

LITERATURE.

THE SHIPWRECKED MARINER.

Far, far away, where ocean rolls its tide
O'er fair Australia's sea-girt shore;
Where the Pacific spreads its blue waves wide,
Stood on a lone rock a shipwreck'd mariner—
His friends, his home, his country he had left,
To brave the perils of the stormy sea.
Of all—save hope—that fond word hope bereft,
A lonely shipwreck'd mariner was he!
His ship,—her crew—her captain, where are they?
No traces of them can his dim eye see,
While round the rock the wild waves madly play,
Far, far away from home, from friends was he.
At even unto the setting sun he turn'd
His downcast eyes, as from his rocky bed
He yet survey'd the rising waves and mourn'd
That he should live—his friends, companions dead!
Without a smile to cheer his way
Beneath the frowning of an adverse sky,
On that cold rock moist with the ocean spray,
He laid him down all lonely there to die!
Oh! who can tell what crimson tears may flow
For him who thus is perishing in the gale?
Who can recount the soul-corroding woe,
When his long absence tells the direful tale?
Or who can tell the mad'ning grief which wrings
The mother's heart, lamenting for her son;
The deep, deep agony that springs
Within that heart for a long lost lov'd one?
Yet, it was hard to die as he there died,
Away from every fond and tender tie,
No kindly eye to watch his hard bed-side—
No soothing voice to breathe a last "good bye!"
Still may we hope that he has found in Heaven,
That joy he failed in finding here below,
And e'en that God has all his sins forgiven,
Since on this earth he had his share of woe!

E. P. J. S.

Sydney, May 25th, 1847.

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

ADVOCATING, as we have all along done, and as we intend for the future to do, a system of National Education—and well conceiving the public disappointment caused by the non-report of Dr. Beckett's splendid lecture on this subject, at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, on Tuesday, May 11th, we have much pleasure and satisfaction in enabling the readers of the ATLAS to peruse the whole of this elegant composition, whereby they will perceive how fully justified Doctor Beckett was in complaining of the garbled report of it put forth in the *Herald*:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—In again appearing before you to deliver the customary annual introductory address, I shall not, as on a former occasion, enter at length into the advantages afforded by institutions of this nature, nor dwell upon their great and undoubted claims to public patronage and support. I shall content myself with stating briefly for your information, that the Sydney Mechanic's School of Arts is rapidly progressing, as is shown by the fact, that our subscription list has, within the last two years, trebled itself, and numbers at this moment no fewer than six hundred members. I make this announcement with peculiar satisfaction, because it points out the increased desire for knowledge that is springing up in this comparatively infant community, and augurs well for the success of the subject I have chosen for this evening's lecture, viz., Education.

The term education is commonly applied to that useless system of indiscriminate mental drilling, by which a boy's memory is often loaded with matter which his mind cannot digest, and which he, therefore, cares not either to recollect or understand. There can be no greater error than to suppose, that education consists merely in the ordinary mechanical routine of a school or college. The materials which such a routine is intended to furnish, are certainly valuable, as forming the ground work of all knowledge, but the order in which they are communicated is not sufficiently progressive, mere children are furnished with books, which demand profound knowledge and a powerful intellect to render them intelligible, and their contents, therefore, are only calculated to excite weariness and disgust. I am aware that it is contended, that the end of education is answered by storing the youthful mind with the materials of knowledge; because it is argued, that however little such materials may be appreciated at the time that they are acquired, they remain imprinted on the memory, becoming gradually more intelligible as the intellect expands, until they can at length be advantageously employed towards the furtherance of those objects to which they may be applicable. I concur fully in the justness of the foregoing observations so far as they relate to some branches of education, such, for instance, as the construction of a language, and the reading of works in a foreign tongue, as also arithmetic and the mathematics. It seems to me, however, that whenever we seek to influence by education the moral and religious nature of a child, it is of the highest importance that our instructions should bear a strict relation to the mental capacity of our pupil. Here there should be nothing misty, all should be clear, rational, and convincing; the reason should never be outraged, but be appealed to in support of those great principles we wish to enforce; in this manner we may hope to inculcate moral force and rules of action, and to avoid those lamentable consequences which so frequently result from insisting in our schools on the propagation of minute points of doctrine, respecting which, the whole Christian world has ever been, and it is to be feared ever will be divided. Righteousness and virtue should be daily and hourly inculcated, for although much is poured into the ears of children about the mysteries of religion, in order to silence their unseasonable questions, pure religion is plain and intelligible enough in its precepts, though certainly difficult in its practice: the Sermon on the Mount contains no mysteries, and yet, he who can arrive at that degree of excellence, which shall enable him fully to carry

out the precepts of that divine discourse, stands in no need of human instruction, and must be in the highest and purest sense of the word religious.

