

*L'Amour, par J. Michelet. Deuxième édition. Paris, Hachette et Cie., 1859, 8vo., pp. 416. Droit de traduction réservé.*

*Love, by M. Michelet.*

M. Michelet, the profound historian, the philosophic analyst of character whose ruthless hand formerly lifted the veil from the "priests, women, and families" of Catholic France, has recently found it more prudent, if not more agreeable, to write on subjects which cannot bear a political or theological interpretation, and which are not calculated to bring down upon him the weight of the temporal arm which has so nearly crushed Montalembert, or the animosity of that spiritual rancour, of which he has himself experienced the full bitterness. He has recently issued two books, one on Birds, the other on Women. The one under our present notice is a moral and physiological treatise upon that relation of the sexes which is the foundation of society. It is a strange work; thoroughly French; had it been written originally in English, we doubt whether the elevation of its sentiment and the purity of its morality would so far have atoned for the indelicacies of its revelations, as to have saved it from the operation of Lord Campbell's Act. He will be a bold man who dares faithfully and without reserve, even to translate some parts of it, for instance, the chapter on "*La bonne Circé qui administre et gouverne le régime et le plaisir*"; and yet M. Michelet is the first Frenchman who, in modern times at least, has treated this subject in a manner at all worthy of its real dignity, or its vast importance upon the temporal well-being of mankind. Balzac, in his "*Physiologie du Mariage*," has dragged it through the mud of French morals, in cynical unbelief in any human goodness; while Henri Bayle, in his work bearing the same title as that of M. Michelet, has fluttered wittily and playfully around the subject; now parading it in a harlequinade of Italian passion; now condensing the ethereal essence into what he calls the *crystallization* of sentiment. His work is clever, amusing, and trivial. But M. Michelet is a philosopher and a moralist, and he, at least, is terribly in earnest. Its complete title, he says, ought to be, "the enfranchisement of the moral powers through the instrumentality of true love." "The ties of family are founded upon love, and society is

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founded upon the family. Love then, precedes all. As the morals are, such will be the city; and liberty will remain but a word with those who practice the morals of the slave." It is indeed, on behalf of man's temporal welfare alone that M. Michelet raises his hand to tear away the disguises of false modesty, and in his eagerness, perhaps, some of the decent coverings of that which is true. The work does not aspire to that high view which makes it the elevated theme of devout eloquence in Jeremy Taylor's *Sermon on the Ring*.\* Still, such as it is, and with all its limitations and defects, it is calculated to make men think seriously and truthfully on matters which men jest upon in public, and allow themselves to be influenced upon in private, by accident, or caprice, or petty interests, as if it were the last and the most trifling, and not the first and weightiest element of their worldly happiness and welfare.

One of M. Michelet's main objects in writing this book, is to advocate marriage at a time when it is becoming a matter of hazardous speculation to those who consider themselves enlightened and civilised in the ways of modern city life. It is a development of those ideas which were recently expressed in leaders and letters in the *Times* newspaper on the social evil, the life of polygamous celibacy, which the luxurious club system promotes. To our readers, who are fully aware, from personal knowledge and statistics, that celibacy is one of the most potent predisposing causes of insanity, a philosophical work which cuts at the root of that selfishness and egotistic cowardice upon which modern celibacy depends, must necessarily be rife with interest. M. Michelet connects the diminution of marriages with suicide, which may be taken as an index of mental disease in a people.

"The terrible irrefragible official figures which I sometimes receive, seem to sound a funeral knell in my ear, and to announce that the race itself, the physical basis of the people, is compromised—thus, the young men, incapable of military service from being dwarfish, hump-backed, or lame, in the seven years from 1831 to 1837, were only 460,000; in the seven following years, their number was 41,000 more. Marriages

\*"Marriage is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities and churches, and even heaven itself. Celibate, like the fly in the heart of an apple, lives in perpetual sweetness, but sits alone, and is confined and dies in singularity; but marriage, like the useful bee, builds a house and gathers sweetness from every flower, labours and unites into societies and republics, and sends out colonies and feeds the world with delicacies, and obeys their king and keeps order, and exercises many virtues and promotes the interests of mankind, and is that state of good things to which God hath designed the present constitution of the world."—*Jeremy Taylor*.

have been diminishing, and in certain years in a manner quite frightful. In 1851, they were 9,000 less than in the year preceding; in 1852, they were 7,000 less than in 1851, that is to say, 16,000 less than in 1850. The official statistics of 1856 demonstrate that the population diminishes or rests stationary. Marriages yet occur among widowers, but no longer among widows. Add to this the enormous number of women who have committed suicide, or have died of misery. Contemplate the Morgue, and the annals of legal medicine."—p. 386.

