

THE STANDARD OF MORALITY.

HUMAN nature everywhere recognises some standard of right and wrong. The saint no more than the savage illustrates this truth. Bishop Butler says truly that whatever the disputes among nations on the question, *wherein virtue consists*, there is in reality a universal standard of it. "It is that," he says, "which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public. It is that which every man you meet puts on the show of. It is that which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth make fit their business and their endeavor to enforce the practice of on mankind; namely, Justice, Veracity and regard to Common Good."

This definition of virtue is more than a hundred years old, and in our country appears to have become nearly obsolete, both as to politics and religion. A very large part of the community do not seem to recognise any standard of morality whatever. A "good citizen" must be male, must have a white skin, morality enough to keep out of state prison and soul sufficient to preserve the body from putrefaction. More is superfluous. Mrs. Stowe somewhere says in substance that young women prefer a streak of the "fast," the "rough," in young men. Probably she is correct. And young men are made to honor villany, drunkenness, debauchery, if combined with talent and success, no matter in what calling not absolutely odious. No wonder they imitate what they honor and elevate to office. No wonder, if young women are willing they should. The pulpit is chargeable with this state of things, no less than the press. Were virtue and righteousness only exalted by professedly virtuous and righteous men, vice could never mount into the high places of honor and power. There are about three million baptized Protestant church-members in the nation. At the poll their vote would be irresistible if always cast only in the direction of justice and righteousness.

The Temperance advocates, in all their various departments, number myriads. What drunkard could ever reel into the presidency over their stern protest. Were they but faithful to their professions, the Church and the Temperance cause would be omnipotence itself against elevating vice or villany, crime or cruelty, injustice or unrighteousness, to any of the seats of power in the government or the church. Sometimes the friends of temperance have proposed to vote for no man to any office who is not pledged openly and as far as known to their principles. But the whip of party leadership, on or before election, catechises them back to "the regular nominations." Robert C. Winthrop said in the Mexican Massacre about Texas, "our country, right or wrong," and the same gospel governs in political partisanship. The political abolitionists at one time elevated their standard so high as that they would not and did not vote for a known apologist for slavery to any civil office whatever. But that scrupulousness did not last long. The Garrisonians predicted that it would not; for when they called on those "Conscience Whigs" and "Independent Democrats" to be consistent and withhold sacramental as well as ballot-box fellowship from the accomplices of man-stealers, they refused indignantly and branded the more faithful and consistent as infidels. And so the world had before it the strange spectacle on Sunday of whig eating sacramental bread with democrat; the democrat drinking communion wine with whig,

and political abolitionists swallowing both whig and democrat with all their slaveholding sins in the holy supper, when on the next day at the ballot-box, each was to both the others an abhorrence and an abomination, and not to be voted for for any political position, sooner than the prince of darkness himself! Thirty years ago this was the virtue of the American church in every important denomination. The Methodists illustrated it in another manner. In several Northern States, "the black laws," as they were termed, prohibited colored testimony in all the courts against white persons charged with any crime or offence, even indecent attacks on colored female chastity, by no means an unusual occurrence. In 1840, the Methodist General Conference resolved:

"That it is inexpedient and unjustifiable for any preacher to permit colored persons to give testimony against white persons in any state where they are denied that privilege by law."

More than eighty thousand Methodist church-members were thus shamelessly proscribed by their own brethren in deference to the ungodly prejudice of the State. They were thus declared unfit to testify even in the church, though presumed to be worthy to sing and shine forever in the courts above.

But it may be said all this belongs to the past. How is it, then, to-day? What higher standard of morality and virtue can the church, or the temperance cause (to say nothing of the outside world) boast? The momentous issue of a next president has been pending for months. The republican party, foiled in its hypocritical impeachment attempt against one drunken president, are determined to put another in his place of similar or worse moral disqualifications, and those unrepented by even the mediocre intellectual ability of the "Great Impeached."