The chief aim, indeed, of the instructor should be to direct aright the moral sentiments as a guide to the intellect, in the development of all the highest energies of which an individual may be capable. This duty is far too frequently overlooked, and indeed it is not improbable that some teachers might contend that it formed no part of their office, but it is surely not too much to require, that he who imparts intellectual knowledge, should also furnish the true means by which such knowledge can be rendered profitable. This part of Education (which, in fact, constitutes moral training), should likewise be undertaken by parents whenever they are competent to the task, but the information, tact, experience, and above all, strong moral sense, requisite for an efficient performance of this important duty, are far beyond what we meet with in the generality of persons, and can always be more advantageously brought into operation by one, whose inclinations, habits, and qualifications, have pointed him out as peculiarly fitted for the office of teacher. It is much to be regretted, that the well-qualified instructor of youth is not duly appreciated or respected, and that the remuneration he receives is so inadequate to the importance and responsibility of the duties which he performs. I know no class of men who have a greater claim to our gratitude and support, and if society in its every day expressions of admiration of virtue were really sincere, the talented and conscientious educator would occupy a position very closely approximating that of an enlightened minister of religion. It should not be forgotten, that the qualifications necessary for such an office are of the very highest order; a well stored and highly cultivated mind, and an unimpeachable moral character, are among the most essential of them; to these must be added a strong feeling of religion (in the rational sense of the word), great equanimity of temper, natural kindness of heart, and sufficient firmness of purpose and independence of mind, completely to carry out all the requirements of duty. To such a man, and to such a man only, we may confidently intrust the education of our children, and we should, if our circumstances require it, be prepared to endure some privations, rather than by a false and selfish economy, deprive them of these most valuable materials towards the formation of character, and the promotion of their true welfare and happiness.

I know that it may be objected, that it is difficult to meet with such an individual as I have described occupying the office in question. Whilst the truth of this objection is to a certain extent admitted, it may be replied, that the existence of this fact results from a state of things which education, and a consequent elevation in the tone of moral feeling alone can subvert. So long as successful profligacy and subservient meanness are tolerated or countenanced, in what is strangely mis-called the best society, and the profession of teaching is looked upon with patronising condescension, real worth can never assume the position it ought to occupy, and men of refined intellect and delicate sensibility will shrink from taking their station in society so far below many of their inferiors in character and education.

Education has, in all ages, had to contend with the bigotry and fanaticism of the day, and we, unfortunately, are not able to say that, even in the present age of intellectual light, it is entirely free from their baleful influence. It requires, however, but little argument to prove the obvious fact, that education and the general diffusion of knowledge are, of all things, most favorable to a dissemination of those great Christian principles, which should pervade the hearts and regulate the conduct of all intelligent beings.

The common adage that "knowledge is power," contains a truth that would be of little moment were it the whole truth—knowledge is indeed power, of which its value to mankind lies not in the existence only, but in the application. It is because that power is conducive to the highest and holiest ends, that the knowledge by which it is acquired should be held so precious; a power that brought no aid to our intellectual or moral nature, or gave force only to the former at the expense of the latter, would be a loss rather than a gain. An insight into sciences which enabled us only to debase ourselves or oppress others, would be indeed both knowledge and power, but the acquisition would only render us either tyrants or slaves. We love God not for his omnipotence, but for his goodness, nor would our homage be acceptable to Him, if it were merely rendered as a tribute to his power. Not then for the sake of power let us follow after knowledge, but because the power which she gives is beneficent; because she is a fountain of wisdom and happiness, which though sometimes perverted and corrupted in its course by prejudice and passion, is, at the source, pure, and will in the end fertilize, enrich and adorn wherever it is permitted to find its way. We are, however, so constituted that knowledge requires some degree of preparation for its reception. As cultivation brings out the resources of the earth, so does it those of the mind; left to their natural state both might exhibit some signs of beauty and fruitfulness, but, at best, the land would remain a wilderness, the man a savage. That we are ourselves not barbarians, is not because we have been gifted with superior intelligence, but because we are born in the midst of an age of civilization—nor of civilization only. Civilization has brought with it education, and education knowledge, and knowledge virtue. They are all steps the one to the other, and he who would interpose between either, with whatever good intentions will, for the sake of the means, be sure to destroy the end. It seems to me that those who oppose education, because it is only education, must, to be consistent, be hostile also to civilization; for how can the barbarian be taught his duty as a Christian, until he has learnt his relations as a man? Of what avail would the Sermon on the Mount be to a North American Indian? Still less the conflicting and often subtle doctrines, which each sect puts forth as the genuine ones of Christianity. Revelation presupposes if not an educated mind, at least a civilized state of being, although in these times the former as well as the latter will still be necessary to those who desire to found their convictions on their own researches, rather than the information of others. "Whoever," says an eloquent historian, "has had any opportunity of examining into the religious opinions of persons in the inferior ranks of life, even in the most enlightened and civilized nations, will find that their system of belief is derived from instruction, not discovered by inquiry. That numerous part of the human species whose lot is labor,

