

THE  
PRINCETON REVIEW.

---

OCTOBER 1841.

---

No. IV.

---

---

ART. I.—*Bacchus and Anti-Bacchus.*

(Concluded from the No. for April, p. 306.)

II. IN the examination of the essays Bacchus and Anti-Bacchus, begun in our No. for April, the second position proposed to be considered had respect to the strength of the wines in Palestine. "It is impossible," says Mr. Parsons, "to obtain strong alcoholic cider from sweet apples, and for the same reason *it is impossible to obtain strong wines from very sweet grapes, but the grapes of Palestine, Asia Minor, Egypt, &c. were exceedingly sweet.*" Anti-Bacchus, p. 203. And why is it impossible? Let Mr. Parsons answer. "Thus the sweetness of the fruits and of the juices, together with the high temperature of the climate, must have been fatal to the existence of strong alcoholic wines." p. 204.

It is true, indeed, that the expressed juice of the grape may be so rich in saccharine matter, as to interfere with its undergoing a thorough fermentation; and it is also true that, in this case, the wine will not be so strong as when the juice is less sweet. But before we conclude that a strong wine cannot be produced from "grapes exceedingly sweet," let us inquire whether there is no method of diminishing the sweetness of the must, and of so increasing the fermen-

ART. III.—*Essays*: by R. W. Emerson.—Boston: James Munroe and Company. 1841. 12mo. pp. 303.

*James W. Alexander*

THIS beautiful production of the Boston press is truly inviting to the fastidious reader, and as he turns over the pages he finds them sparkling with phrases which belong to elegant letters and profound science, and with abundance of names which betoken varied reading: but on a nearer inspection he cannot but exclaim with the fox of Phædrus on finding the mask, *O quanta species, cerebrum non habet!* A book more void of real meaning certainly never fell into our hands, nor one which seems so much to be constructed with the view of hoaxing the public. The air of philosophical profundity which is thrown over it is the obscurity not of a deep but a muddy stream, and the brilliancy of the surface is little else than the iridescence on a bowl of soap-bubbles. Vague as the title is, it is not too much so. The book, if about any thing, is *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*; and we see no reason why such essays might not be produced during a lifetime as rapidly as a human pen could be made to move.

We do not suppose the author to be intellectually all that his book might indicate. It is the property of affectation to make a man even of wit and learning ridiculous. It is only the cross-gartering and the grimace of Malvolio which excite a snile. There are passages here and there throughout the work which evince literary accomplishment and natural sensibility, with a remarkable talent for figure and for melody of construction; but these are just the places where the writer has forgotten the trick of his style, lost sight of Carlyle, and displayed, as the vizor slipped aside, an agreeable and intelligent countenance.

The motto on the third page is portentous and profane:

I am owner of the sphere,  
Of the seven stars and the solar year,  
Of Caesar's hand and Plato's brain,  
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakspeare's strain.

Forsooth, the brain of Plato has become in the hands of its present owner little better than a *caput mortuum*. The titles of the twelve chapters are, History—Self-Reliance—Compensation—Spiritual Laws—Love—Friendship—Prudence—Heroism—The Oversoul—Circles—Intellect—Art.

For any thing that appears, these labels have been assigned by lottery; as from beginning to end there is a total absence of coherence and unity. We deny not the existence of here and there a fine sentiment or beautiful period, but we grow weary of oscillating so quickly between the sublime and the ridiculous. The heterogeneous collection reminds us of those ancient drawers in the cabinets of our grandmothers, in which our childish hands used to turn over shells, ribands, brooches, gold rings, shreds of brocade, and paste-diamonds, intermingled with leathern thongs, crusts, and potsherds; an illustration, by the by, which we flatter ourselves is in our author's happiest manner.

"A man" says Mr. Emerson. "cannot bury his meanings so deep in his book, but time and like-minded men will find them. Plato had a secret doctrine, had he? What secret can he conceal from the eyes of Bacon? of Montaigne? of Kant? Therefore Aristotle said of his works, 'They are published, and not published.'" The same may be said of Mr. Emerson, and as to the discovery of the hidden meanings, either the time has not come, or we are not like-minded men.

We do not consider the following extract as by any means below the general average of the work.

"Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. Its progress is only apparent, like the workers of a treadmill. It undergoes continual changes: it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For every thing that is given, something is taken. Society requires new arts and loses old instincts. What a contrast between the well-clad, reading, writing, thinking American, with a watch, a pencil, and a bill of exchange in his pocket, and the naked New Zealander, whose property is a club, a spear, a mat, and an undivided twentieth of a shed to sleep under. But compare the health of the two men, and you shall see that his aboriginal strength the white man has lost. If the traveller tell us truly, strike the savage with a broad axe, and in a day or two the flesh shall unite and heal as if you struck the blow into soft pitch, and the same blow shall send the white to his grave.

"The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but loses so much support of muscle. He has got a fine Geneva watch, but he has lost the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His note-books impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments and forms, some vigour of wild virtue. For every stoic was a stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?" pp. 69, 70.

After a quotation from an old play, Mr. Emerson utters the following sentences, which afford a good notion of the manner in which he jumbles together things the most unlike and distant :

“I do not readily remember any poem, play, sermon, novel, or oration, that our press vents in the last few years, which goes to the same tune. We have a great many flutes and flageolets, but not often the sound of any fife. Yet, Wordsworth’s *Laodamia*, and the ode of ‘*Dion*,’ and some sonnets, have a certain noble music ; and Scott will sometimes draw a stroke like the portrait of Lord Evandale, given by Balfour of Burley. Thomas Carlyle, with his natural taste for what is manly and daring in character, has suffered no heroic trait in his favourites to drop from his biographical and historical pictures. Earlier, Robert Burns has given us a song or two. In the *Harleian Miscellanies*, there is an account of the battle of Lutzen, which deserves to be read. And Simon Ockley’s *History of the Saracens*, recounts the prodigies of individual valour with admiration, all the more evident on the part of the narrator, that he seems to think that his place in Christian Oxford requires from him some proper protestations of abhorrence. But if we explore the literature of Heroism, we shall quickly come to Plutarch, who is its Doctor and historian. To him we owe the *Brasidas*, the *Dion*, the *Epaminondas*, the *Scipio* of old, and I must think we are more deeply indebted to him than to all the ancient writers. Each of his “*Lives*” is a refutation to the despondency and cowardice of our religious and political theorists. A wild courage, a stoicism not of the schools, but of the blood, shines in every anecdote, and has given that book its immense fame.