Marriage, founded and sustained upon honest love, is Michelet's remedy for this terrible disease of this great people; he sees the cure and the deliverance in an alteration of morals, which shall rescue the young men from the empty and selfish pleasures of the day. He describes a young man rushing into his study and interrupting his labour.

"Monsieur, says he, excuse my strange entrance, but you will not be angry at its cause. The proprietors of certain cafés, and of certain other houses of entertainment, and of certain dancing gardens, complain of your teaching. Their establishments, they say, are a losing affair; the young people acquire a mania for serious conversation, and forget their old habits; in fact, they love after a different fashion. The balls are likely to close; all those who have hitherto gained by amusing the schools, believe themselves menaced by a moral revolution, which, doubtless, will ruin them. I press his hand, saying, if this which you announce should realise itself, it will indeed be to me a triumph and a victory. I wish no other success. On the day when our young men assume serious morals, liberty is saved. That such a result may arrive, and by my teaching, I should hold to be the crown of my life, to place on my tomb. The young man left, and when alone I said, sooner or later I will make them a gift; I will write for them the book of enfranchisement from servile morals, the book of true love."—Introduction, xxix.

As M. Michelet states that every fact asserted in his work, however disguised it may be under poetical or theoretical colouring, is, nevertheless, a fact which has been verified by his own knowledge, we must take this singular incident to be the origin and purpose of this remarkable book. He had long been, he says, a sort of philosophic Father Confessor to the young men of France, and their confiding and transparent souls had revealed many things unto him. He was thus furnished with a great part of that "immense treasure of facts out of which this book was gradually developed."

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“But nothing has been of more service to me than the friendship of those to whom everything is told, that is, of medical men. Of these, I have known intimately many of the most illustrious of the age. I have been for ten years more than the friend, almost more than the brother, of an eminent physiologist, who preserved amidst natural science, an exquisite moral sense. I have learnt much from him on many subjects, but most especially about love. One thing struck me in this man, infinitely ingenious and refined as he was, the calculated perfection of his domestic life. He had a wife ugly but graceful, ignorant but charming; he had found means to associate her in all his ideas, researches, and discoveries; he laboured at them at her side by the hearth, without display of instruments of the laboratory, inventing simple and commodious apparatus, that he might pursue in his room researches frequently complicated, which carried out on a large scale would have kept him away from home, removed him from her, and broken this permanent union of soul. A great trial came upon him. This lady, from an accidental disease incidental to her sex, became insane and delirious for a year or two. He kept her near to him, and continued his labours in the midst of this cruel distraction and interruption. Her insanity was of a gentle type, but she talked much, she dreamed awake, she had groundless fears, she mixed eccentric expressions in all her conversation, and it was with difficulty that one could follow the thread of her thought. But the patience of her husband never failed. One day I expressed my admiration of it. He said, “In a lunatic asylum, where they would have treated her with severity, where they would not have endured her little pranks, she would have become wholly insane, and would never have recovered; but treated well, not being frightened or exasperated, seeing only friendly faces, hearing only considerate and reasonable words, she will in the end be cured without any other remedy.” This, in fact, took place. I do not believe that one can cite a more remarkable example of affection. Young men, in their first warmth for a young and beautiful mistress who brings to them roses only, think themselves very much in love, “they will give their life for her.” I don’t know. Life indeed is often an easy thing to give, but the persevering sweetness of a patience beyond proof, which for years submits to the punishment of interruption; the calm force which ceaselessly rectifies, reassures, and strengthens a poor, erring, diseased soul, possessed by her bad dreams, this perhaps is the grandest and

the strongest proof of love. That which especially surprised me, was the obedience which he obtained from her in things which she could not comprehend, the result of that complete communion, that perfect moral envelopment in which she had lived up to that time. With a body greatly altered, with faltering mind, some things remained in her and survived all, the union and the desire to comply ; in a word, love."