whose principle and almost sole occupation is to secure subsistence, views the arrangements and operations of nature with little reflection, and has neither leisure nor capacity for entering into that path of refined and intricate speculation, which conducts to the knowledge of the principles of natural religion. In the early and most rude periods of savage life, such disquisitions are altogether unknown. When the intellectual powers are just beginning to unfold, and their first feeble exertions are directed towards a few objects of primary necessity and use—when the faculties of the mind are so limited, as not to have formed abstract or general ideas—when language is so barren, as to be destitute of any names to distinguish anything that is not perceived by any of the senses, it is preposterous to expect that man should be capable of tracing with accuracy the relation between cause and effect; or to suppose that he should rise from the contemplation of the one to the knowledge of the other, and form just conceptions of a Deity, as the Creator and Governor of the Universe. The idea of creation is so familiar wherever the mind is enlarged by science, and illuminated by Revelation, that we seldom reflect how profound and abstruse this idea is, or consider what progress man must have made in observation and research, before he could arrive at any knowledge of this elementary principle of religion."

These remarks are from an author (Robertson,) who clearly shows in the history to which they relate, that no just idea of natural religion still less of revealed can be formed by man until he has made some progress towards civilisation, and on the same principle it seems to me that education is equally wanting to instruct and direct him in regard to those great truths and ideas, for the contemplation and enjoyment of which civilization has adapted him. To assist the work of education—to aid it in its ends and objects—has been established the society, which I have now the honor to address. Shall it be said that the knowledge and instruction which is attempted to be imparted in the various lectures delivered from this place, can either fail in good, or be productive of evil, because some of their hearers may have yet to settle their convictions on the subject of religion? Will not the experiments of the chemist, the discoveries of the geologist, of the botanist, and, above all, the astronomer, by revealing, perhaps, for the first time, to such an one, the secrets of nature, send him away better fitted to apprehend and reflect on nature's God? Will the next discourse that he hears from the pulpit, be heard with less profit or interest—will an acquaintance with the works of the Almighty Father indispose him to listen to the words of His Divine Son? Surely this needs not answering; a genuine Revelation is in no peril from knowledge, and he who would obstruct every ray of light from the latter, because the mind has not yet been illumined by the former, is Revelations greatest, though, perhaps, most unconscious foe.

After what I have already advanced, you will be prepared to hear me state, that the Irish or National System of Education, for and against which so much has been said and written, is, in my opinion, peculiarly well fitted to extend the advantages of education, and thus to prepare the mind for the reception of those great divine truths which form the only solid ground-work of an enlightened religious faith. This system has unfortunately met with much violent and, I must add, unjust opposition in this colony; and I should feel that I was shrinking from a duty if I omitted to mention the fact, that much that has been stated with regard to the national system of education is utterly at variance with the truth, and that many most conscientious persons have been led by these mis-statements to express their disapprobation of a system of which they know nothing beyond the name. It has been said, that this is a godless system of education, that its principles are heathenish, and that it conveys no religious instruction whatever. It is unnecessary to have recourse to argument, when a simple appeal to fact will suffice to disprove such assertions, and I shall therefore only refer those who may feel an interest in this subject, to the admirable books published under the sanction of the Commissioners of the National System of Education. It is a somewhat remarkable fact that very few copies of these books have found their way to this country; there are, however, a sufficient number of them to show, that the amount of sound religious and scriptural education conveyed by this system is far greater than is taught at the great public schools of England, where many of those who oppose the national system have been educated. What, then, it will be asked, is the reason why such a system is opposed by so many ministers of religion? The answer is plain; it is this—the national system does not teach the scholars to be either Protestants, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Wesleyans, or Independants, but leaves the determination of a particular religious faith to parents and guardians, or to him, to whom, in fact, in the end, it must always be left, to the individual himself. If, indeed, this latter were invariably the case, it is certain that there would be far more earnestness and sincerity in religion, and that we should less frequently meet with that humiliating spectacle, now unhappily so common, of a man professing one kind of faith, believing in another, and practising none. When once a man can be brought to act a continued falsehood, his moral and religious constitution becomes sapped; his conscientious convictions, whatever they may be, are banished almost as soon as they present themselves, and his actions are determined solely by impulse, and expediency, and the worldly standard of morality. We then meet with that anomalous, but by no means rare character, wherein we see manifested, at the same moment, warm and even generous impulses, combined with gross selfishness and utter want of principle. Such a man is unintelligible to every body but himself, he knows and feels the cause of his degradation, but he wants the moral courage to become free, and openly to cast off such points of faith as may have been compulsorily instilled into him in his youth, but which his mature intellect, and knowledge have led him to disbelieve. The increasing bigotry and intolerance of the age will, however, probably work its own antidote, and it is to be hoped that ere long, many will find courage to release themselves from that spiritual thralldom to which I have alluded. It is indeed lamentable, that a system so well calculated to diffuse the blessings of education amongst all classes of persons should be opposed, and, I must add, misrepresented, (though I would fain hope unintentionally so) by those who should hail with satisfaction any means by which man may be elevated in the scale of moral being, and be thus brought in closer communion with his Maker. In making

these remarks, I am far from intending to reflect disparagingly on the conduct of individuals; when the motives of actions are pure, they should never be angrily assailed, however much we may disapprove of and dread the consequences to which they lead, but should be received with as much consideration as is consistent with a calm but determined opposition to what we believe to be their mischievous tendencies. The evil, however, is a very serious one; inasmuch as it tends to crush the intellect and enslave the mind, and thus to establish a dominion over the moral constitution of society, which can not fail to be destructive of that spiritual freedom so essential to the ascendancy of religion and virtue. The late pious Dr. Channing, in a discourse, delivered at the annual election in 1830, thus eloquently defines the ennobling principles of this kind of freedom:—

It has pleased the All-wise Disposer to encompass us from our birth by difficulty and allurements, to place us in a world where wrong doing is often gainful, and duty rough and perilous, where many voices oppose the dictates of the inward monitor, where the body presses as a weight on the mind, and matter, by its perpetual agency on the senses, becomes a barrier between us and the spiritual world. We are in the midst of influences, which menace the intellect and heart, and to be free is to withstand and conquer these.

I call that mind free, which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which contemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognises its own reality and greatness, which passes life, not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting, and seeking after righteousness.

I call that mind free which escapes the bondage of matter, which, instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit, helps to its own spiritual enlargement.

I call that mind free, which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers, which calls no man master, which does not content itself with a passive or hereditary faith, which opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, which, whilst consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself, and uses instructions from abroad, not to supersede, but to quicken and exalt its own energies.

I call that mind free, which sets no bounds to its Love, which is not imprisoned in itself or in a sect, which recognises in all human beings the image of God and the rights of his children, which delights in virtue and sympathizes with suffering wherever they are seen, which conquers pride, anger, and sloth, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind.

I call that mind free, which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the torrent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement, and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles which it has deliberately espoused.

I call that mind free, which protects itself against the usurpations of society, which does not cower to human opinion, which feels itself accountable to a higher tribunal than man's, which respects a higher law than fashion, which respects itself too much to be the slave or tool of the many or the few.

I call that mind free, which through confidence in God, and in the power of virtue, has cast off all fear but that of wrong doing, which no menace or peril can enthral, which is calm in the midst of tumults, and possesses itself, though all else be lost.

I call that mind free, which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on its old virtues, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but which forgets what is behind, listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions.

I call that mind free, which is jealous of its own freedom, which guards itself from being merged in others, which guards its empire over itself as nobler than the empire of the world.

In fine, I call that mind free, which, conscious of its affinity with God, and confiding in his promises by Jesus Christ, devotes itself faithfully to the unfolding of all its powers, which passes the bounds of time and death, which hopes to advance for ever, and which finds inexhaustible power, both for action and suffering, in the prospect of immortality.

Such is the spiritual freedom which Christ came to give. It consists in moral force, in self-control, in the enlargement of thought and affection, and in the unrestrained action of our best powers. This is the great good of Christianity, nor can we conceive a greater within the gift of God. I know that to many, this will seem too refined a good to be proposed as the great end of society and government. But our scepticism cannot change the nature of things. I know how little this freedom is understood or enjoyed, how enslaved men are to sense, and passion, and the world; and I know, too, that through this slavery they are wretched, and that while it lasts no social institution can give them happiness.

The other objections of the denominationalists appear to me to be of the most flimsy description; they object to selections from Scripture; and say, they must have the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. Now it is well known that selections from the Bible are employed by all denominations of Christians, and that some passages of the sacred writings are far more impressive and more applicable to our spiritual wants than others, and with respect to the argument in favor of the whole Bible as a school book, I need not remind those who are acquainted with the Scriptures that there are passages in the Old Testament towards which no parent would wish to direct the attention of his youthful child. It may, indeed, be very fairly questioned whether the constant reading of the Scriptures have the intended effect of making the children religious. I should imagine that a contrary effect would be produced, and in this opinion I am borne out by others who are peculiarly well qualified to form an opinion, by having specially directed their attention towards this subject. The Rev. Henry Mosely, one of the Inspectors of Schools, says in his Report on Schools—"Having myself examined some thousands of children, whose earlier scriptural education is comprised in thus learning to read (mechanically) from the Scriptures, I can state, as the result of my experience, that the entire school occupation of a child may have been the perusal of the Scriptures, and yet no elementary Scriptural truths be stored up in his mind, and the child be found as utterly unacquainted with the subject matter of their simplest narrative portions as with their fundamental doctrines. Nevertheless, the power to read them fluently may have been acquired, together with a prompt recognition of their peculiar forms of expression, and an abundant familiarity with their language—a familiarity which, whilst it is made to serve no useful purpose of instruction, tends, it is to be feared, to ex-

clude from the child's mind a due sense of their authority, to obliterate the perception of those sanctions under which they have been given, and to diminish the awe with which it is not less natural than it is necessary that it should be received."

I feel the less hesitation in opposing that system which enforces particular sectarian views of religion in connection with the business of education, because there is ample evidence to show that it has already had a most pernicious influence in both the universities of Oxford and of Cambridge, and there is much reason to fear that it will not be very long ere these ancient seats of learning will be left very far behind in the path of intellectual and scientific advancement. In a work by Mr. Lyell, containing much instructive matter relative to the decline of natural science in the universities, we meet with the following interesting and remarkable passages:—

In the year 1839 a last and most vigorous attempt was made at Oxford to restore the functions of the professional body, which had now become contracted within the narrowest limits. The professors of experimental philosophy, comparative anatomy, chemistry, mineralogy, geology, botany, geometry, and astronomy, many of them well known to the literary and scientific world, sent in a representation to the heads of houses, in which they declared their inability to discharge the duties they had undertaken, notwithstanding their unabated zeal and devotion. They accompanied their petition with a printed statistical table, showing how the number of their classes had fallen off annually, during a period in which, as they truly observed, the branches of knowledge taught by them were rising in popular favour and importance. It appeared, by their table, that the anatomy class had diminished between the years 1819 and 1838 to less than one half, and that of astronomy to one fifth of its original numbers. The same had happened to the class of chemistry between 1822 and 1838, many others having declined in the like ratio. Their petitioners observed that if no change were made in the examination statute, their usefulness as professors was at an end.

After a luminous statement of the circumstances connected with the receipt of this petition, and a candid admission of the conscientious motives of those members of the convocation who opposed it, Mr. Lyell proceeds—

The year 1839 was memorable in Europe for another event, tending to prove how unpropitious to the cultivation of the physical sciences is the ecclesiastical spirit, whenever it attains an undue power of interference with academical institutions. In the year alluded to, the first "congress" of scientific men took place in Italy. It assembled at Pisa, under the auspices of the enlightened prince who now reigns in Tuscany. The Pope interdicted all the professors of his colleges of Rome and Bologna, many of whom were prepared to co-operate warmly with the new association, from attending it. The Papal prohibition was continued at the subsequent meetings at Turin, Florence, Milan, and elsewhere. Nevertheless, the congress flourished, and, in spite of the Pontiff's opposition, drew together many of the most distinguished men from all parts of Europe, and of Italy, beyond the confines of the states of the church. It has also given to the world five costly volumes of valuable scientific memoirs, which, but for such patronage, might have remained unpublished to this day.

