is that there are strong contrasts. I recall to memory an English family of eight. There was one drinker amongst them; there was one very immoral man; there were two imprudent men; one son distinguished himself by exceptional industry, conduct, and ability. The same contrast was visible in the husbands of the daughters, who were as opposite as their brothers. Now, how is that family to be described by a single epithet? Can we say that it was moral or immoral, foolish or wise? To be just and accurate we are compelled to distinguish between individuals.

We find, too, that the presence of a vice in one member of a family does not imply its prevalence amongst the other members. One brother is vicious and idle, the others conduct themselves irreproachably. Certainly in some cases the example of the good-for-nothing brother would seem to have a deterrent effect. Instead of being a middling family, neither good nor bad, the family with a black sheep in it may be rather above the average.

This is certainly the case in the great English family with regard to intemperance in drinking. The French gladly accuse the English of drunkenness, and we know that it is the national vice. But only the malevolence of a foreigner would seek to imply that all English people drank to excess. The observation of individual cases very soon leads us to the truth, which may be expressed in a short paragraph as follows:—

There is a great deal of drinking in England, but the excesses of some have produced, by way of protest and reaction, the complete abstinence of others;

and they have produced something more remarkable still than total abstinence, namely, an extreme habitual temperance without any rigid rule. Some Englishmen are drunkards, others are water-drinkers, and between the two are to be found the most various degrees of self-control.

It is impossible to be just to the English without taking account of these contrasts. The English are not a nation of drunkards, but a nation where drunkards are to be found.

I was reading lately a French book of travels in England, quite of recent date. The author's name is not worth mentioning, but he gives an account of a visit to a rich gentleman's country house which deserves notice as a specimen of French malevolence. Now, there are certain signs by which an English critic knows at once whether narratives of this kind are genuine or fictitious. A Frenchman who invents anything about England, and pretends that he is recounting a real experience, is sure to invent clumsily. In the present instance, I know by two pieces of evidence that the writer has been drawing upon his imagination. He makes the men in the smoking-room, after dinner, talk about the absent ladies in a style absolutely incompatible with English breeding, and he describes these gentlemen as having all got nearly or completely drunk before they were helped to bed by the domestics. This Frenchman has read that such things happened under the Georges, and as he is not describing a real experience he makes our contemporaries get drunk to gratify the malevolence of his French readers.

Every one who has any acquaintance with modern England knows that in the most civilized classes the habit of excessive drinking has fallen into disuse. If the men remain together after the ladies have left the dinner-table, they consume very little wine. I knew some terrible drinkers in the English middle

classes thirty or forty years ago, but the habits of those days belong to past history, though French ill-nature may affect to believe that they still survive. All the drinking Englishmen whom I have known are dead; all the living Englishmen whom I still know are either temperate or abstemious. Here is an example that may represent a class. My friend drinks nothing but coffee or tea in the morning. At one o'clock he has lunch, and takes a rather large glass of claret, but no more. He drinks nothing between lunch and dinner. At dinner he takes two glasses of claret or sherry and two of port. This is the kind of Englishman who, according to a French witness, would be carried to bed drunk every night. Others, of course, may go beyond this moderate allowance: they may drink a glass of brandy and soda-water, they may appreciate bitter ale, they may take wine more freely at dinner; but where is the harm if they remain sober, as they do, and keep their sanity and their health?

The French accusation against English ladies on the ground of drinking is even less justified by facts. I have known two or three ladies in England who were said to drink, and just as many in France. In great communities there will always be these victims of anxiety or *ennui* who have gone for a solace to the bottle. But, as a rule, English ladies confine their drinking to an allowance that can do them no imaginable harm. A glass of sherry drowned in a tumbler of water, or a glass of claret, and at dessert perhaps a glass of port, or even two if you will, can do no harm whatever to the nerves of a healthy Englishwoman. There is certainly not at English tables that free consumption of wine which is common everywhere in France, and in which both sexes have their share.