“We need books of this tart cathartic virtue, more than books of political science, or of private economy. Life is a festival only to the wise. Seen from the nook and chimney-side of prudence, it wears a ragged and dangerous front. The violations of the laws of nature, by our predecessors and our contemporaries, are punished in us also. The disease and deformity around us, certify the infraction of natural, intellectual, and moral laws, and often violation on violation to breed such compound misery. A lock-jaw, that bends a man’s head back to his heels, hydrophobia, that makes him bark at his wife and babes, insanity, that makes him eat grass ; war, plague, cholera, famine, indicate a certain ferocity in nature, which, as it had its inlet by human crime, must have its outlet by human suffering. Unhappily, almost no man exists, who has not in his own person, become to some amount, a stockholder in the sin, and so made himself liable to a share in the expiation.” pp. 205—207.

If there is a pleasure in going one knows not whither, through passages that lead to nothing, to have startling positions without proof, and seeming argument without conclusions, then nothing can be pleasanter than this species of composition. And this, we should infer, is the very law of the production ; for the author quotes Cromwell as declaring that “a man never rises so high, as when he knows not whither he is going.” Our author certainly is, by this rule, always *in nubibus* ; and he says himself, “*Dreams and drunkenness, the use of opium and alcohol are the semblance and counterfeit of this oracular genius, and hence their dangerous attraction for men.*”

Mr. Emerson is not pleased with the present aspect of

society; the tone of his criticisms is discontented and morose. As an instance take the following passage, which is not without cleverness, and not without a characteristic profanation of scripture.

“The sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous desponding whimperers. We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death, and afraid of each other. Our age yields no great and perfect persons. We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state, but we see that most natures are insolvent; cannot satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force, and so do lean and beg day and night continually. Our housekeeping is mendicant, our arts, our occupations, our marriages, our religion we have not chosen, but society has chosen for us. We are parlour soldiers. The rugged battle of fate, where strength is born, we shun.

“If our young men miscarry in their first enterprizes, they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is *ruined*. If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges, and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who *teams it, farms it, peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always, like a cat, falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days, and feels no shame in not ‘studying a profession,’ for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. Let a stoic arise who shall reveal the resources of man, and tell men they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that *a man is the word made flesh*, born to shed healing to the nations, that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and that the moment he acts from himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries, and customs out of the window,—we pity him no more, but thank and revere him,—and that teacher shall restore the life of man to splendour, and make his name dear to all History.” pp. 61—63.

But when we come to inquire what it is which Mr. Emerson would apply as the great curative means to the diseases of the age, we can smile no longer; contempt for his finical display gives place to a deep detestation of his false and impious conclusions. And our recurrence to his name must be ascribed to this, and not to any thing either literary or philosophic in the work itself, which can deserve even a passing notice. But having heard of the working of a mock-transcendentalism among the Unitarians of Boston, and knowing the results which the genuine system has produced abroad, we were truly solicitous to learn more accurately the progress of the evil: and we are more than satisfied. Other and abler minds than our author’s have been less communicative, and have spoken ambiguous oracles, but it happens in every great conspiracy that the alarm is given by weak brethren who let out the secret; and the secret

which Mr. Emerson reveals is the extreme of Pantheism. Let us adduce the proof. As a preparatory note, we find such expressions as these:

“The great distinction between teachers sacred or literary; between poets like Herbert, and poets like Pope; between philosophers like Spinoza, Kant, and Coleridge,—and philosophers like Loeke, Paley, Mackintosh, and Stewart; between men of the world who are reckoned accomplished talkers, and here and there a fervent mystic, prophesying half-insane under the infinitude of his thought, is, that one class speak *from within*, or from experience, as parties and possessors of the fact; and the other class, *from without*, as spectators merely, or perhaps as acquainted with the fact, on the evidence of third persons. It is of no use to preach to me from without. I can do that too easily myself. Jesus speaks always from within, and in a degree that transcends all others. In that, is the miracle. That includes the miracle.” p. 237.

Then we have a gradual ascent towards the arcanum:

“There are degrees in idealism. We learn first to play with it academically, as the magnet was once a toy. Then we see in the heyday of youth and poetry that it may be true, that it is true in gleams and fragments. Then, its countenance waxes stern and grand, and we see that it must be true. It now shows itself ethical and practical. We learn that God is; that he is in me; and that all things are shadows of him. The idealism of Berkeley is only a crude statement of the idealism of Jesus, and that, again, is a crude statement of the fact that all nature is the rapid efflux of goodness executing and organizing itself.” p. 256.

“In youth we are mad for persons. Childhood and youth see all the world in them. But the larger experience of man discovers the identical nature appearing through them all. Persons themselves acquaint us with the impersonal. In all conversation between two persons, tacit reference is made as to a third party, to a common nature. That third party or common nature is not social; *it is impersonal; is God.*” p. 229.

“Our moods do not believe in each other. To-day, I am full of thoughts, and can write what I please. I see no reason why I should not have the same thought, the same power of expression to-morrow. What I write, whilst I write it, seems the most natural thing in the world: but, yesterday, I saw a dreary vacuity in this direction in which now I see so much; and a month hence, I doubt not, I shall wonder who he was that wrote so many continuous pages. Alas for this infirm faith, this will not strenuous, this vast ebb of a vast flow! *I am God in nature; I am a weed by the wall.*” p. 253-4.

“Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. *The simplest person, who in his integrity worships God, becomes God; yet forever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable.*” p. 241.

“The Supreme Critic on all the errors of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be, is that great nature in which we rest, as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere; *that Unity, that Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart, of which all sincere conversation is the worship, to which all right action is submission; that overpowering reality which confutes our tricks and talents, and constrains every one to pass for what he is, and to speak from his character and not from his tongue; and which evermore tends and aims to pass into our thought and hand, and become wisdom, and virtue, and power, and beauty.* We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particulars. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal

ONE. And this deep power in which we exist, and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing, and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, *the subject and the object are one*. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul. It is only by the vision of that Wisdom, that the horoscope of the ages can be read, and it is only by falling back on our better thoughts, by yielding to the spirit of prophecy which is innate in every man, that we can know what it saith. Every man's words, who speaks from that life, must sound vain to those who do not dwell in the same thought on their own part. I dare not speak for it. My words do not carry its august sense; they fall short and cold. Only itself can inspire whom it will, and behold! their speech shall be lyrical, and sweet, and universal as the rising of the wind. Yot I desire, even by profane words, if sacred I may not use, to indicate the heaven of this deity, and to report what hints I have collected of the transcendent simplicity and energy of the Highest Law." p. 222-3.

This is surely enough. We have now arrived at the very acme of the Identical or Absolute System of Transcendentalism, in which the subject and the object are one. Schelling could ask no more. And this it is, which, if we are rightly informed, is to take the place of Unitarian Rationalism. The change is certainly great, but not surprising. Step by step Unitarian theology has come down from the true position as to the inspiration of the scriptures, and thus having abandoned the only sure footing, those who are foremost in the descent have found themselves among the ooze and quicksands of atheistic philosophy. We believed that the Unitarian system was too cold to live. It had too little for the heart. Hence its services were formal, its increase was checked, and some of its most learned and able ministers were seen turning aside to spend their lives in discussions merely literary or political, and even in a remarkable number of signal instances abandoning the pulpit altogether. But cold as it is, there can be no greater madness than to leave it for Pantheism. As well might the shivering Icelander cast himself into Hecla.