Doubtless the vote of the Oxford convocation in 1839 was influenced by various motives; among others, a conscientious contempt for that sham professional system which the graduates had so long contrasted with a reality, in the form of compulsory tutorial lectures and examinations, leading to degrees, and often followed by fellowships, livings, prebendal stalls, and bishoprics. In addition to these causes, it has been very generally understood that many, both of the college and private tutors, were opposed to the cultivation of the physical sciences on principle, on account of their irreligious tendency. No one who reads some of the articles written by men who were fellows or tutors at Oxford, in the *British Critic*, against the "British Association for the Promotion of Science," can wonder that such reports were credited, or that they provoked from a prelate educated at Oxford, the remark that "men who entertain such fears seem to forget that the book of Nature and the book of Revelation were both written by the same author."

The writer, after detailing some of the circumstances which led to the Tractarian movement at Oxford, and absorbed all the active talent of the University in theological controversy, gives the following deplorable account of the present state of education at Oxford:—

But to conclude our historical sketch: after the year 1839, we may consider three-fourths of the sciences, still nominally taught at Oxford, to have been virtually exiled from the University. The class-rooms of the professors were some of them entirely, others nearly deserted. Chemistry and botany attracted, between the years 1840 and 1844, from three to seven students; geometry, astronomy and experimental philosophy, scarcely more; mineralogy and geology, still taught by the same professor who fifteen years before had attracted crowded audiences, from ten to twelve; political economy still fewer; even ancient history and poetry scarcely commanded an audience; and, strange to say, in a country whose destinies those of India are so closely bound up, the first of Asiatic scholars gave lectures to one or two pupils, and these might have been absent had not the cherished hope of a Boden scholarship for Sanscrit induced them to attend. As if to complete the cycle of change, and to cause the system to depart as widely as possible from the original University, which secured for the students the services of public and permanent teachers, men of mature age and acquirements, and often highly gifted, the Oxford tuition now fell, from year to year, into the hands of younger graduates, whether in the capacity of private tutors or examiners. Several causes had concurred to accelerate the promotion of college fellows. Their number was still the same, not having increased with church extension, and the multiplication of new schools in a growing population. It consequently became so difficult in many colleges to choose for tutors fellows who were not manifestly too young, that, to remedy the evil, several heads of houses wisely permitted men who had forfeited their fellowships by marriage to continue as tutors. It would appear from the Oxford calendar for 1855, that no less than seven of the colleges and four of the halls have been driven to this resource, nevertheless the majority of the body of public examiners is often under the age of thirty, and some of them only twenty-five years old! They go out of office in succession, after serving for two years. On this fluctuating body of young men, responsible to no one for their decisions, whether in passing students for degrees or in awarding honours, a body having the power of modifying at their caprice the whole style and tenor of the public examinations, the direction of academical education in this great country has practically devolved.

It would seem from the following statement by the same author, that at the other boasted seat of learning—Cambridge, science has been equally neglected and degraded.

Very recently at Cambridge, all branches of knowledge taught

by the professors—in a word, every subject except what is understood in other universities by classics and mathematics, have had sentence of banishment passed upon them, in the form of new compulsory examinations, under the management of College tutors, the Oxford plan of awarding honors to classical and mathematical attainments alone being adhered to. The professors of chemistry and anatomy, who had formerly considerable classes, have only mustered six or seven pupils, although still compelled to give courses of fifty lectures each. The chairs of modern history, and of the application of machinery to the arts, once numbering audiences of several hundreds, have been, in like manner, deserted. Yet dispensations are rarely granted for the discontinuance of useless duties, even when only two pupils present themselves. It is truly fortunate that in proportion as Oxford and Cambridge have withdrawn their countenance more and more from studies connected with physical science and natural history, the wants of a high state of civilization and the spirit of the age have afforded to them in England an annually increasing patronage. It is felt that astronomy is indispensable to navigation, chemistry to agriculture and various arts, geology to mining, botany to medicine, and so of other departments. If the practical connection of any branch of science be not obvious, as in the case of zoology, scarcely any encouragement is given to it in any English place of education; but even here, fortunately, the British Museum and the College of Surgeons, by their extensive collections, step in, and in some degree supply the deficiency.

