

Civilization

John Stuart Mill

[The meaning of ``civilization']

The word Civilization, like many other terms of the philosophy of human nature, is a word of double meaning. It sometimes stands for human improvement in general, and sometimes for certain kinds of improvement in particular.

We are accustomed to call a country more civilized if we think it more improved; more eminent in the best characteristics of Man and Society; farther advanced in the road to perfection; happier, nobler, wiser. This is one sense of the word civilization. But in another sense it stands for that kind of improvement only, which distinguishes a wealthy and powerful nation from savages or barbarians. It is in this sense that we may speak of the vices or the miseries of civilization; and that the question has been seriously propounded, whether civilization is on the whole a good or an evil. Assuredly, we entertain no doubt on this point; we hold that civilization is a good, that it is the cause of much good, and not incompatible with any; but we think there is other good, much even of the highest good, which civilization in this sense does not provide for, and some which it has a tendency (though that tendency may be, counteracted) to impede.

The inquiry into which these considerations would lead, is calculated to throw light upon many of the characteristic features of our time. The present era is pre-eminently the era of civilization in the narrow sense; whether we consider what has already been achieved, or the rapid advances making towards still greater achievements. We do not regard the age as either equally advanced or equally progressive in many of the other kinds of improvement. In some it appears to us stationary, in some even retrograde. Moreover, the irresistible consequences of a state of advancing civilization; the new position in which that advance has placed, and is every day more and more placing, mankind; the entire inapplicability of old rules to this new position, and the necessity, if we would either realize the benefits of the new state or preserve those of the old, that we should adopt many new rules, and new courses of action; are topics which seem to require a more comprehensive examination than they have usually received.

[Civilization contrasted with barbarism]

We shall on the present occasion use the word civilization only in the restricted sense: not that in which it is synonymous with improvement, but that in which it is the direct converse or contrary of rudeness or barbarism. Whatever be the characteristics of what we call savage life, the contrary of these, or the qualities which society puts on as it throws off these, constitute civilization. Thus, a savage tribe consists of a handful of individuals, wandering or thinly scattered over a vast tract of country: a dense population, therefore, dwelling in fixed habitations, and largely collected together in towns and villages, we term civilized. In savage life there is no commerce, no manufactures, no agriculture, or next to none: a country rich in the fruits of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, we call civilized. In savage communities each person shifts for himself; except in war (and even then very imperfectly), we seldom see any joint operations carried on by the union of many; nor do savages, in general, find much pleasure in each other's society. Wherever, therefore, we find human beings acting together for common purposes in large bodies, and enjoying the pleasures of social intercourse, we term them civilized. In savage life there is little or no law, or administration of justice; no systematic employment of the collective strength of society, to protect individuals against injury from one another; every one trusts to his own strength or cunning, and where that fails, he is generally without resource. We

accordingly call a people civilized, where the arrangements of society, for protecting the persons and property of its members, are sufficiently perfect to maintain peace among them; *i.e.* to induce the bulk of the community to rely for their security mainly upon social arrangements, and renounce for the most part, and in ordinary circumstances, the vindication of their interests (whether in the way of aggression or of defence) by their individual strength or courage.

These ingredients of civilization are various, but consideration will satisfy us that they are not improperly classed together. History, and their own nature, alike show that they begin together, always co-exist, and accompany each other in their growth. Wherever there has arisen sufficient knowledge of the arts of life, and sufficient security of property and person, to render the progressive increase of wealth and population possible, the community becomes and continues progressive in all the elements which we have just enumerated. These elements exist in modern Europe, and especially in Great Britain, in a more eminent degree, and in a state of more rapid progression, than at any other place or time. We propose to consider some of the consequences which that high and progressive state of civilization has already produced, and of the further ones which it is hastening to produce.

[Coordination and the power of the masses]

The most remarkable of those consequences of advancing civilization, which the state of the world is now forcing upon the attention of thinking minds, is this: that power passes more and more from individuals, and small knots of individuals, to masses---that the importance of the masses becomes constantly greater, that of individuals less.