We are awaiting with anxious expectation the issue of this controversy. That a schism is now about to take place, real if not ostensible, in the Unitarian body, no well-informed person can doubt. There is much in the new system to attract certain minds; and not the least of its charms is its very novelty. It connects itself also with transatlantic speculations, and the names of great men in Germany. It is dark, mysterious, and inexplicable, and therefore stimulates the imagination and awakens curiosity. To those who best know its penetralia, it is a soothing fatalism, which destroys the distinctions of moral good and evil, and reinstalls the flesh

in the throne from which Christianity had excluded it. And, finally, as the extracts above shew, it gives to man the highest exaltation which the most maddened pride could ask, by merging his personality in that of the Divinity, and saying to the eager worshippers, *Ye shall be as Gods*. We feel justified, by this view of the subject, in dwelling at some length on the phases of this grand delusion in former ages, in order to shew how remarkably, in the cycle of human opinion, the vaunted discoveries of one age are the mere returns of ancient unbelief.

The basis of all sound theology is in revelation alone; and the sublime opening of the book of Genesis contains that fundamental position, in deserting which all Pantheism and atheism take their rise. Never have we so felt the sublimity of the passage, or the value of the doctrine of creation out of nothing, as while we have been attempting to thread our way through the mazes of the old theosophy. "Take away," says Coleridge, "the first verse of the book of Genesis, and then what immediately follows is an exact history or sketch of Pantheism." Let a profane criticism fritter away the sense of this prime oracle of inspired wisdom, and we find no end in wandering mazes lost. The ancients experienced this. The source of all their follies, whether theistic or pantheistic, was their ignorance of Creation. They had no conception of an Omnipotence which could pass the gulf between nonentity and existence. Substance, in their view, could not be originated, and all essence was the same essence; we therefore doubt not that there was Spinozism in the world, five thousand years before Spinoza.

There are some to whom Pantheism appears in the light of a novelty, associated as it is in their thinking with the vagaries of a recent philosophy. A more egregious blunder could scarcely be made in the history of opinion. Far back as we can reach among the hoary systems of primitive speculation, we find this delusion rearing itself in gigantic terrors, like the inaccessible summits of the primitive mountains. And every new discovery, whether of hieroglyphic documents or symbolical architecture, brings us nearer to the mind of the early races, and shews that this hideous system is one of the most ancient forms of falsehood. The researches of antiquaries in Egypt, and the labours of science under British auspices in the East, are destined to reveal still greater wonders; so that in regard to the Oriental theosophies, that



which is last in the order of discovery may prove to be the index of what was first in the order of time.

If the deluge had been universal in regard to the human race, so as to have swept away every individual, it is plain that a new race could have no relic of ancient tradition or manners. But we are too apt to treat of ancient times as if such had really been the case. On the contrary, it is natural to seek among the people nearest to the flood a vivid recollection and reproduction of the more ancient customs, habits and belief. The waters were not waters of the Lethe, and men who had lived some centuries in a different state certainly retained their memory and their habits. In the oldest existing architecture of the world therefore, especially in that which from its being excavatory is least liable to change, we must expect to find in the form and general expression a shadow more or less satisfactory of that which existed before the old world perished. The same is true of opinion, and the fragments which we have of the cosmogony and theology of the ancient Orientals, may be regarded as relics of antediluvian theories. Of the life and character of Ham, before the great catastrophe, and of his alliances by marriage, we know nothing; but it is not very unlikely that as a bold, bad man he had been contaminated by the errors of the Cainites, and not impossible that the first germination of post-diluvian error was from seeds preserved in the ark. If, as some have conjectured, the decay of man's intellectual vigour was gradual, and if it was the abuse of mighty faculties, protracted life and vast experience, that resulted in the horrible licentiousness which the deluge swept away, it is not irrational to look for the reproduction among Noah's descendants of the same falsehoods which had been rife before the flood. Hence there might arise, as from some cause we know there did arise, a revival of the grand Titanic schism, between the children of God and the children of the wicked one; and hence polytheism, pantheism, and atheism. It is among the antiquities of India and Egypt that we must look for the traces of these ancient corruptions, and as the philosophy of those nations seems to have changed in scarcely any particular since the days of Alexander the Great, there is reason to presume that it is many centuries older. The researches of Sir William Jones, Mr. Colebrooke, and other modern Orientalists have opened a mine from which we have received only the earnest-penny, but this is so

marked as to settle the question respecting the characteristic and predominant system of the Indian philosophers. "The Vedanta philosophy," says Frederick Schlegel, "is in its general tendency, a complete system of Pantheism; but not the rigid, mathematical, abstract, negative Pantheism of some modern thinkers; for such a total denial of all personality in God, and of all freedom in man, is incompatible with the attachment which the Vedanta philosophy professes for sacred tradition and ancient mythology; and accordingly a modified, poetical, and half mythological system of Pantheism may here naturally be expected, and actually exists."

Even in Japan, we find traces of this primeval heresy. The doctrine of their Bonzes is thus summed up by Bayle, from accounts of the Jesuit Possevin: they teach "1. That there is but one principle of all things, that this principle is most perfect, that it is wise but understands nothing, &c. 2. That this principle is in all particular beings and communicates its essence to them, so that they are the same thing with it, and return to it, when they have an end."

The Egyptian worship of beasts and birds and reptiles, and insects and plants, admits of an easy explanation from the comparison of an analogous degradation of speculative Pantheism among the Indians: these objects became manifestations of nature or God. But we are not left to the work of inference. Plutarch gives us a celebrated inscription from the temple of Sais, which though brief speaks volumes: *Ἐγώ εἰμι πᾶν τὸ γεγονός, καὶ ὄν, καὶ ἐσόμενον, καὶ τον ἐμὸν πέπλον οὐδεὶς πω θνητὸς ἀπεκάλυψεν.* *I am all that has been, is, and shall be, and my mantle hath no mortal ever yet uncovered.* To which may be added the inscription to Isis, still extant in modern times at Capua:

TIBI.

VNA. QVAE.

ES. OMNIA.

DEA. ISIS.

That the early Greek philosophy migrated from Asia and Egypt is no longer a matter of disputation. Cecrops and Danaus could bring to Europe no other than oriental theosophy; and the Pelasgic teachers were in the estimation of some apostles direct from India. On this subject the greatest revelations are yet to be made from the research of the Indo-German ethnography. There are abundant signs of this among the relics of the Orphic poems, which sing main-

ly of Chaos, the very hieroglyph of Pantheism, and the production of all things from the teeming womb of nature. Proclus gives us a passage of Orphic verse, which might well beseem a German transcendentalist, and which admits of no reference to any but a pantheistic system. And the testimony of Plutarch is remarkable: "Whereas there are two causes of all generation, (divine and natural) the very ancient theologians and poets directed their minds only to the greater of these two, resolving all things into God, and pronouncing this of them universally, that God was both the beginning and middle, and that all things were out of God. Inasmuch that these had no regard at all to the natural and necessary causes of things." The allusion is here to the Orphic poets, the verse which is cited being one of the Orphic verses.