"I am of opinion from this and other analogous facts that, between the world of fatality where physiologists dwell, and the world more or less free where moralists dwell, there is a mixed sphere, which I venture to call *voluntary fatality*, that is to say, one of habitudes willed and free at first, but which through love become a happy fatality and a second nature.

Marriage, according to M. Michelet, is the mutual deliverance both of the man and of the woman from the greatest evils and miseries of life : of the woman from the physical fatality where she is held by nature, and from the weaknesses, miseries, and troubles which she experiences in a state of isolation ; of man from the "servitude of baseness," the happiness of the hearth preventing him from seeking degrading love under the smoky lamps of the ball room, and other scenes of moral degradation ; from the "servitude of weakness," since it leads him "to forget the sad companionship of that young old man, fat, pale, polished, who laughs at women." "True love will protect and concentrate his force from the servitude of sadness ; he who is strong to do man's work, leaving a loved one at home when he goes to his work, he alone is always gay and light of heart."

"Marriage delivers man, secondly, from the servitude of gold ; receive from me this exact rule of social arithmetic, *two persons expend less than one*. I see many bachelors who remain such from the fear of the expenses of marriage, but who themselves spend infinitely more. They live at great cost at cafés and restaurateurs, and at the theatre. Havannah cigars, smoked all day long, are to them a large source of expense ; but why smoke ? "To forget, say they." Nothing is more sad ; one is not bound always to forget — woe to him that forgets evil things, for he seeks no remedies. The man, the citizen who forgets, loses both himself and his country. Behold the gain of having at one's hearth one who is sure and loving, one with whom you are able to bear suffering ; she will prevent you from forgetting, from dreaming. You must suffer, and love, and think, it is the true life of man. One speaks of man living in celibacy, but who does so ? In vain I have sought for this mythi-

cal being. I see all the world married, by temporary, secret, and disgraceful unions, it is true; some for three months, some for eight days, some for a minute—marriages which are the misery of the woman and are not paid for less dearly by the man. The whale consumes less than the Dame aux Camelias.”

We must, with reluctance, leave the noble language in which M. Michelet conveys his moral exhortation and virtuous argument, and address ourselves to the more physiological and psychological portions of the book, with which we are sorry that we must find great fault.

Upon the base of modern discoveries in Ovology he founds the dictum of his theory, that the woman is a diseased person, at least, that “fifteen or twenty days out of twenty-eight, that is, almost always, the woman is not only a diseased person, but a wounded one”; that is, M. Michelet contemplates the natural changes which take place in the ovarium as a constantly recurring wound, the source of physical and moral morbidity, an excuse for all weakness and irritation of mind and of body, and a constant appeal to the patience and support of her stronger partner. This certainly is not quite true. God has not cast one half of the human race in so frail a mould; and although the idea is perhaps less repulsive than that which produces the epicine women of America with their bloomers and their medical doctors, it is one which will be vehemently repudiated by the ladies, and will certainly not be captivating to the great majority of men; in fact, it is a hobby notion of M. Michelet’s which he has ridden very hard and into a great deal of dirt. Allied to this theory, and to the existing state of morals to which he applies it, is the author’s assertion that the characteristic type of disease now prevalent is uterine. He looks at the nosology of modern populations through the coloured glass of his theory, and of his special experience. Perhaps we do the same when we assert that the prevailing type of disease is not that which the author asserts, but that it is essentially that of nervous disturbance both in the man and the woman. “Each age is characterised by its great disease: in the thirteenth century it was leprosy, in the fourteenth it was the black death, in the fifteenth it was syphilis, the nineteenth is affected at both poles of the nervous life, in the idea and in love; in man the brain becomes enervated, vacillating, paralytic; in the woman the womb becomes painfully ulcerated. The age may be called the age of maladies of the



womb; or in other terms, of the misery, desertion, and despair of the woman."

"The punishment is this, that the suffering woman can only produce from her anguish-wrung breast, an infant who is also diseased, who, if he live, will constantly crave for that fatal support against native want of nervous power, which is to be found in alcoholic and narcotic stimulus. If the wretchedness should happen that such a man is reproductive, he will have by a woman more suffering, an infant yet more enervated. May death rather, be the remedy and the radical cure."

