

whose eye is ever on the compass and his hand ever on the wheel, to prevent the ship from striking on a reef, or turning her beam to a heavy sea. You cannot be thinking of the little kindnesses of life, of the slight indications that others are happy or unhappy, that this change would make a house brighter, that that would make it more home-like, if your whole mind is concentrated on the risks which you are running by a great speculative transaction in shares or goods. A mind without oppressive impersonal preoccupations is essential for those personal amenities for which we all look to women. And, therefore, women,—who can, almost always, do more to make others at their ease and happy and gentle than men can,—should, in our opinion, never hide their gifts under a bushel by assuming the blunting and hardening career of a commercial speculator. We say this even of those cases of commercial speculation which are quite legitimate,—the cases where the speculator has an ample capital, does not risk more than he can afford, acts upon scientific calculations and indications of the movements of affairs, and really confers on the community the benefit of equalising prices by raising them when they are too low, and lowering them when they are artificially high. Undoubtedly, there are very few women who could really observe these limits so as to confer a great good on the community, while even those few would necessarily thereby sacrifice a great proportion of their best private influence. But we do not lay so much stress on the rarity of these women, because undoubtedly this is partly because women have had so little discipline in the calculations of risk, and of course they might acquire that discipline in a few generations. We put it on the much stronger ground that if they did acquire that discipline, they would deprive human life of a great deal more than is good than they can ever add to it by doing the heavy and blunting work of the Stock Exchange, or the other Exchanges of the world. You cannot at one and the same time be speculating heavily for a rise, and making the life of a home brighter and purer than it would otherwise be. It takes a great deal of self-command, a great deal of tenacity, a great deal of calculation, a great deal of careful reflection, observation, and strenuousness, to do any speculative business on which the fortunes of your house depend, with judgment and sobriety. All this means the expenditure of a great deal of vitality, and the draining of that vitality from a sphere in which it can be made to contribute vastly to the refinement, the graciousness, the goodness, the sweetness, and the harmony of life. If women are prepared to draw off their life from their own special sphere, and invest it in a hard calculating forethought and an indomitable volition, we can only say that they are prepared to inflict a great misfortune on the world. Let all kinds of life be as free to women as to men. But at least let them exercise their freedom with equal regard to the qualities in which they are strongest, and by which they can contribute most to the refining of human character. We think we may safely say, that amongst these strongest qualities women would not find in one case in a million those which specially suit the possessor of them for a life of sober and reticent speculation, and in that one case in a million would probably find also brighter qualities which must be suppressed, or at least, allowed to rest unused, if the former are to be put to the highest use.

GRATITUDE.

WE have before this remarked on the tendency in the English language, and to some extent in all language, to stamp moral epithets with too distinct an implication of praise or blame, or perhaps we should say rather of blame alone, for the impulse that approves is a much fainter one, and gives its verdict with less emphasis. We want the power of disinterested moral description. We have not a dialect in which to state moral characteristics as facts, without implying a judgment upon them; and it seems impossible to point out many types of character which in their concrete manifestation rouse no particularly strong feeling of revulsion or displeasure, without exaggerating all their evil. How black a shadow, for instance, is cast by our words, when we speak of any one as ungrateful! Hardly any other accusation would be so impossible to soften with explanatory circumstance; it implies the opposite, not the deficiency of good; not human frailty, but diabolic wickedness. Yet, the truth is that, though what we mean by ingratitude is rare—for it implies much more than the absence of gratitude—yet gratitude is so little common, that we hardly

look upon its absence, except when it is lighted up by strong personal feeling, as involving any serious moral offence whatever.

An ungrateful person, as we ordinarily understand the words, is one who is conscious of important obligation, and chooses to disregard it. Such a character, for the experience of most of us, does not exist. We cannot look at the world as it is, and deny that there is such a thing as good consciously received, and requited with evil; but for the world of average humanity, this kind of ingratitude is as though it were not. The ordinary human being remembers benefits, not so definitely as injuries, certainly, but he does remember them, and when occasion offers, if it involves no very great self-sacrifice, he acts upon them. Most of us, probably, would have to ransack our memories, and peer into many a shadowy corner of the past, before we could recall any one of whom we could honestly say that, taking the word in its ordinary acceptation, he had treated us with ingratitude. And the misfortune of the ordinary acceptation of the word lies here,—that seeing ingratitude is not a danger of average human beings in this sense, we are inclined to think it is not a danger in any sense. We relegate gratitude to the world of exceptional achievement and heroic self-sacrifice, so that in the unheroic world where most of us live and die it does not appear, because it is never summoned. But let no one think it is not missed. Because we do not aim at it, we are by no means incapacitated for regretting its absence, though we often mistake the thing we miss, and sometimes exaggerate it. And it would be the double gain from a truer view of this virtue that we should both expect it less and show it more.