The causes, evidences, and consequences of this law of human affairs, well deserve attention.

There are two elements of importance and influence among mankind: the one is, property; the other, powers and acquirements of mind. Both of these, in an early stage of civilization, are confined to a few persons. In the beginnings of society, the power of the masses does not exist; because property and intelligence have no existence beyond a very small portion of the community, and even if they had, those who possessed the smaller portions would be, from their incapacity of co-operation, unable to cope with those who possessed the larger.

In the more backward countries of the present time, and in all Europe at no distant date, we see property entirely concentrated in a small number of hands; the remainder of the people being, with few exceptions, either the military retainers and dependents of the possessors of property, or serfs, stripped and tortured at pleasure by one master, and pillaged by a hundred. At no period could it be said that there was literally no middle class---but that class was extremely feeble, both in numbers and in power: while the labouring people, absorbed in manual toil, with difficulty earned, by the utmost excess of exertion, a more or less scanty and always precarious subsistence. The character of this state of society was the utmost excess of poverty and impotence in the masses; the most enormous importance and uncontrollable power of a small number of individuals, each of whom, within his own sphere, knew neither law nor superior.

We must leave to history to unfold the gradual rise of the trading and manufacturing classes, the gradual emancipation of the agricultural, the tumults and *bouleversements* which accompanied these changes in their course, and the extraordinary alterations in institutions, opinions, habits, and the whole of social life, which they brought in their train. We need only ask the reader to form a conception of all that is implied in the words, growth of a middle class; and then to reflect on the immense increase of the numbers and property of that class throughout Great Britain, France, Germany, and other

countries, in every successive generation, and the novelty of a labouring class receiving such wages as are now commonly earned by nearly the whole of the manufacturing, that is, of the most numerous portion of the operative classes of this country---and ask himself whether, from causes so unheard-of, unheard-of effects ought not to be expected to flow. It must at least be evident, that if, as civilization advances, property and intelligence become thus widely diffused among the millions, it must also be an effect of civilization, that the portion of either of these which can belong to an individual must have a tendency to become less and less influential, and all results must more and more be decided by the movements of masses; provided that the power of combination among the masses keeps pace with the progress of their resources. And that it does so, who can doubt? There is not a more accurate test of the progress of civilization than the progress of the power of co-operation.

Consider the savage: he has bodily strength, he has courage, enterprise, and is often not without intelligence; what makes all savage communities poor and feeble? The same cause which prevented the lions and tigers from long ago extirpating the race of men---incapacity of co-operation. It is only civilized beings who can combine. All combination is compromise: it is the sacrifice of some portion of individual will, for a common purpose. The savage cannot bear to sacrifice, for any purpose, the satisfaction of his individual will. His social cannot even temporarily prevail over his selfish feelings, nor his impulses bend to his calculations. Look again at the slave: he is used indeed to make his will give way; but to the commands of a master, not to a superior purpose of his own. He is wanting in intelligence to form such a purpose; above all, he cannot frame to himself the conception of a fixed rule: nor if he could, has he the capacity to adhere to it; he is habituated to control, but not to self-control; when a driver is not standing over him with a whip, he is found more incapable of withstanding any temptation, or restraining any inclination, than the savage himself.

We have taken extreme cases, that the fact we seek to illustrate might stand out more conspicuously. But the remark itself applies universally. As any people approach to the condition of savages or of slaves, so are they incapable of acting in concert. Consider even war, the most serious business of a barbarous people; see what a figure rude nations, or semi-civilized and enslaved nations, have made against civilized ones from Marathon downwards. Why? Because discipline is more powerful than numbers, and discipline, that is, perfect co-operation, is an attribute of civilization. To come to our own times, the whole history of the Peninsular War bears witness to the incapacity of an imperfectly civilized people for co-operation. Amidst all the enthusiasm of the Spanish nation struggling against Napoleon, no one leader, military or political, could act in concert with another; no one would sacrifice one iota of his consequence, his authority, or his opinion, to the most obvious demands of the common cause; neither generals nor soldiers could observe the simplest rules of the military art. If there be an interest which one might expect to act forcibly upon the minds even of savages, it is the desire of simultaneously crushing a formidable neighbour whom none of them are strong enough to resist single-handed; yet none but civilized nations have ever been capable of forming an alliance. The native states of India have been conquered by the English one by one; Turkey made peace with Russia in the very moment of her invasion by France; the nations of the world never could form a confederacy against the Romans, but were swallowed up in succession, some of them being always ready to aid in the subjugation of the rest. Enterprises requiring the voluntary co-operation of many persons independent of one another, in the hands of all but highly civilized nations, have always failed.