Not very consistent this, if true, with the aim of the book to encourage marriage; for if those who are tainted with the prevalent disease of the age may not marry, how many are there in whom the reproduction of a degenerated race would be a prudent, not to say a patriotic undertaking. There is a passage at pp. 152, 3, in which the author ("blushing while he writes," but asserting it to be true, nevertheless,) complains of the influence of the contrary state of health in the parents upon the organization of children; it presents a singular instance of M. Michelet's tendency to exaggerate an idea, and of the manner in which he throws down ideas, inconsistent with each other, without any attempt to reconcile them.

There is truth, but exaggerated truth, in the chapter upon, "pregnancy and state of grace," which expresses the opinion that in this condition all women are subject to that moral perversion which leads to theft, too often not of that poetic kind which the author describes, of flowers and fruit, but to shoplifting acts of larceny, which are apt to terminate in very unpoetical investigations. Addressing the pregnant lady whom her husband indulges to the top of her bent, the author exclaims, "to say the truth, madam, if this man does spoil you, there is no great merit in it, for we should all do the same; not only your friends, but the mere passers by, yea, all men, all creatures, all nature, are of one accord to grant you all favours for the sake of love, to overwhelm you with our good wishes, our benedictions; wherever you go you are at home, take the fruits and the flowers, or anything else that your desire shall indicate, we are charmed at it for it will bring happiness upon us. Do not pass by, come into my house I pray you; deign to steal from me madam; let me, by preference, be the subject of your thefts. There was a certain old custom which permitted a pregnant woman to take three apples or three pears, it is too little, confer a

favour upon me, and take my whole garden; "But awkward as I am, what have I said? I have spoilt all. She enters, and is abashed, wishes for nothing, and turns away; her charming little pout expressing, one must take no notice. I am distressed, for she hears me no more, for she passes by blushing and looking down. She wishes to do the thing by stealth" !!!

Is this bitter sarcasm? Alas, no. It is an exceptional truth, developed by a poetic mind into an unshaded humiliating principle. A few women with weak and ill regulated minds at the best of times, have kleptomaniac tendencies when they are pregnant. M. Michelet develops the vice-disease, into a charming trait of universal womanhood. Well may he wish to have a permanent medical jury to sit in aid of all courts of assize; that is, if women are to be tried at all, for any offences committed during their diseased periods; that is, according to the author, during three-fourths of their life. In English law, there are certain provisions for a jury of matrons. A jury of sensible matrons, not given to hysterics or philosophy, would be apt to deal rather harshly with M. Michelet's charming culprit, if she can be a culprit, (*si elle pèchait, chose impossible!*) As for a jury of medical men, if it were well packed, we know by the dire experience of medico-legal trials, that it could be made to condone not only petty larcenies, but acts which to other eyes have the appearance of terrible and deliberate crimes. But we do wrong not to give Mr. Michelet's opinion on this important point as nearly as possible in his own words.

"*Is a woman responsible?* Without doubt she is a person, but a person *diseased*, or to speak more exactly, a person *wounded* every month, who suffers almost constantly from the wound and its cicatrization. Examine what the ovology of Baër, Négrier, Pouchet, and Coste has admirably established on this point, from 1827 to 1847."

"When the law concerns itself with a person in a state of disease, in order to be just, it ought constantly to make allowance, in every punishable act, for this attenuating circumstance. To impose the same penalties on a diseased person as on a person in sound health, (that is to say on a man) is not equality of justice, but inequality and injustice."

"I have no doubt that the law will be modified. But the first modification ought to take place in jurisprudence and practical law. Our magistrates should feel, that in order to punish that which there is of *liberty* in the acts of a woman