Humiliating indeed are the feelings which this state of things suggests to any mind whose vigour and freedom, not yet stifled by the arrogance and tyranny of a fierce sectarian spirit, thirsts for the growth of intelligence and the diffusion of the mild ennobling principles of pure Christianity. The old stale cry of the Church in danger, has now been so long associated with a furious zeal, a hatred and harsh denunciation of other religious sects, an arrogant assumption of infallibility in the interpretation of divine truth, and a strict adherence to the outward forms, with a neglect of much of the spirit of religion, that reflecting persons who have been brought up in the bosom of that church are beginning to perceive that in the unrighteous struggle that is being carried on by some of its bigoted supporters, the interests of true religion are likely to be sacrificed.

Is it then to be wondered at, that such persons should stand aloof from the zealots, and should feel unfavorably disposed towards those principles which, if carried out, would do much to counteract the influence of those great truths which our Divine Master came on earth to enforce by his life and example. It may, however, I think, be confidently expected that as the systematic opposition to education has now become so monstrous an evil, it will work its own remedy, and that the period is near at hand, when religion, intelligence, and knowledge will be intimately associated with one another, and thereby prevent a recurrence of those scenes of oppression, bloodshed and misery, which in former days have proved so melancholy a result of their separation.

Although it has been frequently asserted that an acquaintance with natural science tends to make men sceptical of religious truth, nothing can be more false than this idea, and the least reflection will show it to be so. The labours and researches of scientific men have reference almost solely to the works of creation, either as displayed in the vast system of worlds in the starry firmament around us, or in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms of the speck of earth which we inhabit, and it is therefore preposterous to suppose that a just appreciation of, and enlightened enquiry into these objects, can have any other effect than that of increasing our reverence and love for the Great Author of them.

Science, indeed, is one of the firmest supports of true religion, and so it has proved in an eminent degree, on a late very remarkable occasion. About two years since a work appeared in England, under the title of the *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, which attracted at the time a considerable share of attention, and created a very great sensation: the principles laid down in this work, which is written in a brilliant and very fascinating style, would, if they could be supported, if not establish Atheism, entirely subvert the main doctrines of the Christian religion; it is not necessary to relate what those principles are—suffice it to state that they are apparently supported by scientific data, ingeniously though most inaccurately stated, and yet so plausibly arranged as to defy the criticism of any divine (simply as a divine) to answer them. They nevertheless have been admirably answered by a writer (I believe Professor Sedgwick) in the *Edinburgh Review*, not however through the medium of a vague theological discourse, but by a strict appeal to facts, and a rigid adherence to those beautiful principles of scientific truth, at which good but very weak men not unfrequently affect to sneer. Here then is an instance in which an imperfect acquaintance with science, coupled with a vivid and inventive imagination, and a remarkable facility and gracefulness of composition, has led a writer to promulgate in a most alluring form the gravest errors on a subject of the very highest importance. I have little doubt but that on the first appearance of this work, many were drawn towards the dark and comfortless paths of unbelief, and I make particular allusion to it now, as much for the purpose of cautioning any of my hearers into whose hands this book may fall, against the dangerous fallacies it contains, as to point out what is so often misapprehended, the true and close relation between pure religion and natural science.

I feel it almost necessary to offer some apology for insisting at so much length on such self-evident facts, as that education and knowledge are desirable, and that science is not opposed to religion. The occurrences at Oxford, which I have related to you, and the opposition which is still raised to the general diffusion of education, will, however, I trust, justify me in making an effort, however feeble, to oppose sentiments which are worthy only of the bigotry of the dark ages, and are an insult to the understanding of the present day. The evils resulting to a nation from a general want of education are incalculable; the horrors of the earlier times, the criminal offences, and the vice and profligacy of the present day may all be referred in a very great degree to this want. Few persons reflect, or are indeed aware how great an influence education exerts over almost every relation in life. In our daily intercourse with the world, it is not difficult for an observant eye to trace distinctly the effects of education, or the want of it, on the manners of our fellow creatures; for, as the rich man frequently neglects all means of cultivating his intellect,