Ζεὺς ἀρχὴ, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ πάντα πέλονται.\*

That these were the ordinary topics of philosophical discussion in a later age is evident from the chorus in the *Birds* of Aristophanes: "Chaos was, and Night, and dark Erebus, at first, and broad Tartarus; nor yet was air, or earth, or heaven; but in the boundless bosom of Erebus, in the first place of all, Night, with her black wings, brings forth a light egg, from which, in fulness of time, sprung the desirable Eros, his back glittering with golden wings, like to the whirlwind's eddying currents. But he, having cohabited with winged Chaos dark as night, in broad Tartarus, gave rise to our race of nestlings, and first led them forth to light: and erst the race of mortals was not, ere that Eros commingled all things. But when one thing was commingled with another, heaven came into being, and ocean, and earth, and of all the blessed Gods, the race incorruptible:"† a passage of which the extravagance of supposing the birds to have been begotten between Love and Chaos, before all the gods, is supposed by Salmasius and others to be given not as a joke, but as part and parcel of the old atheistic cosmogony, in which the universe, gods and all, by a horrible inversion are made to emerge from brute matter and chaos.

Upon this subject, we cannot do better than refer to such

\* Cudworth, vol. i. c. iv. § 17.

† Χάος ἦν, καὶ Νύξ, Ἐρεβός τε μέλαν πρῶτον, καὶ Τάρταρος εὐρύς. Γῆ δ', οὐδ' ἀήρ, οὐδ' οὐρανὸς ἦν. Ἐρέβους δ' ἐν ἀπειροῖσι κόλποις Τίττει πρῶτιστον ὑπηνέμον Νύξ ἡ μελανόπτερος ὦν. κ. τ. λ.

writers as Cudworth, Brucker, Fries and Rixner, in whose collections it will be seen that the Trismegistic theogony, the Panic worship, and the Eleatic philosophies were full of pantheistic tenets. The Trismegistic books are supposed to be least corrupt in those portions which are most strongly marked with these doctrines: for they savour of the antique, and this renders probable the testimony of Jamblichus, that they contain snatches of the old Theutic or Hermaic philosophy.

The Eleatic school of philosophy is always referred to as having in the most distinct and formal manner avowed pantheistic tenets; and every reader of Cudworth is familiar with the One-all-immovable of Xenophanes, Parmenides, Melissus and Zeno. If Cudworth had lived in our day, and had seen the facility with which polar opposites can be maintained by one and the same school, in one and the same sentence, he would have had less trouble in reconciling the discordant statements of Plato and Aristotle as to the theism or atheism of the Eleatics. The object of Cudworth being to detect every trace of theism in the ancient philosophy, he has not always inquired whether a personal God or a mere pantheistic unity was that which was acknowledged. It is scarcely possible for any one acquainted with the Schelling and Hegel school to mistake the very same doctrines among the Eleatics. *Xenophanes*, says Cicero, *mente adjuncta omnia præterea quod esset infinitum, Deum voluit esse*.\* He taught according to Aristotle that the universe, as being the eternal All-one, is God, and that this unity was possessed of reason.† In the genuine spirit of a transcendental ‘antinomy,’ he declared that the All-one is neither finite without being infinite, nor infinite without being finite, but both at once.‡ His scholar and friend Parmenides taught that the τὸ ὄν is eternal and immutable, and pervaded by reason, and that what men consider temporal change is mere illusion. Melissus, the Samian, differed little from Parmenides, though his language is thought by Cudworth more consonant with our present theology. He declared, in common with Xenias of Corinth, that the diversities of things in the universe are mere products of sensual apprehension, and therefore illusive: πάντα εἰπὼν ψευδῆ, καὶ πᾶσαν φαντασίαν, καὶ δόξαν, ψεύδεσθαι καὶ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον γίνεσθαι, καὶ εἰς τὸ

\* De Nat. Deor. lib. i. c. 11.

† Arist. Met. I. 5.

‡ Aristotle, ap. Rixner, II. p. 117.

μη ὄν πᾶν τὸ φθιρόμενον φθείρεσθαι.\* “Although this system,” says Schlegel, “was first propounded in verse, it was by no means, in its essential and ruling spirit, a poetical Pantheism like that of the Indians—but more congenial with the intellectual habits of the Greeks, it was a Pantheism thoroughly dialectic, which at first regarded all change as an illusion and idle phenomenon, and at last positively denied the possibility of change.” The climax of Eleatic theory was reached by Zeno, famed for his proof that there is no such thing as motion. This was a trifle however to his other tenets, which have never been approached till the days of Transcendentalism. His grand doctrine was that the great substance is at the same time one and many, finite and infinite, the same and different.† Of this it has been kindly remarked by Kant, in his Critique of Pure Reason, that Zeno was not venting scholastic paradox and contradiction, but that he rather intended to show, that where the two antagonist propositions contradict one another, and each is indisputable, the resulting truth is that neither is demonstrable. But the reader must see what he says on the Antinomies of Pure Reason.

Incerta haec, si tu postules  
Ratione certa facere, nihilo plus agas,  
Quam si des operam ut cum ratione insanias.

That these doctrines which had hovered as a mist over all the ancients should now and then darken the field of classic poetry, is no more surprising than that the elves and fairies of our forefathers should still haunt the fancies of our children. Hence Aeschylus,

Ζεὺς ἐστὶν αἰθὴρ, Ζεὺς δὲ γῆ, Ζεὺς δ' οὐρανός.  
Ζεὺς τοὶ τὰ πάντα, χῶτι τῶν δ' ἔθ' ὑπέρτερον.

and Lucretius,

At nunc, inter se quia nexus principiorum  
Dissimiles constant, aeternaque materies est,  
Incolumi remanent res corpore, dum satis acris  
Vis obeat pro textura cujusque reperta:  
Haud igitur redit ad nihilum res ulla; sed omnes  
Discidio redeunt in corpora materiai.

and Virgil,

Principio coelum, ac terras, camposque liquentes,  
Lucentemque globum lunae, Titaniaque astra,

\* Fries. Gesch. d. Phil. I. § 30, p. 151, ed. 1840. Rixner, ii. 125.

† Τὰ αὐτὰ ὅμοια καὶ ἀνόμοια, ἐν καὶ πολλὰ, μένοντα τε ἄν καὶ φερόμενα.  
Plato, Phaedr.

Spiritus intus alit: totamque infusa per artūs  
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

and Lucan,

Superos quid quaerimus ultra?  
Jupiter est quodeunque vides, quodeunque moveris.