it is necessary to take into account the portion of *fatality* which disease infuses into them. The assistance of a *permanent medical jury* is indispensable to the tribunals. I have elsewhere established that the penalty of death is absolutely inapplicable to women. But there is scarcely an article of the code which one can apply to them without modification, especially when they are pregnant. A woman takes something. What can you do? She had for it an insurmountable longing (*envie*). Dare you arrest her? You will injure her. Dare you imprison her? You will kill her. "Property is sacred." I know it well, because it is the fruit of work. But here is higher work which one must respect, and the fruit which she bears in her bosom is the property of the human race. Remark, that in order to regain your property, which perhaps is worth twopence, you run the risk of committing two assassinations! For my part when the object is trifling, I should wish that she might be permitted, with good grace, to steal it, and that arrest should be abstained from. The ancient German laws expressly gave to her (the pregnant woman) the power of taking certain fruits. To these humane reflections, is properly connected that which I have before said respecting the union of the two branches of science, *the science of justice, and the science of nature*. The want which is most felt in them is, the appreciation of their relation to each other. In many points they are one. It is necessary that justice should become medicine, (*Il faut que la justice devienne une médecine*), enlightening herself in the physiological sciences, appreciating the part of fatality which mingles in our free acts, that she may not wish to punish merely, but to cure. It is necessary that medicine should become justice and morality. That is to say, that the physician, intelligent judge of the inner life, should enter into the examination of moral causes which bring on physical evil, should dare to go to their source, there to reform the habitudes from whence diseases proceed. There is no disease which does not spring from the entire life. All medication is blind which is not based upon an absolute knowledge and complete confession of the individual diseased."—p. 393.

"A wise magistrate will allow, that in all causes in which women are concerned, and even in many others, in order that the real degree of free will and of fatality may be elucidated, the tribunals have need of the permanent assistance of a *medical jury*. To call by chance upon an expert, on account of some one material circumstance, is of little

moment. One ought always to aim point blank at the capital and most obscure question of the degree of free will.

"For this, the utmost assistance of the physiological sciences is needed. When the physician has pronounced how much of physical, of material, and of inevitable has been in the act, the judge may commence his work on the conscience and culpability, on the rectification and correction of the soul, on its medication by penitence, and its amelioration."

"In the middle ages, when all science was theological, the magistrate took care to have by his side the clerical judge, (*juge clerc*) that is to say, the learned judge, to enlighten his conscience. At the present day, we do not doubt that our tribunals will more and more desire to have at hand the light of science, which will shew to them a good half of things. By the physician, I mean the physiologist, who without pretending to exert too much influence, will, nevertheless, assist greatly, and will often be able to give to the judge a clue by which he will be able to penetrate the dark question of the will."—p. 246.

It would have been more satisfactory if the learned author had afforded some indications of the mode by which the doctrines of fate and free will may be decided, so as to apportion to any specific act the amount of culpability due to the one, and of irresponsibility due to the other. It cannot be laid to the charge of modern tribunals, that they refuse the aid of science, when the latter is definite and tangible. The science of the microscopist and the analytical chemist is eagerly sought; the science of physiology also, when it is of an unequivocal nature, as on the nature of injuries, the many questions connected with embryology and parturition, has a place of honor in courts of law. But that *mélange* of metaphysics and physiology which M. Michelet would dignify with the name of science, has hitherto gained for itself little respect, either in courts of law or elsewhere. In fact it is not science, but speculation; and it is not speculation or guesses at possible truth, but known truth however narrow, of which the magistrate needs the help in the just administration of the law, in the estimation of culpability and distribution of punishment.

The author's estimation of the medical profession is certainly very high. Its professors are his best friends, they are a class of men whom he thinks, "without comparison, the most enlightened in France." He would place their representatives on the judgment seat; but he would displace them from the bedside of the parturient woman. He declares that

for her the assistance of a woman alone is desired, and that the very sight of a man is frequently the greatest obstacle to the progress of labour, an obstacle to some women "almost insurmountable, even to death!"

"Remark that in most cases, all assistance consists in looking on with folded arms. If there is a malpresentation, dexterity is needed, but the small hand of a woman, her skill and habit of touching minute objects, is certainly of much more value for this purpose than the great fists of a man. *Quelle main sera assez douce, assez fine de tact et de peau, pour toucher, grand Dieu! la chose la plus delicate, horriblement endolorie par cet exces de tension, les eraillures et déchirures de cet pauvre corps sanglante!!!*

"A woman is best cared for by a woman. Why? Because she is at the same time physician and patient; because she readily comprehends in another the evils which she has herself felt, the trials through which she has herself passed. Physicians are learned in science, but know little of the patient. There are scarcely any of them who have the sensations of a being so refined, so full of mystery, in whom the nervous life is everything."