With regard to the French accusation that English ladies drink brandy, all that needs to be said is that, as it is not

done in public, the *onus probandi* rests with the accusers. Let them give names and addresses, and produce witnesses. With two or three exceptions, I have never known a valid reason for suspecting any English ladies of intemperance, and in all such cases we ought to hold the person entirely innocent until there is some sort of evidence against her. Why are we to go out of our way to believe that a woman drinks brandy in private, when we have no more reason for supposing it than for convincing ourselves that she smokes opium? It is in the nature of these general accusations against whole classes, and even nationalities, that as they do not fix upon individuals there is no way of bringing the accuser to the test of producing evidence. If he said that my sisters got drunk (supposing me to have sisters), an action might be brought, and he might be compelled to confess that he had no proofs; but he may accuse the larger sisterhood of Englishwomen with impunity. "Vous savez, les Anglaises boivent de l'eau de vie."

England is now, with reference to drinking, a country of very temperate, very intemperate, and completely abstemious people. If a man belongs to the refined classes, the probability is that he will take wine in moderation, perhaps in great moderation; if he belongs to the humbler classes, he may be a besotted drunkard, a sober workman who appreciates a glass of beer, or an apostle of total abstinence with a blue ribbon in his button-hole. The country spends too much in drink, but its expenditure is gradually diminishing, and the burden of it falls very unequally upon the citizens.

If I now proceed to give some account of French drinking habits, it shall not be by way of retaliation. The individual Frenchman has exactly the same right to be taken for what he really is as the individual Englishman. It will be said that this is a commonplace,

but it is very rarely recognized in practice.

Drunkenness, though it has increased in France of late years, cannot be called a national vice. You do not often see a really drunken man in France. The peasants get just tipsy on market-days, but they can usually drive home without accident, though the roads are crowded with their vehicles. A man of the middle or upper classes hardly ever betrays a sign of drinking. Nevertheless, the consumption of wines, spirits, and *liqueurs* is enormous and increasing, especially the consumption of spirits. How are we to reconcile the apparent sobriety with the vast expenditure in drink? The answer is that France is the country of steady moderate drinking, that may become almost excessive without apparently losing its character of moderation. If there are few drunkards, the abstainers are rarer still. The love of wine is almost universal in France, as in most wine-producing countries. The usual allowance in the inns and restaurants is a bottle at each meal. The common people, when they have a drink together, prefer wine to everything else,<sup>1</sup> and order a bottle alternately till they have had enough. Now, with regard to the habit of drinking wine, a physician, who had practiced in a part of France where this habit was carried far, told me that he had never perceived any evil effects from it on the health of active men.<sup>2</sup> His opinion was that wine-drinking was perfectly innocuous, but he dreaded the effects of spirits, even in comparatively small quantities. He looked upon wine as a kind of safeguard, and on spirits as a terrible danger. The reader may remember a passage in Lewes's *Life of Goethe*, where the biographer says that the illustrious German "was fond of wine, and drank daily his two or three bottles. The amount he drank never did more than

exhilarate him; never made him unfit for work or for society. Over his wine he sat some hours." Lewes appended to this passage a quotation from Liebig, in which he says that amongst the Rhinelanders "a jolly companion drinks his seven bottles every day, and with it grows as old as Methuselah, is seldom drunk, and has at most the Bardolph mark of a red nose."

The common daily allowance of a Frenchman who can afford to live comfortably is two bottles of common wine, with an extra bottle of good wine when he meets a friend. There are, however, many exceptions to this rule. If there are the bottle men (at each meal), there are also the half-bottle men, a division of the human race that is well understood in the Parisian restaurants, where they generally offer a whole bottle of common wine or half the quantity of "superior," if you prefer it. Ladies, for the most part, seem to be of the half-bottle persuasion.

But besides this variety, there is another, dependent on the mixing of wine with water. All physicians seem to be agreed that equal quantities of alcohol are not equal in their effects when taken pure or diluted. Pure whiskey, in the form of drams, is much worse than the same quantity of spirit in whiskey toddy.

I never in my life saw a French peasant mix his wine with water; there may be peasants who do it, but I have never met with one. The peasant will drink water abundantly by itself, but when he gets wine he seems to think that to water it would be a sin against the rites of Bacchus. When there is wine on a peasant's table, the water-bottle is not to be seen.

On the contrary, in the middle and upper classes it is the general custom to mix water with the *vin ordinaire* whilst people are eating, but the finer wines least be one of the causes that predispose to gout.