It is not difficult to see why this incapacity of organized combination characterizes savages, and disappears with the growth of civilization. Co-operation, like other difficult things, can be learnt only by practice: and to be capable of it in great things, a people must be gradually trained to it in small. Now, the whole course of advancing civilization is a series of such training. The labourer in a rude state of society works singly, or if several are brought to work together by the will of a master, they work side by side, but not in concert; one man digs this piece of ground, another digs a similar piece

of ground close by him. In the situation of an ignorant labourer, tilling even his own field with his own hands, and associating with no one except his wife and his children, what is there that can teach him to co-operate? The division of employments---the accomplishment by the combined labour of several, of tasks which could not be achieved by any number of persons singly---is the great school of co-operation. What a lesson, for instance, is navigation, as soon as it passes out of its first simple stage; the safety of all, constantly depending upon the vigilant performance by each, of the part peculiarly allotted to him in the common task. Military operations, when not wholly undisciplined, are a similar school; so are all the operations of commerce and manufactures which require the employment of many hands upon the same thing at the same time. By these operations, mankind learn the value of combination; they see how much and with what ease it accomplishes, which never could be accomplished without it; they learn a practical lesson of submitting themselves to guidance, and subduing themselves to act as interdependent parts of a complex whole. A people thus progressively trained to combination by the business of their lives, become capable of carrying the same habits into new things. For it holds universally, that the one only mode of learning to do anything, is actually doing something of the same kind. under easier circumstances. Habits of discipline once acquired, qualify human beings to accomplish all other things for which discipline is needed. No longer either spurning control, or incapable of seeing its advantages; whenever any object presents itself which can be attained by co-operation, and which they see or believe to be beneficial, they are ripe for attaining it.

The characters, then, of a state of high civilization being the diffusion of property and intelligence, and the power of co-operation; the next thing to observe is the unexampled development which all these elements have assumed of late years.

The rapidity with which property has accumulated and is accumulating in the principal countries of Europe, but especially in this island, is obvious to every one. The capital of the industrious classes overflows into foreign countries, and into all kinds of wild speculations. The amount of capital annually exported from Great Britain alone, surpasses probably the whole wealth of the most flourishing commercial republics of antiquity. But this capital, collectively so vast, is mainly composed of small portions; very generally so small that the owners cannot, without other means of livelihood, subsist on the profits of them. While such is the growth of property in the hands of the mass, the circumstances of the higher classes have undergone nothing like a corresponding improvement. Many large fortunes have, it is true, been accumulated, but many others have been wholly or partially dissipated; for the inheritors of immense fortunes, as a class, always live at least up to their incomes when at the highest, and the unavoidable vicissitudes of those incomes are always sinking them deeper and deeper into debt. A large proportion of the English landlords, as they themselves are constantly telling us, are so overwhelmed with mortgages, that they have ceased to be the real owners of the bulk of their estates. In other countries the large properties have very generally been broken down; in France, by revolution, and the revolutionary law of inheritance; in Prussia, by successive edicts of that substantially democratic, though formally absolute government.

With respect to knowledge and intelligence, it is the truism of the age, that the masses, both of the middle and even of the working classes are treading upon the heels of their superiors.

