

Found wanting.

Every one remembers how it was a night of song and revelry in the kingly palace of proud old Babylon, when the haughty monarch drank wine out of the sacred vessels of gold before the thousand lords and princes of the realm, and that as he drank his soul grew sick with terror at sight of the fingers of a hand that was no man's slowly tracing on the plastered wall words of fate in an unknown tongue; that it was interpreted, and that the revelry again went on, though the fulfillment came full swiftly, and before morning dawned the Persians were in the city and a Mede upon the throne. Babylon's king had been weighed and found wanting.

And it is true that Time, who proves all things, stands with giant scales in his hands, slowly and carefully weighing, not only men and nations, but human thought and human actions; sometimes awarding the tardy meed of approbation, but more often marking with his withering fingers—"Found Wanting."

Far more interesting than noting his estimate of kingdoms and rulers is to mark the sentence he passes on those ideas that have spurred the race onward or have held it in wretched thralldom.

An opinion holds sway in the realm of thought, perhaps, for ages, as strangely defended by apparent facts as Babylon by its impregnable walls; but at last the balance rises and the terrible fingers write the result; its place is then given to another which, in its turn, is weighed and assigned its true value.

The thought that one day is given the sceptre and invested with the royal purple on the next is dragged low in the dust. That which one generation knows to be true past all doubting, the next sneers at as ridiculous error.

It was this fact, no doubt, that led one of the ancient sages to say, there is no such thing as truth, or, at least, if there be, no one can tell when he has discovered it. And, indeed, it is a trifle discouraging and humiliating when, judging from the past, we must believe that some coming age will laugh at our credulity and prove our strongest convictions to be but foolish notions. Yet this will, doubtless, be the case.

"For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs, And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns."

We sometimes almost dread the judgment of the future, but this is nothing to the vexation and astonishment felt when Father Time unceremoniously thrusts our pet theories out of his balances, before our very eyes, as if all at once he considered them too trifling to be weighed at all. And perhaps, too, they are the very opinions we have strongly insisted that every one else should adhere to; for it is not one of the least curious traits of human nature that we have the inclination to make every one else think just as we do, and if they insist too strongly upon having a mind of their own we have some slight contempt for their understanding, or, if it be a difference in strictness of belief, we are shocked at the depth of their depravity. And nothing, probably, equals the discomfiture of discovering that we have been too loud in advocating a very absurd idea.

It seems that the fate suffered by so many human opinions should teach us to be not quite so positive, but it does not; and our not very remote ancestors considered it a duty to make others concede a point on peril of their lives, and some of the most shocking wars that have marred the annals of the world, have been waged to make converts to beliefs that have now long since been proved to be too absurd for consideration.

Some one who has noticed how a score of supposed knowledge some-

times melts away, meekly suggests that it is better not to know so much than to know so much that isn't so. Everyone knows how much harder it is to unlearn than to learn.

As the tide of years sweeps on it makes sad wreck of all vain delusions, and when we look back and see the ruin it has wrought we stand in despair asking, What shall we cling to?

That of most importance that Time is weighing, weighing is the faith of Christendom and never does the scale give sign of rising. All other supports cast out on the waves of life to uphold the human soul have been swept away as broken reeds, but this is as a grounded rock round which the surges beat, and it moves not, but bears the cross high above the angry billows, and to this we cling, knowing that all truth must rest and center here. S. S.

Thomas Hood.

Death and fame came to Thomas Hood almost together. For twenty years he had held his place among the rank and file of literature, earning thereby little more than daily bread and the applause that is but of a moment, when, in 1843, the Christmas number of *Punch* electrified its readers with the "Song of the Shirt." Those wonderful verses went from newspaper to newspaper as in old times the beacon fire was accustomed to pass from hill to hill. The laurels reaped by the author were, however, barren, and the sunshine of celebrity had nothing golden in its beams. With the new year was born an unlucky publication christened *Hood's Magazine*. Misfortunes fell thick upon both periodical and editor, and the "flashes of merriment" that the latter still put forth came from a life blackened with the thunderclouds of sickness and calamity. By May Hood was in a sick-room, and, as editorial apology for the non-continuance of a novel he had commenced, sent forth a drawing of "a plate of leeches, a blister, a cup of water-gruel, and three labelled vials." All the rest of that year, and far into the spring of the next, the light of life still flickered on, sometimes burning up brightly enough for the sick man to resume his pen, sometimes all but fading away into eternity. "I am so near death's door," said Hood, on one occasion, "that I can almost fancy I hear the creaking of the hinges." The third of May, 1845, saw the door gently opened for him as quietly as a tired child falls asleep this gentle spirit passed away from earth. Not a mere jester was it that died, but a brave and kindly spirit who did his noble duty in the battle of life, and who had constantly a heart to appreciate and a hand to relieve the sufferings of others. There is nothing in the fame of Hood over which any descendant of his ever can blush. He wrote much that was calculated to make the best of men better, not a line that could, by any possibility, make the most worthless specimen of humanity worse. Numerous and exquisite as are his poems, there are two that especially shed a star-like light upon his memory. While London remains a city, the hearts of men must continue to be stirred by the "Song of the Shirt" and the "Bridge of Sighs." The one poem is in some sense the sequel of the other. In this metropolis of ours, where the worship of the golden calf is practiced on an ever-increasing scale, it is the poor and not idle that so frequently endure the fate of being ground to powder. These victims are, in general, girls, uneducated or half-educated drudges, whom the love of liberty and the hatred of domestic service have driven to toilsome and ill-paid modes of gaining their daily bread. Year by year their numbers increase, year by year thousands of miserable fates and faces tell us how swift is the descent from the death-in-life of the garret to the hell of the streets. Lest we should be over-zealous in casting stones, lest we should forget that forgiveness turned