We willingly pass by the traces of Pantheism in the Oriental corruptions of Christianity, which would demand our attention if we should address ourselves to a history of the error; the rather as we have recently indicated some of the points of resemblance between the ancient Gnostics and the German Transcendentalists. The subject is frequently touched by Neander, to whose works we would earnestly direct the attention of the reader. It promises more practical benefit to glance at the pantheistic tendencies of unshackled and unsanctified speculation among the schoolmen, as being more allied to the extravagances of the German school, and like the latter the natural consequence of a Babel-like attempt to rear a structure without God. On this topic we also touched, but it is not our intention to go over the same ground. We need scarcely say that to an original acquaintance with the numberless folios of schoolmen we make no pretensions; life is too short for this, and we rely upon the extracts of Hallam, Rixner, Eichhorn, Fries, and others, who wrote with an entire freedom from any bias in regard to the subject we are treating.

On a former occasion we introduced the name of John Erigena, or Scotus, but we beg leave to give a fuller view of his system as connected with the present investigation, and this shall be done from his own statements, of which a syllabus in the original may be found in Rixner.

It is remarkable that in the bold and almost irreverent speculations of Erigena, we find him on the one hand tending towards the Platonic idea of a Great Supreme, so far removed beyond all being, as that we can predicate nothing, not even existence, of him; and on the other hand, reaching some of the very speculations, and the very forms of speech, of the modern German Transcendentalists. Thus the trajectory of opinion is found, after the lapse of ages, to be a re-entering curve; and there is nothing new under the sun. The cardinal principles of Johannes Erigena were those which follow.

1. There is no other philosophy than religion. To discuss philosophy, therefore, is nothing else than to unfold the

principles of true \*religion, by which is worshipped God—the highest cause of all things.

2. In order to attain this knowledge, there are four ways or methods, viz. those of Division, Definition, Demonstration, and Analysis. The *Diaeretic* method, or Division, separates one thing into many: the *Horistic*, or Definition, collects one thing out of many: the *Apodictic*, or Demonstration, lays open what is obscure by means of what is clear: the *Analytic* method resolves what is compound into its simple parts.

3. Nature, the object of all knowledge, admits of a division into four species: (1) *Natura Prima*, which creates, but is not created; (2) *Natura Secunda*, which is created, and also creates; (3) *Natura Tertia*, which is created, but does not create; (4) *Natura Quarta*, which neither creates, nor is created. These are alternately opposed to one another; and the first and fourth coincide in the divine being. For the divine nature may be called ‘*creatrix quae non creatur*,’ when viewed in itself, and with equal justice ‘*nec creatrix nec creata*,’ inasmuch as, being infinite, it never proceeds beyond or out of itself; nor was there ever a time when it was not in and of itself.

4. The primary being, or divinity, being infinite reality, and unconditioned simplicity, can be neither understood nor comprehended; neither spoken nor known. Every conception would limit that which is illimitable. And accordingly the knowledge which God has of things is not mediate, by the means of conceptions, but immediate or in idea.\*

The expressions of Erigena upon this topic are highly transcendental, at once reminding us of those modern Germans who have defined God the ‘universal nought,’ *das allgemeine Nichts*.

God is all, says Erigena, that truly is; since he makes all, and is made in all [et fit in omnibus]. For all that is understood and known, is nothing but the appearance of the non-apparent, the manifestation of the hidden, the affirmation of the denied, the comprehension of the incomprehensible, the utterance of the unutterable, access to the inaccessible, intelligence of the unintelligible, embodying of the incorporeal, *essentia superessentialis*, form of the formless, measure of the incommensurable, numbering of the innumerable, weighing of the imponderable, materializing of the spiritual,

\* See Fries, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. ii. § 139, p. 170. Halle, 1840.

visibility of the invisible, location of the illocal, time of the timeless, limiting of the infinite, and circumscription of the uncircumscribed.—Far be it from me to mean that God does not know himself, when I say that he does not know *what* he is, *quid sit* : for by this very thing he immediately knows that he is above all that can be conceived apart from himself, *se ipsum esse super omne quid* ; and herein infinite ; so that the most adorable wisdom shines forth in this species of divine ignorance.

5. The ideas of the divine Intelligence are the primordial causes of all things : the things themselves are only representations of these existences, which are the first productions of God. These primal causes are the same which the Greeks denominated prototypes, ideas, divine purposes. They differ from the unformed mass, or original matter, in this respect, that they are nearest to the true essence, whereas this rude matter is nearest to non-entity. And the unformed matter is perpetually betraying some motion of the non-existent striving towards a place in that which truly is.

No one can fail to recognise in this a mere modification of the Platonic hypothesis. For this philosopher taught that the visible world was a transcript of the invisible God, a copy of the eternal in the temporal : and that every thing is, and subsists, only in and through the divine Idea. The whole subject suggests an inquiry into the speculations of the New-Platonists, with whose subtle disquisitions, those of the Schoolmen, and we may add of the modern Germans, have a remarkable analogy.

6. The world is an eternal production of God. It is not an accident for God to create the universe. God subsisted not *before* the creation of the universe. God precedes the universe in no sense other than that he is its cause, but not in the order of time. God is, and was, and ever shall be the cause of all things, and the creation is his eternal manifestation.

7. The nothing, out of which according to the scriptures all things were created, is the incomprehensible essence of God himself ; for this essence, being inaccessible and inconceivable, even to the highest intelligences, may be thus denominated, inasmuch as, viewed in itself, it is not, was not, and will not be. It can be embraced by no predicate, and represented by no creature, for it is infinitely above all creatures. With reference to us it is a sublime negation ; yet



by the divine condescension it reveals itself to us, by glimpses in the creatures, which may then be said to proceed out of nothing, in respect to our apprehension. Thus every creature is a theophania, or obscure manifestation of the infinite Supreme. Though above all essence, it gives essence to all.

8. All created existence eventually returns into the uncreated self-existent God, and then God is all in all. Even at present, God is all in all, considered in himself, but then he will be recognised as such by all divinely illuminated beings.

9. The human intellect is an immediate product of the divine Mind. The intellect which perfectly knows itself, is thereby united to God, and knows God. He who knows not God, cannot perfectly know himself. God is the intellect of all.

10. Time and space are relative to created existence, and not eternal. When the sensible world shall perish, time and space will be annihilated. Time is the measure of motion, as space is the measure of extension.—Here we have an anticipation of Kant's fundamental position, that time and space have no objective reality, but are merely the forms of sensation, or the conditions under which the mind apprehends objects of sense; an exposition of which may be found in the author's Latin treatise entitled *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis*. There are those who would explain all these pantheistical expressions in accordance with the philosophy of emanation. Hallam, for example, charges Brucker with great injustice, in accusing John Erigena of Pantheism.\* But if we allow such latitude of interpretation, it will be difficult to establish against even Spinoza himself this hateful charge. Our authority for the extracts is Rixner, ii. § 11.