If we now consider the progress made by those same masses in the capacity and habit of co-operation, we find it equally surprising. At what period were the operations of productive industry carried on upon anything like their present scale? Were so many hands ever before employed at the same time upon the same work, as now in all the principal departments of manufactures and commerce? To how enormous an extent is business now carried on by joint-stock companies---in other words, by many small capitals thrown together to form one great one. The country is covered with associations. There

are societies for political, societies for religious, societies for philanthropic purposes. But the greatest novelty of all is the spirit of combination which has grown up among the working classes. The present age has seen the commencement of benefit societies; and they now, as well as the more questionable Trades Unions, overspread the whole country. A more powerful, though not so ostensible, instrument of combination than any of these, has but lately become universally accessible---the newspaper. The newspaper carries home the voice of the many to every individual among them; by the newspaper each learns that others are feeling as he feels, and that if he is ready, he will find them also prepared to act upon what they feel. The newspaper is the telegraph which carries the signal throughout the country, and the flag round which it rallies. Hundreds of newspapers speaking in the same voice at once, and the rapidity of communication afforded by improved means of locomotion, were what enabled the whole country to combine in that simultaneous energetic demonstration of determined will which carried the Reform Act. Both these facilities are on the increase, every one may see how rapidly; and they will enable the people on all decisive occasions to form a collective will, and render that collective will irresistible.

To meet this wonderful development, of physical and mental power on the part of the masses, can it be said that there has been any corresponding quantity of intellectual power or moral energy unfolded among those individuals or classes who have enjoyed superior advantages? No one, we think, will affirm it. There is a great increase of humanity, a decline of bigotry, as well as of arrogance and the conceit of caste, among our conspicuous classes; but there is, to say the least, no increase of shining ability, and a very marked decrease of vigour and energy. With all the advantages of this age, its facilities for mental cultivation, the incitements and rewards which it holds out to exalted talents, there can scarcely be pointed out in the European annals any stirring times which have brought so little that is distinguished, either morally or intellectually, to the surface.

That this, too, is no more than was to be expected from the tendencies of civilization, when no attempt is made to correct them, we shall have occasion to show presently. But even if civilization did nothing to lower the eminences, it would produce an exactly similar effect by raising the plains. When the masses become powerful, an individual, or a small band of individuals, can accomplish nothing considerable except by influencing the masses; and to do this becomes daily more difficult, from the constantly increasing number of those who are vying with one another to attract the public attention. Our position, therefore, is established, that by the natural growth of civilization, power passes from individuals to masses, and the weight and importance of an individual, as compared with the mass, sink into greater and greater insignificance.

[The resistance of the Conservatives]

The change which is thus in progress, and to a great extent consummated, is the greatest ever recorded in social affairs; the most complete, the most fruitful in consequences, and the most irrevocable. Whoever can meditate on it, and not see that so great a revolution vitiates all existing rules of government and policy, and renders all practice and all predictions grounded only on prior experience worthless, is wanting in the very first and most elementary principle of statesmanship in these times.

'Il faut', as M. de Tocqueville has said, 'une science politique nouvelle à un monde tout nouveau.' The whole face of society is reversed---all the natural elements of power have definitively changed places and there are people who talk of standing up for ancient institutions, and the duty of sticking to the British Constitution settled in 1789! What is still more extraordinary, these are the people who accuse others of disregarding variety of circumstances, and imposing their abstract theories upon all states of society without discrimination.

We put it to those who call themselves Conservatives, whether, when the chief power in society is passing into the hands of the masses, they really think it possible to prevent the masses from making that power predominant as well in the government as elsewhere? The triumph of democracy, or, in other words, of the government of public opinion, does not depend upon the opinion of any individual or set of individuals that it ought to triumph, but upon the natural laws of the progress of wealth, upon the diffusion of reading, and the increase of the facilities of human intercourse. If Lord Kenyon or the Duke of Newcastle could stop these, they might accomplish something. There is no danger of the prevalence of democracy in Syria or Timbuctoo. But he must be a poor politician who does not know, that whatever is the growing power in society will force its way into the government, by fair means or foul. The distribution of constitutional power cannot long continue very different from that of real power, without a convulsion. Nor, if the institutions which impede the progress of democracy could be by any miracle preserved, could even they do more than render that progress a little slower. Were the Constitution of Great Britain to remain henceforth unaltered, we are not the less under the dominion, becoming every day more irresistible, of public opinion.