"Our physicians are a class of men most enlightened; in my opinion the first in France, without comparison. No other class knows so much in general, nor so much on certain subjects. No other class is so gifted with intellect and character. But their rude and masculine education, received in the schools and hospitals, their harsh surgical initiation, one of the glories of the country—all these qualities give rise in them to a great defect for this purpose. They border on causing the extinction of that fine sensibility, which alone is able to perceive, and foresee, and divine, matters relating to the female mystery. The womb of woman, that delicate miracle on which nature has exhausted all her tenderness, who, unless woman herself, can touch it without impiety?"

"The fault does not rest with medical men, who, I believe, will agree with my opinion. It is most owing to the weakness of man (greater than that of woman in these moments) to the husband, whom nothing but the presence of a doctor can reassure at these moments. I have nothing to say against this; although so many illustrious midwives—Boivin, Lachapelle, &c., &c., may well suffice to reassure the husband; although the example of Europe, where they are everywhere preferred, may also prevail over our fears. There is nothing to prevent the medical man from being consulted and assisting with his advice, provided that he does not act himself,

and even that he does not remain too near. His direct intervention is far less adapted to aid, than to paralyse nature."

"The women ought to be heard, and they avow frankly (when one dares press them on so delicate a subject) that their whole force in this act is one of extreme effort, that is to say, the liberty of effort; and that this liberty is null, if a man is in the room. From this it results, that at every moment, hesitations and contradictory movements arise. They will and they will not. They exert and restrain themselves. It may be said that they act wrongly, and that at such a crisis they ought to place themselves at their ease, and forget the superstitions of modesty, the fear of those little miseries by which they are so humiliated. But we ought to take them as they are; and he, who for their safety places them in danger, is without doubt a fool."—p. 176.

Never was more exquisitely illustrated the pointed truth of the saying, that "a nice man is a man of nasty ideas." Even the author's language is indecent in its refinement, and gross in its candour; some of it is unpleasant to translate, even in a medical journal. What then must be said of it, as a book written for the public, which lies on club-room tables; and, in spite of the female delicacy, on which the author sets so much store, has doubtless found its way into thousands of boudoirs; When old Montaigne wrote his dirty essay "On some verses in Virgil," he said, "I am vexed that my essays only serve the ladies for a common moveable, a book to lie on the parlour window; this chapter shall prefer me to the closet;" and a kindred spirit, old Burton, says, "in their cogitations they are all out as bad or worse than others."

"Erubuit, posuitque meum Lucretia librum  
Sed coram Bruto; Brute recede, leget."

Whether the opinion of these old cynics be true or not, sure we are, that if it were possible for any English women of English habits of thought, to read this book through, they would vote its delicacy more indelicate than its coarseness; as George Sand is more indelicate than Fielding, and Byron than Shakespeare. Extremes meet, and this over-refinement of delicacy is thoroughly indelicate. Is there anything in Tom Jones worse than the death-scene of the over-refined heroine in Paul and Virginia, who prefers drowning to the removal of a garment? The French may admire this sort of sentiment, and the American ladies may put trowsers on the legs of their piano fortes, but let us trust that our own dear

countrywomen will long continue to act upon the doctrine, that, "to the pure all things are pure."

As for man-widwifery, it is a painful necessity of the profession; and M. Michelet's objection to it is provably absurd from his own pages. He vastly over-paints the timidity, dependence, and feebleness of women; and yet he would place her in a position where sudden and unexpected demands upon strength and courage are made; under which the nerve of strong men sometimes fails; under which, the inevitable result of such failure is, the deplorable loss of most valuable human life. Is there any operation which a hospital surgeon is called upon to perform, requiring more cool, prompt, and patient courage, than the removal of a placenta from a woman bleeding to death with hour-glass contraction of the womb? It is not true that Europe prefers midwives, and if there are good ones in Paris, let us be sure that they are not women of delicate sensibility and mobile nerve, but strong, brave women, cast in the masculine mould.