We ask special attention to the remark that we are far from attributing pantheistic error to the great Anselm, but we name him here in order to allude to his famous argument for the being of God from the idea in the human soul. Leibnitz commented upon it, and discovered this flaw in it, that it assumes the *possibility* of divine existence. The argument, says he, proves that there is a God, if such an existence be possible. The modern Pantheist, Hegel, has also examined and defended, or rather subsidized, the same ar-

\* Bruck. Hist. Crit. Phil. iii. 620. Hallam's Middle Ages, iv. 392.

gument. The objections raised against it, all arise, Hegel thinks, from the false supposition that the subjective idea has a separate existence by itself, and the Divine Being, or object, a separate existence by itself; whereas, adds Hegel, very characteristically, ‘the basis of all true philosophy is the absolute identity of the conception and its object:’ the thought and the thing thought of are one and the same. ‘The contemporaries of Anselm objected,’ says Hegel, ‘that from a bare subjective thought no objective or real existence could follow, because thought may be conversant with what is false. In this they utterly misunderstood his meaning, for Anselm is not speaking of a subjective thought, but of an eternal and unchangeable intuition of Reason, Vernunftanschauung, which necessarily carries objective reality with it.’\*

This allusion to modern Transcendentalism must be pardoned, upon the ground that there is nothing in the whole investigation more important, than the discovery of this singular coincidence of recent German metaphysicians with the most subtle schoolmen.

Attempts have been made by modern authors, and particularly by Fessler, in his *Life of Abelard*, to show that this theologian maintained a hypothesis concerning the existence of all things in God, and God in all things, which is not very different from the Pantheism of Spinoza.

The rashness of scholastic speculation was further manifested in the case of Gilbert de la Porrée (ob. 1154), a contemporary of Abelard, and somewhat notorious in the church-history of that period. He was condemned by the councils of Paris and Rheims, in 1147 and 1148. But his name is here introduced, simply for the sake of showing how naturally the wildness of philosophy runs into the same absurdities in distant ages. De la Porrée held, as Hegel has done in our own day, ‘that God, or rather the Godhead, as well in himself, as with respect to us, is nothing.’†

We digress for a moment to note a singular coincidence of scholastic with transcendental theory in the case of the celebrated Parisian Hugh of St. Victor. This philosopher not only recognises a threefold partition of human faculties into Sense, Understanding, and Reason, as Kant and the Germans have done, but adds a supreme cognitive power,

\* Hegel's *Encyclopedie*, p. 97.

† Deum, seu potius Deitatem, tam in se, quam quoad nos, nihil esse. Rixner, ii. 31.

*Mens*, for the sole purpose of contemplating God. And, indeed, the principle of classification which would erect into a separate genus the cognition of things above and beyond time and space, or Reason, would seem to warrant the addition of a further faculty for the knowledge of God. Because, if the human faculties are to be divided by the differences of their objects, it is reasonable to say that the great inscrutable God belongs to a category independent of, and infinitely superior to all others. This arrangement of the faculties is however whimsical, and incomplete, and lies very near the base of the whole transcendental figment.

The seventeenth century produced a number of men whose names are beginning to be revered by the initiated as martyrs in the cause of Pantheism, and this even before Spinoza. If some of these were denounced, and one of them burnt, for atheism, it may be observed that a similar misconstruction seems to have awaited their successors in every age. Andrew Caesalpinus, of Pisa, lived through most of the seventeenth century. His fundamental doctrine was, that the primary and actuating substance is and can be but one, namely, God; he denied creation out of nothing, and seems to have anticipated the grand tenet of Spinoza.\* Lucilio Vanini was burnt alive at Toulouse in 1619. He has usually been styled an atheist, but if Rixner rightly reports his tenets he was a genuine Pantheist; for he taught that "God is all in all, but neither included nor excluded; God is simple and pure; the first, middle and last; he is all, is above all, before all, and after all; the world, like God, is one and not one, all and not all, like and unlike, eternal and temporal, immutable and mutable."† This is in the very vein of Hegel and Marheineke. Of Jacob Boehme, the inspired shoemaker of Alt-Seidenberg, the object of a common and affectionate veneration to Goethe, Coleridge and Schelling‡ we need say the less, because he is better known than most we have mentioned, and especially because his fond disciples, as zealous as those of Swedenborg, are about to give the whole of his original works to the public. Dr. Robert Fludd, an Oxonian, who died in 1635, deserves also to be named among those who, in Cudworth's language, "have made God to be all, in a gross sense, so as to take away all real distinction between

\* Buddeus, *De Spinozismo ante Spinozam*, § 16.

† Rixner ii. 276.

‡ See Goethe's *Tag- und Jahres-hefte*, 1807—1822, *Werke*, vol xxxii. p. 72.

God and the creature, and indeed to allow no other being besides God; they supposing the substance of every thing, and even of all inanimate bodies, to be the very substance of God himself, and all the variety of things, that is in the world, to be nothing but God under several forms, appearances and disguises.”

But all these lesser lights pale their ineffectual fires before the luminary of modern Pantheism. Baruch or Benedict Spinoza, a Jew of Portugeze parentage, was born at Amsterdam in 1632. In 1660 he renounced Judaism, without, however, receiving baptism, though he sometimes attended the Lutheran worship. He died in 1677.\*

The whole system of Spinoza proceeds upon the falsehood to which we have already pointed as the the source of all pantheistic atheism, namely the impossibility of a proper creation, and the unity, self-existence, and infinity of all substance. Of his teaching concerning God and nature, the following may be given as a fair summary. “By *substance* I understand that which is in itself, and is conceived by itself; that is, the conception of which needs the conception of nothing beside itself; moreover, such substance can be but one;—nor can it be produced by another;—it is necessarily infinite. By *attribute* I understand that which the understanding perceives as belonging to the essence of substance; by *mode* the affections of substance or that which is in another, and by which also it is conceived. By *God* I understand the absolutely infinite Ens, or substance consisting of infinite attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence. Moreover God, or the substance consisting of infinite attributes, exists truly eternally, and necessarily.—Whatsoever is, is in God, and nothing can be, or be conceived without God.—God is the immanent, not the transient cause of all things.—The *natura naturans* is that which is of itself, and is conceived by itself, namely God, so far forth as he is viewed as a free cause: the *natura naturata* is that which results from the necessity of the Divine Nature, or of each of the divine attributes; in other words all modes of the divine attributes, considered as things, which are in God, and which cannot be nor be conceived without God—God does not work of his own free will; and things

\* His works are these: *Cogitata Metaphysica ad principia Philosophiæ Cartesianæ*; 1663. *De libertate philosophandi*; 1670. *Posthumous works*, containing his Ethics, Correspondence, and a tract *de Emendatione Intellectus*, edited by his friend and physician Louis von Meier, 1677.