The Philadelphia *Daily News* only echoes the voice of multitudes (of both political parties), residents and visitors at the capital, when it says:

We do not hesitate to assert that at the present time there may be found in Washington a greater amount of depravity and gross villany than could be found by raking out all the penitentiaries in the country. We are ready to substantiate this assertion whenever any of our Radical contemporaries will seriously undertake to controvert what we assert; and we shall prove it by such evidence as will leave no doubt upon the mind of any candid person. It is amongst those who ostensibly represent the people and States of our Union, and the officials acting under their direction, that the most unblushing reproaches in America may be found. Men so debased in mind and morals that they are not ashamed to let the world know that they are guilty of theft, lying, slandering their opponents, resorting to most despicable arts to deceive the people, and taking the most solemn oaths, which are broken almost as soon as uttered.

Is it not an act of gross injustice to punish poor and friendless persons for small crimes, while those who are guilty of the most enormous outrages upon justice and decency are placed in positions of honor and power?

Suppose Andrew Johnson guilty of all the crimes in the calendar. He cannot be punished for the one sole reason, that there is not moral rectitude in the government to deal with a great criminal. The great crime of all, and most deserving impeachment, was *making him vice-president*. When the whole foundation of the government had given way under rebellion and revolution, the party in power selected him, a "poor white," a slaveholding democrat, to be the second officer in the government. A good republican was sacrificed for him, all on the ground of base, blind expediency and availability. And the party that elected him of course cannot punish him; has no right to punish him; dare not punish him. It is conscience

that makes it coward. There is with it "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." And with good reason.

And now availability again selects the candidate. He was, like Gen. Taylor, twenty odd years ago, ready and willing to be taken up by either party. The republicans seized him first and called him their own, lavishing on him gifts of fabulous value, as on a coquetting mistress. He had avowed no principles, had none to avow. Principles were not necessary. Can he be elected? was the question. It was believed that he could be, because both parties thought so. Both parties wanted him, and the republicans snatched him from the hands of the democrats; knowing that unless they nominated him, the democrats surely would. Jefferson's questions, is he honest? is he capable? would have been impertinent. That he was not *honest* was certain, or he could not have coquetted with both parties. That he was not *capable* was at least probable, for he had never expressed an opinion, at a time and in a state of affairs when silence itself was crime, where men like him, highest in popular favor and among the very highest in office and authority, had counsel to give.

And now, blindly and basely, the young men and the old men of the country are expected to elect him not on trust even, but with full knowledge of his utter moral and mental unfitness and unworthiness. Such is the present standard of moral and political sentiment? Senator Wilson says he "never saw him drunk." So once in an ancient court where a criminal was on trial for stealing an axe, two good men swore they saw him take the axe, put it on his shoulder and carry it away; but the other side brought twelve witnesses who swore positively, like Senator Wilson, that they didn't see him do any such thing. The court decided that the oath of only two could not be taken against twelve, and discharged the defendant.

The republicans taunt the democrats with entire want of a candidate; a most ungracious fling truly when the parties had but one available candidate between them, and only by a happy accident did he fall into their hands; and will undoubtedly yet prove to them a traitor. Should he be suddenly taken from them, where would they be, even now?

If the democracy, the true democracy, will only have the grace, or even good sense, to accept the situation, build a platform of modern principles, making *educated but impartial* suffrage its corner-stone, and then nominate Chief-Justice Chase as their candidate, bruise, kill all copperheadism, never speak opprobriously of the colored race again, nor odiously and cruelly proscribe them any more on account of their color, the very stars in their courses would fight for them, and the days of republican misrule would be ended. P. P.

WOMEN FARMERS.

A WESTERN widow, handsome and learned, manages a large farm, and she raised, last year, 1,000 bushels of wheat and 1,200 of corn; has a large stock of hogs, sends fat cattle to the New York market, has abundance of flowers, apples, peas, strawberries, and currants. Keeps up with current literature. Does not want to get married. W. F. C.

Travelling through Kansas, last autumn, we found many women who had carried on their farms and other business in the absence of their husbands during the war, and in many cases paying up debts, and managing far better than the "white males" had before them.