We should expect it less, because we should see that it has as its foes not only all the vices, but also some of the virtues. Indolence is the foe to every form of goodness, and, therefore, to this among the rest. Gratefulness—so let us designate the quality we would describe, to distinguish it from that heroic development which has usurped the place of the homelier type—gratefulness implies a good deal more mental exertion than is obvious at first sight, as any one will allow who compares the occasions on which the feeling has been expressed by him with those in which it has failed to find any expression of word or deed. Pride, too, is its enemy,—at least, what we generally mean by the word is so; ideal pride, being fastidious in accepting obligations, and scrupulous in acknowledging them, would rather appear as its ally; but the cheap substitute we put up with in every-day life somehow keeps only the first of these characteristics, and not always even that. And some of the qualities we most admire, we must confess, appear on the same side. It cannot be denied that this must be said of generosity, in a general way; although the fact is one we are slow to admit, mainly because we mistake the impressiveness of exceptions for their frequency. Probably most of us have known more than one person who was both generous and grateful, and the link forged by such a memory seems a thing no experience of its uniqueness can break. There are a few persons who shine both as a giver and receiver, but we shall be more just to ordinary humanity, if we remembered that it is not a small thing to exhibit one-half of what makes up the ideal of human nobility, and that we must never look for more.

After allowing that more than one of the virtues are apt to ally themselves with ingratitude, we must make the same concession for genius, for moral attractiveness, and for enthusiasm. The man of genius is as ungrateful as the child. In the child's case, we are all so prepared for the absence of gratitude, that the word strikes us as altogether inapplicable. Children cannot be grateful, and cannot therefore be ungrateful. Something not altogether unlike this is true of the man of genius,—indeed, it is true of a very much larger class than one we could designate by anything that the world recognises as *genius*. The wealthy, richly-endowed nature keeps habitually the standard of gratitude that we all held when we were four years old; love bestowed is as natural, service is as much a matter of course, merely to draw near one's benefactor is, in the one case as in the other, an ample requital of all service. We cannot say that the external effect is the same; it must always be with a certain shock that we discover that any mature human being keeps the child's recklessness of obligation, whatever reason may urge in defence. But reason has much to urge in this case. "It goes against me to see 'X' take his obligations to you so easily," says some wife, fully conscious of all she could have done for her children with the hun-

dreds that have gone to make life easier for her husband's gifted friend. "You make too much of a little money," says he, but an uneasy feeling is revived by her words, and perhaps does not again slumber. Yet, after all, on which side lies the true obligation? It may be a matter quite indifferent to him that his name will be known to the generations that come after as the friend of "X;" he is not solicitous, perhaps, to be remembered otherwise than in the loving memory of a few survivors, but has not he received more from the poet or the teacher than he has given him? Is not his life more improved by the friendship than that which it has sheltered from penury? This is the question which, whenever he asks himself, he answers with an emphatic affirmative; but it is one of those truths of human relation which seem to depend for their truth on the lips that utter them, and it is always a shock to find that the man of genius himself takes this view of the relation. But indeed, though we speak of genius, we would point out the temptation of a much larger class. Genius is but the summit of that mental elevation of which the lower heights, though unrecognisable from afar, have to those who tread them not a few of the characteristics of genius, and many a name associated with no world-wide resonance rouses memories that could not be surpassed in vividness and significance by any that are enshrined in classic biography and revived by stately monument. Wherever there is this mental wealth, we shall be apt to find a certain poverty in the power of feeling gratitude. The man who is always welcome, who feels his presence a boon, who cannot but be aware that he leaves all society the chillier for his absence, does not associate any services rendered him with self-denial. Was it you who introduced him to this delightful home? He can hardly remember the fact, so many there are who seek his society. Did your painstaking service render possible this brilliant achievement? He feels you fortunate in having had a hand in anything that has seemed to him worth doing. Indeed, there is a great deal of careful, disinterested service, which the person for whose sake it is done would scornfully repudiate, if he supposed that any gratitude was due from him to the worker. Gratitude! Were you working at a noble cause, then, with merely personal objects? An enthusiast is indignant at the possibility of loyalty to himself coming in to eclipse the claim of devotion to his work. He cannot remember how mixed are the springs of most human action, how small a class of motives we can divide into good and bad, how unwise it is to discourage the personal influences that dilute a pure love of a principle or a cause. There is something noble in his ingratitude; but it is not politic, nor rooted in any real depth of moral wisdom.

