

in name at least the object of each Synod, when it has to elect a Bishop will be to find out the best man in the diocese. That is not a search which a representative is calculated to prosecute with much success. Now and again, no doubt, the experiment answers, and some man of exceptional eminence is recognised as having an absolute and unchallenged superiority. But these are rare instances; more often, mediocrity is the essential condition, and personal popularity, arising from qualities which have nothing to do with Episcopal excellence, the determining consideration. The danger which awaits the Bishops of the Disestablished Irish Church is a kind of earnest of the danger which awaits the Church itself. To be the Church of respectable dullness, leaving the realities of religion to the Roman Catholics on the one hand, and to the Presbyterians on the other, is a destiny in which there is nothing to envy.

#### THE RELATION OF MEMORY TO WILL.

**A**MID all the varied general interest of the great *cause célèbre* of our day—the Tichborne Trial—perhaps the most distinct and important was the light thrown by it on people's different ideas of what it was possible to remember and to forget. When the trial was under general discussion, the contrast, or possibly the resemblance, between the powers of oblivion demanded for the Claimant, and those which A and B were conscious of possessing, were matters of frequent mention, and most of us gained some knowledge of the different distance to which the past recedes in different lives. Hardly any knowledge can be more interesting or more fruitful, whether we consider its bearing on the moral atmosphere of the persons thus differently affected, or on the suggestion so expressively conveyed in the German name for memory,—*Erinnerung* (the inward faculty). Plutarch, in an attempt to vindicate the possible knowledge of the future, by showing the mysterious element in our knowledge of the past, calls memory “the sight of the things that are invisible, and the hearing of the things that are silent;” and a thinker, whose great metaphysical achievement was almost avowedly the obliteration from our mental inventory of all those powers which are supposed to deal with the invisible, recalls this description, in his confession that the analysis which reduced every other source of apparently ultimate knowledge to a trick of association was checked when we came to that within us which bore witness to a real past; and the concession that in this case we do know what we cannot prove, seems to us a pregnant one. How we know that these dim pictures on our walls—at once faint and indelible—are the work of another artist than imagination, must, J. S. Mill allows, be a question as vain as how we know that the things around us are real. But it is under its personal aspect that we would speak of memory to-day.

Apart from some such test as the Tichborne Trial, we are curiously ignorant of the different aspects of the past to different minds. One would have expected, perhaps, that we should discern any idiosyncrasy in this region clearly enough. A good memory may be avowed without vanity, and a bad one confessed without shame, while the exigencies of practical life are continually confuting or confirming the claim or the confession. But as for the test at all events, and we suspect as to the self-revelation, it belongs exclusively to the recent past, and concerns rather what we should call the materials for memory than memory. A man would say he had a bad memory if he forgot to call for an important letter at the post-office, but there is nothing in such a fact as this to throw any light on his relation to the past. While he is chafing at his forgetfulness, the words—even the insignificant words—of those who have been for more than a generation unseen among men, may be distinct in his inward ear; he may see the flower-beds whence he plucked nosegays with tiny fingers, and feel again the push of a door that taxed his childish strength, on the threshold of a house whose very bricks and mortar have long since been mingled with the dust. And on the other hand, the most unique and one of the longest lives we ever knew—the life richest in material of the knowledge that would have found an eager listener—was obscured by the profusion of detail in the near past; far off, moved figures known to the historian, but close at hand there were so many of the doings and arrangements of contemporaries, remembered with a really surprising accuracy, that a glimpse at the giants who moved on our sphere when the century was young was hardly discernible through the cobwebs. Of this memory for the distant, we may almost say, in the exaggeration permissible to any short utterance on such a subject, that it differs, with different persons, as a window by day differs from a window

by night. To some persons, hardly anything within the room is so distinct as its prospect. Those far-off hills, that winding road, that distant indication of busy life attracts their eye from open book, or pressing letter, or picture of some far fairer scene within. To others, the past is much what the outlook becomes when the candles are lit. A hasty glance in that direction reveals nothing but the reflection of the observer on the window-pane, and if he opens the window, and makes an effort to look out, still nothing is visible but the dim outline of things close at hand. Yet it is likely enough that for all practical exigencies one of the last class may have a good memory, and one of the first a bad one.

In this region our very silence is misleading. We are silent about what we have forgotten. We are silent also about what we remember most profoundly. “Rien ne se ressemble comme le néant et la profondeur.” We are apt to make mistakes both ways. Sometimes we take the silence of oblivion for the silence of profound and overpowering recollection, sometimes our mistake is in the opposite direction; and it is impossible to say which error is the commonest, for the one occurs when the deep mind judges the shallow, and the other when the shallow mind judges the deep. At all events, this misconception is one of the many causes which hide from us the meaning of memory in one mind and in another, and thus curtain off from us the moral background of every life.