<sup>1</sup> Except in the cider country.

<sup>2</sup> In the sedentary it may lead to gout, or at

are never watered. Then you have all degrees of watering. You have the gentleman who puts three drops of water in his wine in deference to custom, though it is a mere form; you have the gentleman who mixes the two liquids conscientiously in equal quantities; and you have the drinker of *eau rouge*, who would probably be a water-drinker, like an English teetotaler, if he had not before his eyes the dread of the French proverb, "*Les buveurs d'eau sont méchants.*"

I remember, however, one of those drinkers of "reddened water," who used to maintain that a few drops of wine almost infinitely diluted gave the taste of the grape-juice far more delicately and exquisitely than the unalloyed grape-juice itself. The reader may try the experiment, if he likes. Let him take a glass of water, and just redden it with claret. If he fails to appreciate the exquisite taste of the beverage, it will, at least, inflict no injury upon his constitution. Unless, indeed, as the old bacchanalians affirmed, water brings on the dropsy; for what saith the good Maistre Jean Le Houx, the gentle singer who immortalized the Vau de Vire?

*On m'a défendu l'eau, au moins en beuverie,  
De peur que je ne tombe en une hydropisie ;*

*Je me perds si j'en boy.*

*En l'eau n'y a saueur. Prendray je pour  
breuvage*

*Ce qui n'a point de goust ? Mon voisin qui  
est sage*

*Ne le fait, que je croy.*

Enough has been said about wine, except that some Frenchmen have the habit of drinking white Burgundy or Bordeaux early in the morning, and eating a crust of bread along with it. This habit is so pleasant that one might easily fall into it, but the nervous excitement produced by the white wine when taken into an empty stomach is found to be deleterious to the nervous system in the long run, and all prudent people avoid it. The working classes have a habit that is probably quite as bad.

They take a dram of pure brandy every morning before starting work, often a large dram. If the brandy were fine old Cognac the harm would be less, but it is cheap and half poisonous. I have not seen this morning dram in use amongst the peasants. It is customary in the towns, and amongst the river and canal population.

There is a general belief in England that all Frenchmen go to the *café*; that a Frenchman cannot be happy unless he has a *café* to frequent. Many go to the *café* every day, others occasionally, and others never enter the door of such an establishment. Amongst the daily visitors there is an immense difference in drinking habits. I remember a middle-aged gentleman who confined himself to one tiny glass of pure Cognac per day, an allowance that he never exceeded. Another visits the *café* every day regularly at six in the afternoon, and takes his absinthe. A third drinks only ale. A fourth confines himself to coffee. In short, there is often some self-imposed restriction. There are also the unlimited drinkers, who take all kinds of liqueurs, one after another. They do not get drunk, but they damage their constitutions, and are blamed for their imprudence by their friends.

A Parisian physician told me (what I had observed already) that in France the commonest kind of excess is what is called "*l'alcoolisme des gens du monde.*" This is not drunkenness, nor anything like it, but a steadily maintained, mild alcoholic excitement, which does great injury to health in course of time. The art of gentlemanly drinking has been reduced, in France, to a learned programme for every day, in which there is a scientifically ordered succession of wines, spirits, beer, and liqueurs, each at its most seasonable hour. The observer of these rites lives in a state of alcoholic pleasure without ever in any way disgracing himself. At night he has a *verre d'eau* in his bedroom, to

quench thirst if he awakes. What is called a "verre d'eau" is usually a very pretty glass tray, with a decanter for water, a little sugar basin, and a goblet. This description is, however, incomplete. I ought not to forget a smaller decanter, carefully filled with Cognac.

The men who go to cafés occasionally make use of them merely as a convenience, either to meet somebody on business, or else to rest when in a strange town. In these cases there is no *habît* whatever. I was traveling with a French officer last year, who would go to a café with a friend, but never alone. In a month's travel he went to a café three times.

The total abstainers from the café are more numerous than would be easily believed. They have a set phrase by which they are known, their shibboleth. This phrase is, "Je ne bois jamais rien entre mes repas." They are not teetotalers, as they drink at *déjeuner* and dinner, but between these periods they observe a strict abstinence, like the Mahometans in the Ramadan fast, between the rising and the setting of the sun. They pretend that they are never thirsty, but I do not believe them; it is merely the pride of their sect. Since we are talking about individual tastes, I may add that I know a Frenchman who confesses to the weakness of thirst, but boasts that he quenches it effectually with a little *warm* water!