On the one hand, then, the richly endowed are rarely grateful. On the other hand, we must say the same of the needy, when their whole experience is of need. This is one of the innumerable cases where extremes meet. The recollection is one we need most with regard to outward poverty, and the first warning we should give to a person who was trying to serve the poor would be not only that he must avoid looking for gratitude—that is true of all service, and hardly needs saying, though it needs remembering—but that he must be prepared for ingratitude. Many a noble life would be spared a bitter pang by the knowledge that the worst misfortune of need is its tendency to exclude the power of gratitude for its own mitigation. The discovery cannot be made without a shock. It is not that a man who has given time, and money, and anxious thought to the welfare of his workmen, and finds that at the first stress of difficulty they treat him merely as one belonging to a hostile class, was looking for gratitude: that is never the motive of one who really works for others, but the discovery of ingratitude rouses a question of the whole value of his service,—to what effect has he worked, if his desire to aid be not even believed in? The doubt is not ignoble, though it is mistaken. He is working to create the possibility of that grateful feeling which is a better thing than the outward advantages by which it is gradually developed. And the truth he needs to remember, though it is with regard to outward poverty we have most cause to remember it, is not confined to outward poverty. It is true of all need. The unhappy are ungrateful. Gratitude belongs to the temperate zone of the spirit. It withers alike in the tropic glow of unbroken prosperity and under the icy blast of arctic despair, it can live only where breezes alternate with sunshine, and the heart knows the meaning of a wish fulfilled, as well as of a wish disappointed. It is true that this is, we trust, the condition of the majority of the human race. Still, the minority is important enough to be

constantly borne in mind when we think of gratitude. It is well to remember that the feeling is impossible to a large proportion of those we are tempted to envy, and a still larger proportion of those for whom we feel compassion. The happy and the unhappy, beyond a certain point, *must* be ungrateful.

We have pointed out the alliance of ingratitude with virtue, genius, and the extremes of good and evil fortune, not as an apology for it, but as an attempt to show that it is something against which any of us may be on our guard. Ungrateful, in the sense of seeing a benefit and not requiting it when we have an opportunity of doing so, most of us know that we are not, and we fail, therefore, to be alive to the many small claims for gratefulness that lie half hidden in the intercourse of every day. Human effort is so blind and so feeble, that much energy is given out in efforts at help that have had almost as little result as if they had aimed at filling a neighbour's cup in the dark; his thirst is unsatisfied, but the bottle is empty. It is a part of the general dislocation of aim and attainment that makes up so much human history in this world. The thing to which gratitude is due is aim, and not attainment. The young fail most towards the old,—innocently at first, as we have admitted, but not so innocently, on the whole, that an accurate memory of youth affords a painless review to any one. And then, again, if life continues, the old are apt to fail towards the young, though the ingratitude of age is a much smaller thing than the ingratitude of youth. But it is a more injurious thing. The young need encouragement, and never more than when they try to serve their elders, and it is surprising at such times how little gratitude is supplied by a great deal of love. A child's efforts to serve are often ineffectual and tiresome, but the most precious thing in the world has its roots injured when they are discouraged. And if *gratitude* seem too large and weighty a word for the father's smile and the mother's kiss when the book is found or the footstool put straight, that is exactly the thing we are complaining of. There is a thing that we want every day, that would more than anything else supply sweetness to average life, and we surround it with associations that make us feel it inaccessible, except at some crisis that comes, perhaps, once in a dozen lives. It is as if we treated sugar as our most precious possession, and had to take every meal that was not a feast without it, because to unlock the casket in which we had enclosed it were an effort too great to make more than once or twice in a year. And it should be a strong influence in driving us to make some effort to express thankful feelings in the trifles of every-day life, that the unthankful ones are sure to be expressed. Dissatisfaction, we may say, expresses itself. The natural impulse of human beings is to be silent about what goes right, and put every cause of displeasure into words. As long as servants do their duty carefully and completely, they hear nothing about it, but one detail wrong is a grievance. They should, perhaps, be distinctly told of a failure oftener than they are; but that should not be the only thing they are made aware of, and more often than not it is so. The habit of making a claim on others for sympathy in all our dissatisfaction has not always even the excuse that we are prepared to teach them to set the matter right. How common it is to hear the person for whose pleasure an expedition has been planned point out all the ugly features in the view, not the least in a spirit of ill-humour, but as an exhibition of his critical powers, while he leaves its beauties to be taken for granted! It is curious that it should be so much easier to say "I think that ugly," than "I think that beautiful," but there is no question that it is so. We all feel it cleverer, it is hard to say why, to discover flaws than merits, and with no tendency towards grumbling or complaint, the most natural form of remark will generally be found to be depreciatory. Perhaps that does not express the speaker's whole feeling, but it is the part of it that is easiest to put into words.

There is one reason why gratefulness should be made a conscious effort which may strike some persons as far-fetched, but seems to us a very real one. It is that Gratitude is the only virtue to which law gives no encouragement whatever. In a general way, we may say that disapproval, beyond a certain point, casts some shadow on the criminal code. When unkindness has gone far enough in the direction of cruelty, or untruthfulness of dishonesty, the legislator takes cognisance of these things; but a moral failing, which rouses more indignation than either, lies, even in its most heartless and revolting forms, utterly beyond his province. Ingratitude affords, indeed

the most telling illustration of the truth that the sphere of morals and politics are not conterminous, nor even concentric. Perhaps we might even say, with very little violence to the natural meaning of words, that so far as the law takes cognisance of gratitude at all, its attitude is a disapproving one. All grateful feeling, in the sphere of law or politics, becomes treachery to the State, and while the law interposes to prevent this sense of personal gratification being a basis of the relation between a constituency and its representative, it does not interpose to punish the offence against grateful feeling which the social code most disapproves. And if the law cannot urge us towards gratitude, neither can the person to whom gratitude is due. All high motives preclude such a claim, and a good many that are not particularly high. Pride comes in to aid humility here, as so often elsewhere; and good taste and a sense of the absurd are more effective, it is to be feared, than a true magnanimity. A quality that is so large an ingredient in the pleasantness of life, and is at so many disadvantages, should be cultivated by all the aid that can be given by education. And there is hardly any other in the cultivation of which parents might feel that they did so much for the happiness of their children. An average life to a thankful disposition becomes a happy life, for gratitude is one of the most delightful emotions the heart can entertain, and there is no life in which there is not some cause for it. And there are not many emotions more painful than the recollection of ingratitude, as most persons will acknowledge who have a clear recollection of their own youth. Perhaps we are not always just to ourselves, as we look back. It may be that if we could call back the teacher or parent from his far-off home, we should find that the acknowledgment, so faint and inadequate in our memory, had left on his an impression even of humorous exaggeration. But not even that contradiction, if it were possible, would assuage the pain of some memories of the patient kindness and wisdom poured lavishly on our youth, and recognised only in our age. Let us endeavour so to train our children that the pain shall come to them more lightly; in some degree and some form, we cannot save them from it, for it is the heritage of humanity.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE POLITICAL SCHOOLMASTER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—As a general rule, the Masters of our great Public Schools have, I think wisely, abstained from mixing themselves up with party politics. I doubt whether the departure from this salutary rule which I observe chronicled in the *Harrow Gazette* of last Saturday will afford satisfaction to any considerable body of Harrovians, whatever may be their political creed. It appears that on the 15th inst. a meeting of the Harrow Conservative Association was held at the Public Hall. The chair was taken by Mr. Cecil F. Holmes, an Assistant-Master in the School, and a J.P. for the county of Middlesex. The chairman commenced the proceedings by saying that the object of such meetings as the present was to give sound information to the working-men of Harrow on the leading political topics of the day, and after commenting, in the customary Tory style, upon some of those topics, he proceeded to deal with a speech delivered some days previously by the President of the Harrow Liberal Union, as follows:—