could not be produced by God in any other order than that in which they are actually produced.”\*

Such is the system of which Coleridge was wont to speak in terms of apologetic kindness, and which he gave due notice would be discussed at length in the fifth treatise of his ‘Logosophia;’† a scientific structure to be found only among the *châteaux en Espagne* of the amiable opium-eater. The system so nearly resembles those of the modern ‘absolute-philosophy,’ that one of the adherents of the latter says: “If we compare Spinoza with Fichte and Schelling, his spiritual kindred in our day, the system of Spinoza appears a philosophic Epos in contemplation of the absolute, as reposing on the eternal and sole being and life, consequently as objective, realistic, and plastic. On the other hand the Ego-doctrine of Fichte, describing the wrestling and struggle of the Ego to comprehend itself in its root, is purely subjective, consequently ideal, lyric, and musical. And Schelling’s system of Identity, as the harmonizing summit of Spinozistic Realism and Fichtean Idealism, beholds the finite life as locked in the infinite; while nevertheless neither finite nor infinite thereby ceases to be in itself real, each passing over into the other. Thus Schelling’s system is neither an Ego-doctrine nor a Unity-doctrine, but an All-one-doctrine, and therefore truly dramatic.”‡ Not merely dramatic, we would humbly add, but in the highest degree comic.

The revival of pantheistic infidelity in Germany is one of the most remarkable phenomena of our day. The tendency of the reigning philosophy in that country is towards this form of atheism, and every day shows more and more the practical evils of a corrupt system when once it escapes from the schools of the disputant, and spreads its miasma over Christianity and literature. It is not our intention, however, to make our long article yet longer, by entering upon this boundless subject. We have already, in more than one instance, raised our warning voice against the impieties of transcendental theology. Upon some, we are assured, our caveat is not entirely lost. Upon others, already infidels of another complexion, all our advices fall as idle tales. And if there is still a third class, who indulge the hope of combining the anti-scriptural absurdities of Hegel and Daub with

\* Rixner iii. p. 60. ff. Fries. Geschichte der Philosophie, vol. ii. § 165, p. 321.

† Biographia Literaria, vol. 1. p. 165. note; also p. 86.

‡ Weder Eins-Lehre, noch Ich-Lehr, sondern Alleins-Lehre.

the doctrines of the reformed Confessions, though we doubt not a moment that the experiment will produce the successive results of latitudinarianism, infidelity and atheism, we can only leave them to the bootless task of pouring new wine into old bottles, and harmonizing Christ and Belial.

While we cannot feel serious apprehensions of the spread and ultimate prevalence of pantheistic irreligion as a system of American belief, we should be blind not to perceive a tendency in certain minds to embrace some of its worst errors. Though it is a forced growth, and though we are unacquainted with any indigenous system of Transcendentalism on English or American ground, yet exotics sometimes flourish, and where the plant is deadly, its culture even in the hothouse or the conservatory is to be dreaded. It is, we suppose, conceded, that to the writings of Coleridge we are indebted for the first impulse in this direction. The reputation of this great man as a poet, his varied and recondite learning, his remarkable facility in wielding the English language, and above all the mystic obscurity of his oracles, intimating the most philosophic depths, combined to give him influence with young and inquiring minds. The *Biographia Literaria* was therefore a fascinating work, and all the more so for the constant intermingling of elegant criticism and the delights of literature, with the portentous shadows of metaphysics. The philosophical hypotheses occurred only here and there, like caverns in a land of meads and flowers. No foreigner perhaps ever became so fully transformed into a German. The years which he spent abroad were the most ductile of his literary life; and they were submitted to the moulding touch of Schelling, whose enthusiasm was also then at its height. It is not wonderful then that the doctrines of his school were indelibly impressed upon the mind of Coleridge, and that they were reproduced whenever he spoke or wrote upon this subject.

We have not learnt that the borrowed philosophy ever had many converts in Great Britain, and its progress was slow in America. But the leaven wrought extensively here. The charm of real or seeming profundity was too strong to be resisted. To profess a creed which not one in a thousand could understand was a cheap distinction. By those who glory in being unintelligible to the profane vulgar, the fame of greatness is soon acquired. To be a La Place, an Airy or a Bowditch, requires years of sedulous and wearisome application, and the laborious concatenation of proof on

proof, every link of which is subjected to the acumen of a thousand practised eyes; but Transcendental philosophy exacted no such Herculean toil of her votaries. It was but to plunge into the turbulent and darkened flood to emerge a sage. It was easy for the novice to vaunt his esoteric lore, and denounce the shallow, empirical, or sensuous philosophy of the crowd without.

Conformably to these statements was the fact that the converts to the new sect were mutually allied in character. From whence did these profound philosophers proceed? Not from the schools of pure science, where the patient research of mathematical relations—esteemed since Plato the best discipline for the philosopher—had chastened the imagination, and taught the judgment to take no step without proof; not from the laboratories of physical inquiry, where jealous wisdom repeats her experiments a thousand times, and spends a lifetime in making firm and broad the basis on which induction may rear the pyramid of just theory; not from the cloisters where philosophy loves to ‘outwatch the Bear, with thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere the spirit of Plato;’ from none of these, but from the coteries of gay sciolists, and petit-maitres. Among their ranks we have described not one great savant, linguist, or mathematician; but a glittering assemblage of upstart ‘litterateurs,’ dapper clergymen, small poets, and fashionable sentimentalists. Philosophy was never so genteel. The shibboleth of Transcendentalism now rolls from organs which scarcely rest from the prattle of the saloon; the same names appear in defence of the ‘Pure Reason,’ and in the fugitive vapidity of the ladies’ magazines; and the Entered Apprentice talks as freely as an old acquaintance about Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Daub, Goerres, and Schleiermacher; or as the Frenchman did of Cicero, on seeing his works in a library, *Ah! mon cher Cicéron! Je le connais bien; c’est le même que Marc Tulle!*

It is our serious belief, that never since there was such a thing as science in the world, has it been so easy to attain a name for profundity, as since the origin of the new philosophy. And accordingly we are confident in ascribing the popularity of the system with a certain class of minds, to its affording a royal road to greatness for those who could not reach the goal by the common highway. The ostentation of great depth and originality has therefore been most obvious in the younger classes of literature. The egg deposited by foreign wisdom lay addle in many a nest, but asserted its

vitality in the resorts of bachelors-of-arts and inchoate preachers, who sprang forth ready to mystify the world ;

Feathered soon and fledge,  
They summed their pens, and soaring th' air sublime  
With clang despised the ground, under a cloud  
In prospect.