not away from the sins of Magbalen, Hood showed us the starving woman despairing, the sinful woman dead. "One more unfortunate" is, perhaps, the most pathetic line poet ever penned. The thought of it seems to turn the Thames into a grave.

Select Reading.

—The easiest and best way to expand the chest is to have a good large heart in it. It saves the cost of gymnastics.

—Hold on to your good character, for it is, and ever will be, your best wealth.

—Many who cannot be convinced by argument, can sometimes be won by love.

—A lady school teacher at New York was docked two cents the other day by the principal in whose school she taught, for being one minute late in getting to her desk. That is almost equal to Mark Twain's story about a mining company which docked a man for the time spent in being blown up, when his back pay was being handed to his widow.

—It is easier to forgive an ancient enemy than the friend we have offended. Our resentment grows with our undesert, and we feel vindictive in due degree with our own doubts of the chance of finding forgiveness.

—Each Pisgah of labor has its glimpse of the promised land.

—Practice flows from principle; for, as a man thinks so will he act.

—Truth is not realized to us, but by a conformity of our wills to its discoveries.

—Every good deed that we do is not only a present pleasure, but a prop for the future.

—Without confidence, friendship is but a mockery, and social intercourse a sort of war in disguise.

—A man of sense may well disdain artifice, just as a man of known wealth may venture to appear in a plain garb.

Be careful how thou sayest anything of the absent, which thou shouldst be unwilling they should hear, if present.

—Sin is never overcome by looking at it, but by looking away from it to Him who bore our sins, yours and mine, on the cross.

—Night brings out stars, as sorrow shows us truths; we never see the stars till we can see little or naught else—and thus it is with truth.

—Good sense and even propriety require manners to change according to ages. Peurility in an old man is as ridiculous as pretensions to accomplished manners in a child.

—A dinner of fragments is often said to be the best dinner; so there are few minds but might furnish some instruction and entertainment of their scraps, their odds and ends of thought.

—When a generous man is compelled to give a refusal, he generally gives it with a worse grace than the ungenerous; first, because it is against his nature; and, secondly, because it is out of his practice.

—Our thoughts are the parents of our words, and our words are soon crystallized into deeds. Therefore our deeds are as our thoughts, as certainly as the sapling only produces the tree, each after its kind. He who talks vice will become vicious, so far as his courage will permit. He who loves impure thoughts will naturally illustrate these thoughts in daily life, while he whose heart tablet is free from the impress of unholy thoughts and vicious desires will naturally be kept from the outcropping of sins.

—An hour of vice is as long as an hour of virtue; but the difference which follows upon good actions is infinite from that of ill ones. The good, though it diminishes our time here, yet it lays up a pleasure for eternity, and will recompense what it taketh away with a plentiful return

at last. When we trade with virtue, we do but buy pleasure with the expense of time; so it is not so much a consuming of time as an exchange.

—Life is a lemonade, made up of different ingredients. Fortune, that's the water; misfortune, that's the lemon, and good fortune is the sugar. It is rather pleasant when the ingredients are not disproportionately mixed; but it is an unpleasant dose when the lemon is excessive; or the super-abundant water makes it insipid, or a large quantity of sweetening makes it mawkish or pall upon the appetite.

SILENT SUFFERING.—These things are often unknown to the world; for there is much pain that is quite noiseless, and vibrations that make human agonies as mere whispers in the roar of hurrying existence. There are glances of hatred that stab and raise no cry of murder; robberies that leave man and woman for ever beggared of peace and joy, yet kept secret by the sufferer.

Old Maids and Old Bachelors.

Old maids are useful; they can cook, sew, take care of children, nurse sick people, and generally play the piano. Old bachelors are useless; they do not even know how to drive or split wood.