"He would now expose what the President called an instance of Tory misrepresentation, viz., that the 'Government were entering into contract with atheists and assassins,' which was the fact. Had not Mr. Gladstone given every sort of moral support to Mr. Bradlaugh, even to leaving the House sooner than to vote for his expulsion; and as to assassins—thanks to Mr. Forster—the infamous Kilmainham Treaty had been at last brought to light, by which Mr. Gladstone made terms, notably with one Sheridan, whom he knew was steeped to the lips in murder. . . . And how was this so-called 'misrepresentation' received by the Liberal Union, involving as it did such grave matter?—with laughter. 'Had the Liberal Union forgotten,' the chairman continued, 'the agony that Ireland had gone through ever since the Government came into power? Had any class or sex been spared—peer or peasant, farmer or labourer, landlord or tenant? Had not delicate ladies of rank been brought to the verge of starvation and the workhouse? Even dumb animals had been grossly maimed and ill-treated by savages, virtually bounded on by the Government. This was hardly a subject for merriment. For as sure as there was a God in Heaven, the blood of these murdered innocent people lay on the heads of the Government,—let them look to it. . . . The chairman concluded by saying:—The times, ladies and gentlemen, are very serious, and when in the Harrow Chapel I hear the prayer read for the High Court of Parliament, the words seem to fall

with but little meaning on my ears, that the honour and welfare of our Sovereign and her dominions should be maintained, and that 'truth and justice, religion and piety, be established amongst us for all generations.' Could this be said to be the case under the present Government? It, therefore, the more behoved not only every Conservative, but every lover of his country, to be up and doing, and show what good stuff true and loyal Englishmen were really made of."

It is with considerable astonishment that I observe that this language was not only listened to without protest by a General Officer in her Majesty's Service, but that a vote of thanks to the chairman was moved by that gentleman, "in his usual polished and courtly style."—I am, Sir, &c.,

STET FORTUNA DOMUS.

[A schoolmaster is a citizen, and has a right to his opinion. If, as in this case, it is a nonsensical one, that affects his reputation for efficiency, not his rights. Mr. Holmes, however, is fortunate not to live under a Liberal Dr. Hornby.—*Ed. Spectator.*]

THE CLERGY AND TOLERATION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—May I state some of the reasons for which I hold that the present clerical and religious movement to defeat the Affirmation Bill is a serious mistake, likely, for a short season at least, to injure the cause of religion, and frustrate the intentions of those who take a part in it? It should not be necessary to say that civil or political disabilities consequent on the maintenance of religious or irreligious errors are entirely out of date. A man is plainly responsible for his faith or his unfaith to God and his own conscience, but in no sense to the State or general community. I do not deny that virulent and offensive blasphemy against the religion of the vast majority of the nation may be carried to such lengths as to call for repression, as a public scandal, injurious to morals, or incentive to breaches of the peace. But we shall all feel that State interference and judicial punishment are only possible in the most extreme cases. Any attempt to close the lips of assailants of existing institutions is not only incompatible with liberty of speech and action, but defeats its own end, by leaving an impression, on all un instructed minds at least, that the cause of order is unable to defend itself, and therefore calls the arm of physical force to its assistance.

There are two conceivable theories of a Christian State,—one the absolute, that that citizen only is entitled to political rights who shares the faith recognised by the State, or that of the established religion of the country; and what I may call the relative theory, which, while it confirms the Church, in the possession of her own, and recognises religion, yet grants full civil and political rights to all citizens alike. The latter theory is the only tenable one in modern Europe, and it is that on which we act. Therefore did we abolish the Test and Corporation Acts, and so admitted Nonconformists to all State privileges; therefore did we emancipate, and that most wisely and necessarily, the Roman Catholic and the Jew; and I am at a loss to conceive on what ground we can refuse the same simple justice to the avowed Agnostic. Should we refuse the services of a great Admiral or General in the hour of national danger, because he had the misfortune (as we consider it) to be an Agnostic?

Mr. Bradlaugh sees that he cannot prove a negative, cannot reasonably maintain that there is no God. He can only avouch, and does so, that the existence of God is not proved to his mind, and he further openly rejects the Christian revelation. So do other Members of either House whom we could all name, yet they accept the Oath of Allegiance as a decent formula. They are willing to affirm their loyalty, or their submission to the Powers that be, in the name or in the presence of what is to them avowedly an abstraction. Can Churchmen or any Christians think that we can advance the interests of the Christian revelation, or promote the honour of our God, by enforcing an indefinite formula? The Positivist is perfectly willing to accept it, telling us plainly that his God is Collective Humanity. Another may say that his God is *Anima Mundi*, or the Principle of Life. Nobody proposes to enforce an orthodox construction of the word. Are not men fighting, then, for a shadow? Would it not be far more becoming for the Positivist and the Agnostic also to make a simple declaration, since, as a matter of fact and necessity, we are willing to admit, and do admit, both Positivists and Agnostics to the Houses of Legislature?

But, it is argued, Mr. Bradlaugh is personally offensive, on account of the character of his attacks on revealed religion and