That among the throng of professed admirers, there are some real disciples of the German systems, we cannot doubt for moment. We even fear that to some cultivated and tasteful minds, misguided and sickened by the opposite extreme, there has been a point of attraction even in the pantheistic element. The musings of a poetic mind always connect themselves with the contemplation of nature, and it is easy for admiring love to brighten into adoration. The capacity for veneration and worship, the native principle of religion, will have an object, and when the depraved soul turns aside from the living and true God, it bends before external nature. This is the pregnant source of every mythological system, and of idolatry itself. "This pure and simple veneration of nature," says Frederick Schlegel, "is perhaps the most ancient, and was by far the most generally prevalent in the primitive and patriarchal world. In its original conception it was no by means a deification of Nature, or a denial of the sovereignty of God—it was only at a later period, that the symbol, as it so often happens, was confounded with the thing itself, and usurped the place of that higher Object which it was destined originally to represent." "Nature in its origin was nought else than a beautiful image—a pure emanation—a wonderful creation—a sport of Omnipotent love ; so, when it was severed from its divine Original, internally displaced, and turned against its Maker, it became vitiated in its substance and fraught with evil. This alienation of Nature from God, this inversion of the right order in the relations between God and Nature, was the peculiar, essential and fundamental error of ancient Paganism, its false Mysteries, and the abusive application of the higher powers of Nature in magical rites. On the other hand, we ought to regard every similar derangement in the divine system, though established on the basis of Christianity, and by Christian philosophers—we ought I say to regard every such attempt as being in its essential nature and principle a heathen enterprise—the foundation of a scientific Paganism, although no altars be erected to Apollo, and no Mysteries be celebrated in honour of Isis." The allusion of the last sentence is to Schelling,



who was at an earlier period closely allied with the Schlegels, as also with Tieck, Novalis, and Ritter.

The legitimate end of this tendency is the recognition of the all-present Jehovah in his works; but, in default of this, poetry worships the phenomenon. It is a form of counterfeit religion which has re-appeared in every age, and among the most godless men; the devotion of Art, which no doubt glowed intensely in the creative minds of antiquity, and has left its expression on the Pyramids, the Parthenon, and the Apollo Belvedere. It may co-exist with fetishism, with lust, or with atheism.

“How often we forget all time, when lone  
 Admiring Nature’s universal throne,  
 Her woods, her wilds, her waters, the intense  
 Reply of hers to our intelligence!  
*Live not the stars and mountains!* Arc the waves  
 Without a spirit? Are the dropping caves  
 Without a feeling in their silent tears?  
 No—no—they woo and clasp us to their spheres,  
 Dissolve this clog and clod of clay before  
 Its hour and merge our soul in the great shore.  
 Strip off this fond and false identity!  
 Who thinks of self when gazing on the sea?”

We presume there is no reader who does not feel within him a profound response to these sublime verses, and no reader of sensibility and taste in whom they do not awaken an emotion of delightful awe, which he has often experienced among the scenes of nature: yet they are godless. Here is more than the personification—here is the deification of nature. And it is easy to see how short the step for such a mind into Pantheism; for we have here the life of nature—commerce of devotion with her—and the merging of personal identity in the great whole. This is what atheism substitutes for the worship of God. “We are assured,” says M. Benjamin Constant, “that certain persons accuse Lord Byron of atheism and impiety. There is more religion in these few lines, than in all the writings, past, present, and to come, of all who denounce him put together.”

A God from whom moral attributes are thus abstracted, an impersonal, changeful, aesthetic divinity, among whose lineaments every taste may make selection, is exceedingly agreeable to the depraved mind; and hence this is the form of religion which prevails in the poetry of our age. Even good men may forget the Creator in the midst of his work. In Goethe or Shelley this might be expected, but what shall

we say of Wordsworth, the great meditative poet of our generation? We will not say that he is either an atheist or a Pantheist, we rejoice to recognise him as a Christian; but there are passages of his in which we cannot mistake the tendency towards a neglect of God and a worship of the creature, or at least a mystic devotion to the works of nature:

“ To them I may have owed another gift,  
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood  
In which the burden of the mystery,  
In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world,  
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,  
In which the affections gently lead us on,—  
Until the breath of this corporeal frame  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul:  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things.”

Wherever an exquisite sensibility combines itself with devotional elevation, the tendency to mysticism is irresistible, and when regulated and fixed on the true object, it results in some of the most lovely characters, in whatever Christian persuasion it may be found; hence we have a Synesius, a Fenelon, a La Martine, and a Tholuck. Such a one cannot look abroad on nature without a sense of God; delightful if not overpowering. The starry heavens, the sea, the mountains, vegetable nature, the very insect throng, are full of God, and the tendency is to regard the things themselves as God, and thus to lapse into Pantheism or idolatry. “ Take ye good heed, lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them,” Deut. iv. 15, 19. The Pantheist plumes himself on this, as a flight beyond the level of vulgar minds; yet there is about it a crudity unworthy of the philosopher. For it is a false merging of matter and spirit, of cause and effect; it stops short of the highest analysis, and rests in a concrete visibility, from which a more trenchant discrimination would abstract the divine ethereal part. This it is which led Bossuet to say of such philosophers, *Tout était Dieu, excepté Dieu même*. We therefore say to the Pantheist, Come up higher, to a more spiritual summit. Your boasted advantages are all possessed by us. We, no less than you, admire the glories of nature: we, no less than you, behold God among

them and in them. He is as near to us as to you. His all-pervading essence is fully and intimately present in all parts of his dominions. In every flower that blows, in every contour, hue or motion of leaf or wing we discern the expression of the infinite Mind. But mark the difference between us: Where we see a work, you see a deity. The conception is gross and material, we reject it, and glory in the apprehension of One who is not a congeries of mind and matter—not the sum of an infinite series of phenomena—not a chaotic tumultuating ocean of self-developments—not a mere physical first cause or regulative law—not a mere *anima mundi*—but a Creative Spirit, separate from all his works, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, and ever present; and who is moreover in the purest and highest sense personal, accessible, and suited to be adored, loved and eternally enjoyed; yea, *this God is our God for ever and ever!*

The contemplation of the whole subject is fitted to inspire a holy caution in every Christian inquirer. From the awful ruins of philosophic speculation in age after age the cry reaches us, *Noli altum sapere, sed time.* In those things which concern the divine nature and the infinite glories of the unseen world, God has made a positive revelation of so much as concerns us; to renounce this authority, and pretend discovery on the same points, is not merely futile and delusive, but irreligious. But, through the pride of human reason, it is this very experiment which has been repeated in every age, and always with the same results. The profane speculation of Christians is of course vastly more culpable than that of the heathen; yet even of the latter, we know that they are without excuse. Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise they became fools. It is as true now as in the days of the Temanite, that God taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and that the counsel of the froward is carried headlong. The analogy is striking between the modern atheistic metaphysics and the ‘philosophy and vain deceit,’ whereby some were ‘spoiled’ in apostolic times; and we should be happy to believe that young ministers of our day needed no cautions against profane and vain babblings, and the oppositions of counterfeit philosophy, ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως.