by it. And we aver and we know, concerning our people at large, and that too from some minute knowledge and extensive comparison, that there is not a more honest and virtuous people on earth. We might say more; for there is nothing among our people, to compare with the small, paltry, perpetual deception, knavery and lying that one finds everywhere on the continent of Europe. We might say more then; but thus much at least, will we say; for while on the one hand, we have no taste for flattery, on the other, we will not give up our people to unjust reproach. Conceit may be bad, but discouragement is scarcely less so; to submit passively to opprobrium is to go half-way towards deserving it; and at any rate, what we desire in the case, is absolute truth and justice — no more and no less.

The third grave charge against American morals is fixed upon the system of Slavery.

Let the charge be precisely stated. It is not that we now import slaves, or suffer them to be imported. We have declared the trade to be piracy; and were the first nation in the world to do so. The charge is, that a body of the unfortunate African race formerly introduced into this country, and which has come by inheritance into the hands of the present generation, is still held in bondage. It is an involuntary possession. It was not sought by those in whom the title now vests; it is not desired by the most of them; it was entailed upon them. And the substantive matter of the accusation is, that they do not emancipate this class immediately. Gradual emancipation has been going on in this country from the moment that it was freed from its connection with Great Britain. Up to the time of the Abolition excitement, the discussion of such relief was freely entertained from one end of the country to the other. Let the reader remember the debates in the Virginia Legislature after the Southampton massacre, the language of Jefferson himself on this subject, and the conversations he must have held with the Southern planters, if he has taken any pains to converse with them. The charge is not, that the body of our citizens even in the slave States, approve of this system in the abstract; not that they would now establish it; but that they permit its existence at all, that they do not break it up immediately; or with regard to the Northern States, it is that they are slumbering in criminal apathy over this tre-
mendous evil and wrong. In one word, the charge is, that the national conscience is far behind that of other civilized countries. For it is not our present business to maintain that we are better than other nations, but to show that no grand demoralization has taken place under our Republican forms. This is what is now alleged in Europe, and this is what we deny.

We had prepared ourselves to make a somewhat full statement of our views of the entire Slavery question; but we refrain from doing so at present, for two reasons. The first is, that it would swell this article beyond due bounds. And the second is, that we are unwilling on reflection to discuss the subject at large from the particular point of view at which we now stand. It places us in a false position with reference to our own sentiments. From some experience we have found, that everything we say, with a to view the defence of the national morality on this subject, is seen in a false light. We are looked upon as apologists for Slavery: a thing we can never permit.

We must content ourselves at present, therefore, with some remarks on the state of feeling existing in this country, and the judgment formed of it abroad. Are we then to say, in the first place, that this feeling is altogether right, that the public conscience is elevated or quickened to the desirable point? It would be idle and foolish and immoral to say it. We suppose the people of this country, and especially the parties interested, feel very much as the people of England or France would, as all people will at first, in a case where immense interests are involved, where old habitudes and prejudices are called in question, and where selfish passions are aroused by earnest discussion. And here we must still desire the reader to observe our point of view, and not to misconstrue us. Absolutely speaking, we can have no wish but to raise the public character and conscience among us, to the highest elevation possible. In this view, it is nothing to us that other nations fail; we will spread no such shield over our errors. But when it is said, that our free institutions have depraved the national character, have made us a selfish and reckless people, have made us worse than any other people, it is to the purpose, and it is but justice to the great liberal cause, to deny the charge. We are willing that other nations should exact of us more than they
demand of themselves, if they please; but when the exaction is brought into this kind of argument, we think it is unfair. We freely say, that we are not satisfied with the feeling that exists in this country with regard to the stupendous immorality of the slave-system, but we must equally deny that it indicates any extraordinary degeneracy.

But, in the next place, what is the feeling in fact? The Northern States have always been opposed to Slavery; they have manumitted all their slaves long ago; they are overspread with Abolition Societies at this moment; and the writings of Channing and others, have drawn universal attention and stirred the universal conscience. Does all this look like apathy? But then it is said, that many people at the North have been exasperated by the Abolition movement. But we ask,—could this be, because they are opposed to abolition? Why, they have abolished slavery themselves! The truth is, they thought this movement dangerous to the peace of the country, to the union of the States. And then they did not like the manner and tone of the Abolitionists. They could not help their dislike perhaps; but they ought, we think, to have been more considerate than they were. They ought to have respected the pure and gentle, the courageous and self-sacrificing spirit of a man like Follen, and of others like him; and we believe they did. But at any rate their dislike of the Abolitionists was not a hostility to abolition. The hopeful idea has always been entertained in New England, that the emancipation of which itself had set the example, would gradually spread itself over the South, till not one human creature in these States should be held in bondage. Then again, with regard to the feeling entertained at the South, we must believe that much injustice has been done to it. There are those, it is true, who defend the slave-system in its very principle, and maintain that it ought to be permanent. But we believe they are few. Many of the planters, we know, feel their situation to be a painful and irksome one, and would gladly be rid of it. But what should they have done? They saw, as they aver, that manumission, with them, did the colored man no good; that he was a worse man, and worse off for his freedom. They felt, too, that their characters were assailed with rude and cruel severity, and
they were naturally indignant. This was set down, at once, to Southern pride and selfishness and inhumanity; but was it just? We have known the Southern people, as generous and hospitable and kind-hearted and courteous to a proverb; no people in the world more so; was it right to heap upon them unmeasured opprobrium and indignity, instead of approaching them as brethren, with kind and respectful reasoning; instead of mildly asking them what ought to be, and what could be done?

And indeed, what is to be done? This we say, in the third place, is the great question; and it is a difficult question; it is environed with difficulties. The way out of these difficulties is not so plain that a good conscience must needs see it at once and feel no hesitation. The example of West India emancipation has indeed relieved some doubts. The docility, the gratitude, the joy of the colored people there, and their willingness quietly to enter into new social relations, to work as freemen upon the fields which they had tilled as slaves, presented a beautiful and touching spectacle; and we rejoice at it; we thank God for it. But yet, is West India emancipation an example for us? The colored race, with us, must ever be a small and depressed minority. They can never be the dominant class, as in the West Indies. Scattered among us and yet separated from us by impassable physical, if not mental barriers; refused intermarriage, refused intercourse as equals, be it ever so unjustly; how are they ever to rise? How are they to enjoy any fair chance as men? We are disposed to ask for them an ampler measure of relief than mere emancipation. And yet how they are to get it, except in entire removal from the country, we see not. Force, for this purpose, is out of the question; but we have thought that, if, being emancipated, they should see it to be for their advantage to retire to Hayti or the West Indies, it would be fortunate for them; it would be the only situation in which they could rise to their proper place as men. And we have doubted whether emancipation in this country, either at the North or South, has done them any good. The instances that have fallen under our particular and personal observation, go to prove the contrary. We have known communities of them, where fifty years of freedom have left them worse and worse off for it. We do not say,
that they were less happy; for we think that freedom is a boon that may compensate for the loss of almost everything beside. At the same time we hear that there are far more favorable instances than those we have examined. We are told, that in the cities of New York and Philadelphia there are communities of regular, orderly and industrious colored people, who have their churches, their schools, their charitable institutions, and among whom are far fewer poor and wretched than among the Irish emigrants. They are said to have improved very much within the last ten years. Something of this we have suspected; and it has occurred to us that the demonstration of friendship given in the visible array of the Abolition movement, may have been of great service to them.

The question before us, we say, is one of momentous concern, and fraught with difficulty and danger. It were a comparatively easy thing to vote twenty millions, or a hundred millions, to free slaves in a distant island. And we verily believe that our difficulties would be less, if all the States were slave States. Then we should have one common interest. Then we might go together. Now there is a perilous altercation between the North and the South. To our apprehension it endangers the Union. Foreigners can feel little concern about it, compared with what we feel: and they may use a rough and violent language on this subject, which it would not be our wisdom to imitate.

On the whole, we think it must be apparent that this is a subject to be treated with the utmost care and consideration, with the utmost Christian seriousness and moderation. We are accused abroad of a base and criminal apathy upon it. Who of us may deserve this charge we know not, but we do know many who have stood aloof from the Abolition movement, in application to whom it would be utterly and cruelly false. From our youth up, we have known the fact to be far otherwise. Twenty-five years ago — long before any Abolition Society was heard of — we knew of a private Association of gentlemen formed for the investigation of this subject.* Often and often have we known this matter to be discussed, as the most fatal evil and peril of the country; discussed at the North with solemn deliberation, and at the South with anxieties and

* The writer of this article was a member of this Association.
tars even, which should have won a consideration far different from this coarse and ferocious abuse.

It has been proclaimed abroad that our pulpit dares not speak out on this subject; that many of our clergy are Abolitionists, but have not the courage to confess it. We repel the charge with indignation. Our clergy generally, though of course opposed to Slavery, are not Abolitionists. Nay, and we have discussed the subject of Slavery less frequently than we otherwise might have done, because we saw, or thought we saw, that the discussion was taking a dangerous turn. Foreigners can strike in freely among us; the blow does not hurt them; they care little for our dissentions and our perils; but we, with their leave, must look a little more carefully after these matters. It is always found that one's neighbors can speak much more freely of his family than he can himself. They understand but little of the difficulty and delicacy of his situation. We say plainly, that we do not like the tone of English criticism upon us.* We have seen more than one rough and reckless comment upon our soberest writers on politics, like Channing and Story. They are considered as timid and time-serving. We recollect that in one of the leading Reviews, Channing was represented — the high-hearted and intrepid Channing — as "bowing and kissing hands to the public all round!" Nay, even on the subject of Slavery, he was too prudent for some. The celebrated John Foster said, when reading one of his powerful Essays, "it is very fine, but rather too much like a razor." He wanted that the American champion should strike with a club. The fact is, people abroad look with a sort of speculative and curious feeling upon our discussions. They like to see the Democratic principle, as they consider it, carried out to the fullest extent, as it is in

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* We do not descend so low in this allusion as to a late article, run mad with the rage for abuse, in the last London Foreign Quarterly Review. Nor do we refer now to its criticism on our poets. But the first few pages contain an attack upon this country of such unmeasured injustice, that we can find no words therewith adequately to speak of it. We are sometimes tempted to ask, is there something coarse and brutal in the English civilization? But we check ourselves. We have seen the homes of England, and never and nowhere on earth do we expect to find more refinement, courtesy and hospitality than we have seen there. And we trust the higher mind of that country to rebuke, as they deserve, such insane ebullitions, when occupying any lofter place than the vilest newspaper, or the lowest gin-shop.
the former writings of Brownson, and of others young and rash as he was. That pleases them, amuses them. But we have something else to do in this country, besides pleasing or amusing anybody. We must be sober, if we would be wise men. We have many things to consider, that are out of the reach of trans-Atlantic eyes. We have many interests to take into the account, many powers and tendencies to hold in a careful balance. God forbid that we should set anything above the sovereign, solemn, eternal truth! But beneath that truth we must walk reverently, soberly, humbly.

We have now considered the three heaviest charges that are brought against our national morality; repudiation, the spirit of gain, and slavery. We might proceed to say something, if we had space, of certain disorders, private broils and violations of law, under the name of Lynch Law, which characterize the state of society in the far West. There is a certain border-land between civilization and barbarism, where personal vindication, and lawless defence of society against thieves and gamblers, sometimes take place of the regular administration of public justice. We have no defence whatever to make of these usages. We have only to say, that they are less remarkable and portentous than they appear to European eyes; especially when it is considered that these are continually exhibited in newspaper paragraphs, instead of the general order of society which prevails in that part of the country. But the important observation to be made is, that this border land is constantly retreating before the advances of settled law and order. If it were otherwise, if this border were coming Eastward, if Lynch law and the bowie knife were gaining upon us, it were an invasion to be looked upon with unmitigated horror. But the truth is, that they are constantly driven back and are fast retreating to "their own place," the wild domain of savage life.

After all, we are not sure but the great offence of this country lies in what is called "a Democratic levelling of all distinctions," and in what is represented as "a consequent general vulgarity of mind and manners." Strangely enough Mr. Dickens has especially taken it to heart, to make this impression upon the people of England and upon his readers all over Europe. We do not say that he was obliged to think well of