The French are not usually accused by other nations of being a drinking people, — indeed, I think their prowess in that respect is rather undervalued, — but they are often accused of being a nation of gourmands. Here, again, there are great individual differences. The basis of the accusation is the quantity of different dishes that are served in the hotels, but here lurks a misunderstanding. The variety of dishes at a *table d'hôte* is merely intended to give every guest a chance of selecting what he likes, and a man who limits himself to two dishes

may choose them out of a dozen. The hotel-keeper is but a sort of shopman, who displays a variety of goods. In private houses the number of dishes is very limited, except on state occasions. The usual meal in ordinary private houses is scarcely more varied *in that one repast* than it would be in England, but there is more variety in the feeding in a week than there is in an English week. The English have the advantage in the different character of their meals. The *déjeuner* and *dîner* resemble each other too much. In the French middle classes, however, the dinner is often the lighter meal of the two, rather like an English lunch, and the heavy meal is in the middle of the day, according to the practice of our English forefathers.

There are two broad varieties in French lovers of eating, the *gourmets* and the *gourmands*. The difference between them is so great that they may be considered as complete opposites. The *gourmand* is a mere glutton, who eats as much as he can, devouring one dish after another. He is simply an animal with a great appetite, feeding very much as a dog feeds, with the difference that he is far more omnivorous than the dog. The *gourmand* is the man who omits not one of the dishes at a *table d'hôte*, and then complains that he cannot dine properly in that hotel. At his own home he indulges in his greediness at the expense of others, and often growls over his meat, like the tigers in a menagerie. In a word, the animal nature of the *gourmand* is so predominant that in the matter of feeding he has not yet become a civilized being. The *gourmet*, on the contrary, is a product of high civilization. He enjoys with discrimination, and he is quite on the side of temperance; he even values the commonest things, if they are excellent of their own kind. A French gourmet once said to me, "I am excessively fond of oysters, but I never exceed one dozen, being convinced that after the first dozen the pal-



ate has become incapable of fully appreciating the flavor." A real gourmet preserves his palate in the healthiest and most natural condition. He would not cover an oyster with pepper, nor even squeeze a lemon over it. Plain things are often preferred by a true gourmet to richer things. The uninitiated drink wine and eat cakes at the same time. A gourmet would not do that unless the wine were unworthy of his attention; with a wine of any quality he would eat a crust of bread. A gourmet prefers the simplest meal, such as a fried mutton chop, if it is really well cooked, to an elaborate banquet where the cookery is less than excellent. In Thackeray's imitation of Horace (*Persicos Odi*), he expresses contempt for "Frenchified fuss" in the first stanza, but in the second he exactly hits the taste of a French gourmet in praising the good qualities of a simple dish: —

"But a plain leg of mutton, my Lucy,  
I pr'ythee get ready at three:  
Have it smoking, and tender, and juicy,  
And what better meat can there be?"

I knew a Parisian who was a gourmet in Thackeray's manner, and his way of living was to order one dish of meat, one of vegetables, and a little dessert, at an excellent and expensive *restaurant à la carte*. He did not desire the more abundant feeding at the *restaurants à prix fixe* and the *tables d'hôte*. He drank very moderately, also; in a word, he lived as a gentleman ought to live, without excess, yet with perfect appreciation.

The influence of the French gourmet on the prices of eatables is very remarkable. The dealers know that extravagant prices will be readily given for anything that is very good of its kind. The result is that the Parisian connoisseur in good living feeds very expensively. But in this, as in everything, individual

peculiarities tell. A wealthy Frenchman, who gave to the state a collection worth several millions of francs, used to dine, when by himself, in a little restaurant, for half a dollar. I have known another collector, who gave exquisite dinners to his friends, but lived in private with patriarchal simplicity.

The accusation against the French that they are a nation of gourmands, who make gods of their bellies, may, then, after a careful analysis, be answered briefly as follows. France is the country where the preparation of food for luxury has become a fine art. It is also the country where the economical preparation of food for mere existence has been most studied and is best understood. It is a country where both the gourmet and the gourmand flourish, but in small proportion to the population. The great masses of the French people are peasants, soldiers, priests, members of religious houses, young people in educational establishments, and work-people. All these live simply. I used to suppose that the commercial travelers must be great eaters, but the hotel-keepers assure me that these men eat less, on the average, than their other guests.<sup>1</sup> As for the richer classes, the smaller squires live quite as simply as the *bourgeoisie*. The very richest people are, I am told, as extravagant in their tables as in every other luxury.

I have given more space to this question of eating and drinking than the subject may seem to deserve, but, besides its real importance, it is the common subject of international recrimination. The French constantly accuse the English of being drunkards and gluttons, whilst the English, on their side, at one time blame the French for being enormous eaters, and at another despise them for living on frogs, small birds, and other "kickshaws" unworthy of a

<sup>1</sup> They are probably sickened by the sight of so many dishes a day. I remember seeing a commercial traveler who complained that

everything was bad, and ordered two boiled eggs. This was but a natural desire to return to a simpler diet.

manly appetite. An English lady once told me that the French lived on air, and another complained that after the appetite had been satisfied by a heavy repast a roast fowl was invariably placed upon the table.<sup>1</sup>

I had occasion, in a preceding article, to make some reference to Mr. Matthew Arnold's statement that wealth excites the most savage enmity in France, and I showed that the evidence of such enmity is not to be found in the behavior of the French people towards the rich. In the same paragraph (Nineteenth Century, February, 1885, page 225) Mr. Arnold used these words: "This is one of the many evils which the French have to suffer from that worship of the great goddess Lubricity to which they are at present vowed."

In reference to an accusation of this kind, it is more than ever necessary to bear in mind that a nation is composed, not of a mingled mass, like the water in the Lake of Geneva or in the Dead Sea, of which you may truly say that it has this or that quality, all of it, but of separate creatures, belonging, indeed, to the same political body, yet differing from each other as much in their habits as they notoriously do in their opinions. If the object is merely to gratify international malevolence, any general accusation is good enough for that purpose. You may say that foreigners are given over to fleshly lusts as easily as that they are liars and thieves, but if justice is your object you will consider individual cases. The method I would venture to recommend with regard to a foreign country is that which everybody practices in his own. In our own country we suppose a man to be innocent until

there is some evidence of his guilt. Wordsworth is supposed to have been moral because there is no evidence to prove the contrary. Byron is believed to have been immoral because we have evidence of his adulteries. Shelley is supposed to have lived according to a sort of morality of his own, leaving him liable to great errors. George Eliot believed herself to be strictly moral, yet she lived in an irregular *liaison*. George Sand was full of the most exalted sentiments, but in her case the liaisons were more numerous. In all these cases we have a chance of being just, because we have some materials for judging, and especially because we take the people individually. But if you put Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley together as immoral men, you are positively unjust to Wordsworth, and relatively so to Shelley. If you class George Eliot and George Sand together as immoral women, you are unjust to George Eliot. The difficulty of justice increases with the extension of the group. Imagine a room where Byron, Wordsworth, and twenty of their contemporaries were present: you could not decide about them with any certainty unless you knew the twenty as you know the two. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, you would have charity enough to suppose that the twenty were more like Wordsworth than like Byron; or rather, if perfectly wise, you would not trouble your head with useless conjectures about their morality or immorality at all. I know France more intimately than Mr. Arnold knows it, and when I hear him talk of the French being "vowed to the worship of the great goddess Lubricity" I wonder what evidence could be adduced against

<sup>1</sup> I have often tried to determine, for my own satisfaction, which of the two nations is the more extravagant in food and drink. The difficulty is that the extravagance is of different kinds. The French are excessively economical in losing nothing, in making the most of everything, in providing a sufficient meal out of scant or poor materials, often out of small

remnants, but they are extravagant in the abundant use of costly things. The English show less luxury, but their extravagance consists in waste caused by the display of abundance and by the desire to exhibit food in untouched masses. The combination of simplicity with costliness is carried to perfection in England.