If M. Michelet's principles are true, in relation to midwifery practice, they must also be valid to a greater or less extent in medical and surgical practice, for both the physician and the surgeon are frequently placed in circumstances scarcely less offensive to spurious delicacy than those in which a man midwife affords aid to the parturient woman. Must there be female surgeons, for instance, to perform all operations on women, below the girdle; or would M. Michelet allow a male surgeon to touch with his scalpel a female breast? To the impure all things are impure. About the physician indeed, the author has expressed himself. The husband must be the physician to his wife. The author is an antipriest, and therefore it is not surprising that he has discovered the delicacy of French women to be such, that the priest must be banished from the house. But the physician, "his honoured friend," "incomparably the most enlightened man in France," it is hard that he also should be banished; and yet it is so.

"In what are the priest and the physician distinct? I have never been able to comprehend. All medicine is blind, unintelligent, and worthless, if she does not commence by complete confession, by resignation, and reconciliation with the general harmony; who can accomplish this when the question regards a woman? He who already knows her, who is herself; this one alone is her physician born, both for body and soul. These two things in such perfect harmony with each other, are not separable;

may the young man think on it and prepare himself for it. What immense encouragement to moral and physical studies will he find in reflecting that he must be everything to the object of his love?"

"In the future, all education (disburdened from sterile subjects of study) will comprehend some years of medical study. The present state of affairs is ridiculous. Whoever lives, needs in the first place to know what life is, how it is maintained, how it is lost. These studies, moreover, exert so miraculous an influence upon the intelligence, that a man can scarcely be called a man who has paid no attention to them. Even for the purpose of explaining one's sufferings to a physician, so as to make him comprehend them clearly and without mistake, it is necessary that one should be three parts out of four a physician. Most people will tell you it is impossible to care (medically?) for one's self or one's family, which amounts to saying one is incapable of treating those whom one knows best. I rely much more on that which a physician of the south has said to me on the subject, "Never shall my son or my wife be treated by any one except myself; not that some of my *confrères* may not be more skilful than myself, but here I have over them all the immense advantage of knowing thoroughly, root and branch, the subject of treatment. A child sprung from me is myself; the woman, at length transformed into me, is always myself."

"Individuality is constantly progressive; the science of medicine of former times, if ignorant, frequently effected cures, and why? because both diseases and diseased persons, arranged themselves in grand classes. One was able to practice, if I may say so, on *general principles*. The class, and the calling, determining the temperament, indicated beforehand both the disease and the remedy; classes are no more, and so is the science of medicine for classes: she has for her last glory, the illustrious man already named, who cured the debris of the great army."

"All has changed, no man resembles another, everything is special, original, *individual*, very complicated, nothing determined beforehand: in order to seize upon this individuality, great study is required, a long course of observations, an extreme assiduity. The physicians of great towns have not acquired this, and have not the time for it.

"This enigma, *the individual*, is incurable by one who does not know him wholly, from head to foot, piece by piece, as to his present and his past state; incurable by one who is not, as it were, internal to him, who is not another self; the



more you are one with him, the more curative power you have over him."

"But if you have for a long time lived with this person ; if your existence, identical by force of habit and of love, at every moment produces in you phenomena analogous to those which take place in her, so that your functions are a revelation of hers, you are, *bien avant* in this being, with a power to establish that which is her harmony or her discord, actual evil, or the re-establishment of well-being. You are her health, and she is your disease ; cure for her is to re-enter into harmony with you."

"*What is Woman ? Disease,*" says Hypocrates. What is man ? The Physician."

"The most eminent doctor whom you can call in as a stranger, after some questions is more than satisfied ; he knows only the crisis of the disease ; but this is of no account ; he ought to know the life. How much time and patience, and genius also would he find needful to obtain from her a thorough confession ! but would she know how to reply ? Dare she reply ? He would often find it needful to content himself with little. The husband on the contrary knows everything. You laugh ! But I maintain, that even the most dissimulating woman, she who can best conceal certain circumstances, cannot hinder him from, on the whole, knowing her entirely, and for this reason alone, that they cohabit. He has appreciated her by the five senses, in every exterior manifestation. He knows her every change intimately, her months, her days, her hours, her regularities, and her caprices. He foresees her humours and her thoughts, even to her minute desires. Who can have such a terrible detail of knowledge ? He who loves, or who has loved ; and who craving and insatiable has felt and noted all things, everything, even that which she herself has forgotten ; moreover he has exerted wonderful influence upon her by the life led in common, by fruition, impregnation, and the profound metamorphosis which accompanies it, *he has made this woman*. The husband is the father of the wife in this sense, even as much as of the infant. He has made her, and he is able to remake her. At least, if any one is able to do it, it is he."—p. 289.