Old maids are amiable. If one wants anything done that requires patience and kindness of heart, a single lady is sure to be the one to do it. Old bachelors are ill-natured. They desire to be as disobliging as possible. They snub children, despise babies, hate young mothers, and are always so busily employed in seeing that other people take good care of them, that they have not a moment to give to any one else.

Old maids are nice-looking, and "young for their years." Old bachelors generally have red noses, rheumatism in their knees, bald heads, and mouths that turn down at the corners.

Old maids can make a house of one little room, and cook delicious meals for one over the gas jet, in cunning little tin kettles, besides making all their own wardrobe. Old bachelors need an army of tailors, waiters, cooks, distant relatives, and hotel landlords to keep them comfortable.

When old maids are ill, they tie up their heads in pocket-handkerchiefs, take homoeopathic pellets out of two bottles alternately, and get well again. When old bachelors are ill, they go to bed and send for four doctors; have a consultation, a mantle-piece full of black bottles, all the amiable married men who belong to the club to sit up with them at night, besides a hired nurse; they telegraph to their relations, and do their best to impress the world with the idea that they are dying.

When an old maid travels, she takes a sandwich, a piece of pound-cake, and a bottle of lemonade in a hand-basket, and lurches comfortably in the carriage. When an old bachelor travels, he orders a dinner in courses at the station, and raves because he has no time to eat it before the fifteen minutes for refreshments are over.

Old maids drink weak tea, and it cures their headache. Old bachelors drink strong liquors, which give them headaches.

Old maids are modest. They think their youth is over, and their beauty gone. If, after a while, some autumnal love is given them, they take it as sort of miracle, and hope people will not laugh at them for "marrying so late [in life]." Old bachelors believe that all women are in love with them, and that they must carefully guard themselves from traps laid to inveigle them into matrimony. They also fondly cherish the brief that, should they eventually become married men the world expects them to exhibit great taste in women in their choice, and that the "other fellows" will laugh if their portion be not tender youth and

beauty; also that, when they marry, many a woman will expire of jealousy. —Northwest.

Lady Bulwer.

There was never, it is said by those who saw her then, a handsomer girl "brought out" into London society than the one who became the wife of Sir Edward Bulwer (Lord Lytton)—the father, later on, of "Owen Meredith" the poet.

Perfect in form, Lady Bulwer had the kind of face to which the words "strikingly handsome" are suited, rather than the terms "lovely" or "beautiful," for they seem to apply to beauty of a softer and less haughty character. Her great, dark eyes; her high, proud, and extremely regular features, and her noble carriage of a figure then slender, though symmetrical, all suggested the word "handsome" rather than any other term.

But no untrained colt ever scattered more consternation in a stable than Lady Bulwer in the establishment of that precise gentleman, that "Pelham out of the book," to whom she had given her youth and beauty by the marriage contract. To sop up spilt ink with a twenty guinea handkerchief, to snap a gold chain into bits under the influence of temper, to upset fine china in the "torrent, tempest," and, we may say, "whirlwind of her passion," were not domestic features that exactly suited "Pelham." They were rather sensational than desirable, and when to them was added a great deal of extravagance in other ways, "Pelham objected." Still, it is not to be doubted that the novelist was anything but agreeable as a husband. Self-worshippers are said to be detestable as home-companions. In fact, a self-worshiper wants nothing near him but object worshippers of the same god, and Lady Bulwer's rights as a beauty and a wit were not, to the best of her belief, so slight a thing as to be sacrificed with her consent upon the shrine of the self-complacent litterateur.

The son inherits much of the mother's good looks. There is nothing of the irregularity that made Bulwer so homely as an old man, though there is much *hauteur*.

Gossip tell us that the beauty grew rather stout, and that she allowed her friends to pelt "Pelham" at the elections. Those who know, say that at this pelting "Pelham" was very much incensed. The separation and divorce never affected the social position of either Lord or Lady Bulwer, nor that of their son.

There are a great many whisperings of Bulwer's love-affairs after he became a free man once more. No such stories are told of his wife. But certain it is that there is something to be admired in the dignity of the woman who "held her state" as a self-respecting woman under the trying circumstance of unhappy wifehood, lonely divorce, and the persecutions of a vain man's revenge. —Ladies Journal.

—A wise man will accommodate himself to all the contingencies of life; but the fool, like a swimmer struggling against the stream, contends with everything.

—If the riches of the Indies or the crowns of all the kingdoms of Europe were laid at my feet in exchange for my love of reading, I would spurn them all. —Fenelon.

In the Jewish dispensation there were some very holy things,—golden vessels in the holy place,—and these had a great position, as it were; they occupied very important place in the manifested presence of God; but yet they were only the shadows of things in the heavens,—types of something that was coming,—and now we are being taught about the heavenly things themselves. Now, what are the heavenly things? If you have come to Jesus, been washed in the precious blood, sealed of the Holy Ghost, you are the heavenly things in Christ—you are the vessels for God's service.