a number of private persons whose names I could easily write down. This is the proper test. If it were not a breach of delicacy to mention private individuals in print, I would write down a hundred names, and ask for evidence against them. Miss Betham-Edwards has rather an extensive acquaintance with French people, she has many friends in France, and I asked her what she thought of Mr. Arnold's accusation. It produced exactly the same effect on her mind that it had produced on mine; she could only say that in her experience there had been no evidence to support it. I afterwards spoke of it to a French barrister, the mayor of an important place, and he said, "There is a good reason for supposing that cases of scandal cannot be very frequent in this part of France, which is that they make such a noise and are so well remembered when they do occur; they are remembered for forty years." This is literally true. There was a case of adultery forty years ago, which is still talked about, and which has done permanent social injury to the innocent members of the family in which it occurred. I may add that French public opinion respects good conduct, and blames its opposite; for example, the ladies of the House of Orleans have always been warmly respected in France by people of all opinions, whilst those of another dynasty have been little respected, it being generally believed that they were either light in their manners, or worse.

The great evidence on which the accusation of general French immorality is founded is that afforded by the playwrights and the novelists. Such evidence ought to be taken exactly for what it is worth, and no more. Works of fiction are not made to paint the world as it is, but only to sell, and it is found that the most exciting incidents sell best. Morality is meritorious, but dull. Our own historians pass wearily over the moral monotony of George III.

and Queen Charlotte; they prefer to describe the court of Charles II. The French novelist does not write for France alone, but for all Europe, England included. His fictions sell by thousands in England, both in the original and in translations; and a new play by Dumas or Sardou is announced in long telegrams in the great English newspapers, as if it were a political event. No English writer ever gets such effective advertisements. The most extreme "naturalism" is loudly condemned, but it is largely bought; and the author has no objection to have stones cast at him, when he finds they are nuggets of gold. Besides, all these describers of immoral situations profess to be great moralists in their way. They expose vice by showing how it disturbs the peace of families; they encourage to virtue by occasional, though transient, glimpses of its blessedness.

The plain truth is that people whose lives are rather monotonous like to read about anything that gives new sensations; and as vice is at least *different* from virtue, and in itself more changeful, it seems to supply the want. In France, this is done by cleverly narrated fiction turning upon adultery; in England, those who do not read French novels get the same material in the long reports of the divorce cases. The French method excels in art, but the English is far superior in that incomparable force, reality. The fictitious adulteress is but a phantom in comparison with the living beauty who is seen and heard in the court of justice; and what fall of an imaginary hero ever impressed us like that of the gifted and ambitious politician who barred his own path to the premiership of England? The reports of divorce cases are valuable, too, for the glimpses of high life that they afford to the middle and lower classes. One lady witness, much accustomed to the world, said that the only difference between a certain immoral

duke and other gentlemen lay in the superior frankness and honesty of His Grace. In a novel this would have signified very little, but when it comes from a competent witness in real life its significance can hardly be overrated. Nor ought we to overlook the educational value of divorce reports for the young of both sexes. The French novel is kept as much as possible out of their way, — I mean in France, — and at least in the case of the *jeune fille* the precaution is usually successful, because she herself observes a rule of abstinence. But the English newspaper is not classed as immoral reading: it is on the drawing-room table, it lies on the sofa, it is everywhere; consequently, if the young people are not theoretically well acquainted with sexual matters, it is entirely their own fault.

It does not follow, in either country, that because people like to read about adultery they are ready to commit it. Old ladies are sometimes fond of reading about murders; their faculties are dulled, and the murder in the shape of a paragraph is only an agreeable little excitement. But they would not even like to witness the shedding of blood. We have all read Hamlet, and it is considered perfectly moral, because it is a classical English play; however, there are both murder and adultery in it, and the adultery is very crudely described. Well, the readers of Hamlet are not more inclined to imitate the adultery than the murder. A celebrated Englishwoman became successively the mistress of several men of very high rank on the Continent, and at the close of her career she wrote her memoirs. In form, the narrative was not more indecent than an account of successive marriages, and it found many readers in both sexes, who were impelled by mere curiosity. They wanted to know what the aspect of life might be to a woman who had such varied and exceptional opportuni-

ties for observation. Unfortunately for these readers, she had not made good use of her opportunities, and the book was stupid.