But a man can scarcely know his wife better than he knows himself, and the proverb says that he who doctors himself has a fool for a patient. Moreover, a husband who knew his wife so intimately would not be likely to know other women at all, for the profound knowledge derived

through the devotedness of love must suppose faithfulness. Now if he knew other women not at all, the very defects and diseases in his wife might appear to him as perfections, or at least as the normal state of affairs, like the wife of Hiero who never noticed that her husband had bad breath, because never having been able to make comparisons, she thought it was common to all men.

There is a half truth in the author's remark, that for the future, medical treatment must be more founded upon a intimate knowledge of the individual, than formerly. It must indeed be so; but to that knowledge must be added the intimate knowledge of other individuals, so that comparisons may be drawn; for knowledge without comparison is sterile. The information, therefore, of M. Michelet's pattern *French* husband, who has accurate knowledge of his wife's secretions, will avail nothing in medical treatment unless he has that power of comparison which the practical experience of the physician can alone give.

But what a picture of married life! The gorge rises at it! Is there to be no reserve; no veil before the infirmities of poor female nature; no decent respect; no sanctuary for womanly shame! no boudoir feeling that,

“ Nil dictu fœdum visuque hæc limina tangat,

Intra quæ *conjug.* Procul hinc, procul inde, *mariti.*”

Let no philosophic pedant, persuade ye, O husbands, to pry with irreverent eyes into the mysteries even of the toilet of your wives, much less into the little failings and *ménagements* of their health. Believe if ye can that they are healthy and wholesome, as they are good and virtuous; or fear the just punishment of mean and prying souls, in the loss of estimation of all ye prize; for sure is the truth of that copy-book maxim, that, familiarity breeds contempt.

Finally, we must confess to great disappointment felt at concluding the perusal of this work. Excellent as is its aim, eloquent its language, elevated the reputation of its author, we feel that its arguments must fail in producing that conviction, without which its pages can do little good, and are capable of doing much harm. It depreciates woman from being the equal and helpmate of man, to being his feeble dependant. It systematically humiliates her as an imperfect diseased being. It imposes upon husbands the task of creating from this morbid material a wife, worthy of love and trust, at such an expense of time and labour, that few men who have the will and the opportunity of devoting their lives to the work, would have the courage to enter upon it,

that is if they believed in M. Michelet. We are far from finding fault with the author's doctrine, that the married life ought to be one of devotion and self-sacrifice. The defect does not lie in this, but in the motive which he assigns. *Why* must the man devote himself to the "intellectual fecundation," "the moral incubation," "the medication of the heart," "the medical treatment of the body" of the woman? To create her and absorb her being into his own for the purposes of moral and physical hygiene! This motive may certainly influence a few *esprits forts*; but for the selfish and unphilosophical many, monogamy, as painted by M. Michelet, would have little attraction in comparison to the lighter cares and responsibilities of single life. Marriage, as painted by M. Michelet, will never tempt the young stags from the mountains of celibacy to be bound in the fetters of woman's weakness and disease.\* Doubtless the teaching of the mere moralist is true so far as it goes, and it may influence exceptional men in whom the selfish passions are strictly subjected to the intellectual convictions, but for the many of all classes a pure life never was and never will be the result of mere moral teaching. In them the passions are stronger than the reason, and with them there is but one motive strong enough to purify life, especially if it is only to be led according to the teaching of our author, at the cost of self-sacrifice. This motive at which M. Michelet has never hinted, is obedience to the law of God. This and this alone can purify morals. This and this alone can make man and woman faithful and just to each other. Without this the fervid eloquence of M. Michelet must fall to the ground, barren and resultless.

J. C. B.

\*"The stags in the Greek epigram, whose knees were clogged with frozen snow upon the mountains, came down to the brooks of the valleys, hoping to thaw their joints with the waters of the stream; but there the frost overtook them and bound them fast in ice, till the young herdsmen took them in their stranger snare. It is the unhappy chance of many men, finding many inconveniences upon the mountains of single life, they descend into the valleys of marriage to refresh their troubles, and there they enter into fetters, and are bound to sorrow by the cords of a man's or woman's peevishness."—*Jeremy Taylor*.