We could be far more nearly just to each other, if we realised that with some persons the past years remain, and with others they depart. Take, for instance, the new light thus thrown on the sin of which, perhaps, we can least bear to believe ourselves guilty. Ingratitude, in the sense of an opportunity deliberately neglected to repay a great benefit, we should hope was a crime as rare as it is repulsive, but in the sense of a half-voluntary oblivion of small benefits, of the importance of which it is possible to take very different views, we do not think it is at all uncommon. Now look at it in the light of this intellectual difference between man and man. You are surprised that So-and-so shows no recollection of the kindly dealings which, having happened at a time when he was nobody, and you were somebody, surely deserved to be remembered. No intellectual explanation can exonerate one who has forgotten a kindness; still it makes a great difference, surely, if the ungrateful person has forgotten everything else that happened at the same time, wrongs to himself included. To him, the long-ago means something it is an effort to see. To you, it may mean something it is an effort not to see. You, perhaps, are imagining him to see these past actions of yours, and choose to ignore them, while it needs as great an effort on his part to recall them (to return to our first figure) as to look out from a lighted room. And his loss is not pure loss. His short memory may improve his relations with his fellow-men as often as it injures them;—indeed, men and women being what they are, it is to be feared rather more often. A generous person dismisses the slight of yesterday to oblivion and recalls the kindnesses that enriched his far-off youth, whatever be the medium through which he habitually views the past. But we shall never know the difficulty in either action without some reference to this medium, and by the same principle, we cannot, without such a reference to it, rightly judge him who forgets what he ought to remember, or who remembers what he ought to forget.

Nevertheless, the “ought” remains. The very illustrations which bring home to us the difficulty of discarding or retaining the past, impress on us also its aspect as a part of duty, and while we shall best understand other lives by realising its difficulty, it is a constant sense of its possibility which we need in order to mould our own. That any one ought to remember, indeed, and that recollection therefore is, to some extent, a matter of will, we admit every time we blame a child or a servant for forgetting a message, whatever difficulty we may find in carrying out our own view consistently. But can we say that the possibility of remembering at will involves the possibility of forgetting at will? Because we may make a successful effort to resist sleep, does it follow that we may make a successful effort to resist wakefulness? There is a natural fitness in effort to produce recollection, is there not also a natural fitness in effort to prevent oblivion? Does not the very desire to forget, imply that we are doomed vividly and permanently to remember? This question was, in fact, one of the great points of interest in the famous trial to which we have alluded. The possibility of obliterating a painful past from the mind was the plea put forward on the part of the person who had, it was asserted, voluntarily reduced certain parts of his life to a blank. “This possibility,” said the Chief Justice, in that

masterly summing-up, which most of its readers must have wished they had made their exclusive source of knowledge of the history, "will not be confirmed by the experience of most people." How many, indeed, must have wondered that any other suggestion had not been made in preference to one that defied all their most vivid experience,—that any one should forget a part of his youth *because* it was painful. You might as well suggest that a speech had been unheard by him *because* of the loud voice of the speaker. And what is surprising is that, however ardently we may wish that such and such things had not been, it is wonderfully difficult even to *desire* that they should be forgotten. Whilst the past seems a part of oneself, that clinging to life which belongs to our whole being makes itself manifest in the recoil from oblivion, even with regard to what we would so gladly have avoided altogether. Oblivion is near enough; we approach that time, to borrow the fine, though rather confused, image of Locke, when our memory is to resemble the tombs to which we are hastening, in which, though the marble and brass remain, "yet the inscriptions are effaced, and the imagery withers away." We will not go half-way to meet the chill shadow; even pain is less an object of dread than the loss of something that has become a part of our intellectual being.

It is true, there is in the effort to forget, something that seems a sort of intellectual suicide. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which forgetting, we believe, is as much of a duty as remembering. There is such a mental attitude, however difficult it be to describe, and though it be impossible to give it a single name, as turning our back on the past, or on part of the past. Duty has no more despotic claim on any part of our being than on that faculty which surrenders its possessions to oblivion. Doubtless it is impossible to put into words the kind of effort a man makes when he wills to do something which *will*, apparently, has no tendency to achieve. Or rather, perhaps, the effort to move the will is a thing indescribable in words. How can I make myself cease to wish what I do wish?—It must be possible, for it is sometimes the demand of conscience. The past must remain, but we may open the door to something that hides it. The well-known and often repeated condemnation of the Bourbons,—that they had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing, commemorates the general impression, which we believe to be a profoundly true one, that a man must forget in order to remember. There are some things in the history of every man which he must cease to contemplate, in order to see anything else. We remember hearing the biography of one eminent lawyer by another criticised by a third as rendered nugatory by the constant reminder, "I have been very much ill-used by him." The biographer needed to forget one fact about his hero, in order to state clearly anything else about him. The necessity is seen most clearly in the lives of the great, but it is common to them and their humblest fellow-men.

We believe that hardly anything would do more to open springs of sympathy, and close those of bitterness, than the recognition of our responsibility for what we remember. That it should cease to be true that,—

"Each day brings its petty dust,  
Our soon-choked hearts to fill,  
And we forget because we must,  
And not because we will;"

—this, we believe, would bring about such a transformation of the moral nature as would resemble, or rather as would supply, new motives for all strenuous action, new dissuasion from all useless thought. It would be something like choosing from out the whole circle of our acquaintance the wisest and best to be our daily companions, and so occupying our attention with their large and fruitful interests, that all that was small, or futile, or bitter should, under this beneficent encroachment, wither away of itself.

#### PHYSICIANS' FEES.

THE true point at issue in the present controversy between the public and the Physicians seems to us to be missed by both sides. It is not a dispute as to the right to fix prices, but as to the right to fix prices in breach of an implied contract. For more than a hundred and fifty years, the public and the profession have agreed that the proper fee for a patient to give a physician, when asked for advice in his own house, is a guinea, without reference either to the importance of the case or the time demanded for its examination. It is rather a stupid method of payment, effacing, as it does, all distinctions both as to the importance of the relief desired and as to the reputations and engagements of those who listen to the complaints; but still, in

presence of some difficulties not experienced in any other profession, it has been universally accepted as a rough but still quite endurable compromise. If the physician is under-paid in one case he is over-paid in another, and if the patient cannot afford so much, he either says so, an excuse invariably accepted, or he reduces the number of his visits to the furthest extent he can. So firmly seated is the practice indeed, that the majority of country-folks think a guinea fee as much part of the law of Nature as five per cent. for money lent, and hear that the great, who hate trouble, pay only a pound, with a sense of hearing of an impropriety. Of late years, however, the physicians have fancied that this fee of one guinea has become too little. All expenses, they allege, have increased, and so far as expenses incidental to "style" are concerned, that is undoubtedly true. House-rent has increased excessively, and a doctor in full practice now-a-days needs rooms only to be found in houses subject to heavy rents. The cost of carriages has increased still more, and a physician cannot without a carriage cover the necessary ground with the requisite freedom at once from fatigue and from mental disturbance. The cost of living has not increased, but the cost of living as the successful live has; and it is essential to a profession, if it is to attract the ablest young men, that its heads should be, and appear to be, as successful as their rivals in any other profession. Above all, the cost of saving has increased with the fall of interest, until it takes a frugal man of to-day nearly twice as much money to produce an independent income as it did his grandfather. Dr. Brown could have made 7 per cent. in 1700, where Dr. Smith could not in 1878 make a clear 4 per cent. The physicians, feeling all this, perceive also that their chief men are, on the whole, not quite keeping step in success with their competitors in other walks of life. They are hampered by a special difficulty,—the customary social arrangement of time. There are only twenty-four hours in a day for anybody, but if a barrister secures much business, and wishes to make a fortune rapidly, he can lengthen his working day, either by getting up early or by working deep into the night. Many barristers in the full tide of practice rise at four and work almost without intermission sixteen hours a day, thus, in fact, for purposes of accumulation, giving themselves twelve working days a week. The physicians cannot, if ever so industrious, follow this example. If they get up at four, no invalid will come to them; and if they open their doors at night, patients will think that their complaints, in the absence of light, are only half understood. The physicians must make their money between ten and seven, and they contend, upon some good evidence, that the money is not enough. They do not, work for work, make as much as their grandfathers, though of course they have an advantage from the increased number of wealthy patients, and they very seldom succeed in making fortunes. Wild stories are frequently told of physicians' incomes, but we are assured, on sound authority, that they are wholly unfounded, that their incomes are confounded with those of surgeons who often obtain large sums for operations, and that the physicians in London who take £5,000 a year may be counted on the fingers of one hand. At all events, they deliberately think themselves under-paid, and so thinking, have a right to modify their charges, while the method they adopted is a fair and convenient one. We say they have a "right" because, though we fully admit the claim of humanity, popular medical men have, except in a single instance, no monopoly whatever. A first-rate oculist has no doubt a sort of monopoly, because his art demands qualities almost as rare as the qualities of a great poet or sculptor. The number of men who can cut with unerring decision to the thousandth of an inch on a structure like the human eye, and with blindness as the sufferer's penalty in case of error, is exceedingly limited—there are not ten in Europe who are quite certain—and they are therefore under the sort of moral pressure which would attend a man who possessed a fountain of health-giving water; but popular physicians, and even surgeons, are very often not greatly the superiors of their rivals who are not yet popular. Unless they are Specialists, the general practitioner, if tolerably young, is just as efficient as they are, and has time to take more trouble. The rich have as much right to treatment as the poor, and if some physicians find their whole time occupied by patients able to pay two guineas for a first visit, they have a right to ask that fee. The first visit costs them five or six times the time consumed in the second, and is—in all humility be it spoken—very often the only one in which they do serious good. The alternative would have been double fees for precedence in point of time, which would have