Much of the blame on the score of morality that is inflicted by the English on the French may be ascribed to a few comic newspapers that the Englishman compares to Punch. The French papers of this class are usually as inferior to Punch in wit as they are in morality, but I may observe that Mr. Punch occupies a much higher position in the state, and also a very different position in society, and therefore has certain responsibilities from which his French contemporaries are exempt. I have never yet met with one of the coarse and shallow French comic papers in a private house. I have only met with them in cafés or hotels, where they are glanced at for a moment by the men. There is one of those little publications (I forget its name) which regularly illustrates vice in so dull a fashion that the effect of it must be almost moral. The *Grelot* is a very coarse sheet, with large colored caricatures, perfectly merciless, and in the style that pleased our grandfathers.

But there are clever and amusing sketchers in France. Mars, for example, is refined and charming as well as humorous. Soldiers and sailors have found their own illustrators in Randon and Lepic. As for the wit of Cham, it was inexhaustible, but more in the invention of sentences than in the art of the designer. Paul Renouard, the intentionally indiscreet revealer of all commonplace ugliness, is now as much appreciated in England as in France. Here, as everywhere else, there is a great difference between one man and another, a truth that I once ventured to insist upon to an old lady who was always calling one person by another person's name, and considered the error of no consequence.

Philip Gilbert Hamerton.

## THE LANDSCAPE CHAMBER.

## I.

I WAS tired of ordinary journeys, which involved either the loneliness and discomfort of fashionable hotels, or the responsibilities of a guest in busy houses. One is always doing the same things over and over ; I now promised myself that I would go in search of new people and new scenes, until I was again ready to turn with delight to my familiar occupations. So I mounted my horse one morning, without any definite plan of my journey, and rode eastward, with a business-like haversack strapped behind the saddle. I only wished that the first day's well-known length of road had been already put behind me. One drawback to a woman's enjoyment of an excursion of this sort is the fact that when she is out of the saddle she is uncomfortably dressed. But I compromised matters as nearly as possible by wearing a short corduroy habit, light both in color and weight, and putting a linen blouse and belt into my pack, to replace the stiff habit-waist. The wallet on the saddle held a flat drinking-cup, a bit of chocolate, and a few hard biscuit, for provision against improbable famine. Autumn would be the best time for such a journey, if the evenings need not be so often spent in stuffy rooms, with kerosene lamps for company. This was early summer, and I had long days in which to amuse myself. For a book I took a much-beloved small copy of *The Sentimental Journey*.

After I left my own neighborhood I was looked at with curious eyes. I was now and then recognized with surprise, but oftener viewed with suspicion, as if I were a criminal escaping from justice. The keepers of the two country taverns at which I rested questioned me outright, until I gave a reassuring account

of myself. Through the middle of the day I let the horse stand unsaddled in the shade, by the roadside, while I sat near, leaning against the broad trunk of a tree, and ate a bit of luncheon, or slept, or read my book, or strolled away up the shore of a brook or to the top of a hill. On the third or fourth day I left my faithful companion so long that he grew restless, and at last fearful, as petted horses will. The silence and strangeness of the place and my disappearance frightened him. When I returned, I found that the poor creature had twisted a forward shoe so badly that I could neither pull it off altogether, nor mount again. There was nothing to do but to lead him slowly to some farmhouse, where I could get assistance ; so on went the saddle, and away we plodded together sadly along the dusty road. The horse looked at me with anxious eyes, and was made fretful by the difficulty of the projecting shoe. I should have provided myself with some pincers, he seemed to tell me ; the foot was aching from the blows I had given it with a rough-edged stone in trying to draw the tenacious nails. It was all my fault, having left him in such a desolate place, fastened to a tree that grew against a creviced ledge of rock. We were both a little sulky at this mischance so early in the careless expedition.

The sea was near, and the salt-marshes penetrated deep into the country, like abandoned beds of rivers winding inland among the pine woods and upland pastures. The higher land separated these marshes, like a succession of low promontories trending seaward, and the road climbed and crossed over from one low valley to another. There had been no houses for some distance behind us. I knew that there was a village with a good tavern a few miles ahead ; so far,