With regard to the advance of democracy, there are two different positions which it is possible for a rational person to take up, according as he thinks the masses prepared, or unprepared, to exercise the control which they are acquiring over their destiny in a manner which would be an improvement upon what now exists. If he thinks them prepared, he will aid the democratic movement; or if he deem it to be proceeding fast enough without him, he will at all events refrain from resisting it. If, on the contrary, he thinks the masses unprepared for complete control over their government---seeing at the same time that, prepared or not, they cannot long be prevented from acquiring it---he will exert his utmost efforts in contributing to prepare them; using all means, on the one hand, for making the masses themselves wiser and better; on the other, for so rousing the slumbering energy of the opulent and lettered classes, so storing the youth of those classes with the profoundest and most valuable knowledge, so calling forth whatever of individual greatness exists or can be raised up in the country, as to create a power which might partially rival the mere power of the masses, and might exercise the most salutary influence over them for their own good. When engaged earnestly in works like these, one can understand how a rational person might think that, in order to give more time for the performance of them, it were well if the current of democracy, which can in no sort be stayed, could be prevailed upon for a time to flow less impetuously. With Conservatives of this sort, all democrats of corresponding enlargement of aims could fraternize as frankly and cordially as with most of their own friends: and we speak from an extensive knowledge of the wisest and most high-minded of that body, when we take upon ourselves to answer for them, that they would never push forward their own political projects in a spirit or with a violence which could tend to frustrate any rational endeavours towards the object nearest their hearts, the instruction of the understandings and the elevation of the characters of all classes of their countrymen.

But who is there among the political party calling themselves Conservatives, that professes to have any such object in view? Do they seek to employ the interval of respite which they might hope to gain by withstanding democracy, in qualifying the people to wield the democracy more wisely when it comes? Would they not far rather resist any such endeavour, on the principle that knowledge is power, and that its further diffusion would make the dreaded evil come sooner? Do the leading Conservatives in either house of parliament feel that the character of the higher classes needs renovating, to qualify them for a more arduous task and a keener strife than has yet fallen to their lot? Is not the character of a Tory lord or country gentleman, or a Church of England parson, perfectly satisfactory to them? Is not the existing constitution of the two universities---those bodies whose especial duty it was to counteract the debilitating influence of the circumstances of the age upon individual character, and to send forth into society a succession of minds, not the creatures of their age, but capable of being its improvers and regenerators---the universities, by whom this their especial duty has been basely

neglected, until, as is usual with neglected duties, the very consciousness of it as a duty has faded from their remembrance, is not, we say, the existing constitution and the whole existing system of these Universities, down to the smallest of their abuses, the exclusion of Dissenters, a thing for which every Tory, though he may not, as he pretends, die in the last ditch, will at least vote in the last division? The Church, professedly the other great instrument of national culture, long since perverted (we speak of rules, not exceptions) into a grand instrument for discouraging all culture inconsistent with blind obedience to established maxims and constituted authorities---what Tory has a scheme in view for any changes in this body, but such as may pacify assailants, and make the institution wear a less disgusting appearance to the eye? What political Tory will not resist to the very last moment any alteration in that Church, which would prevent its livings from being the provision for a family, its dignities the reward of political or of private services? The Tories, those at least connected with parliament or office, do not aim at having good institutions, or even at preserving the present ones: their object is to profit by them while they exist.

We scruple not to express our belief that a truer spirit of conservation, as to everything good in the principles and professed objects of our old institutions, lives in many who are determined enemies of those institutions in their present state, than in most of those who call themselves Conservatives. But there are many well-meaning people who always confound attachment to an end, with pertinacious adherence to any set of means by which it either is, or is pretended to be, already pursued; and have yet to learn, that bodies of men who live in honour and importance upon the pretence of fulfilling ends which they never honestly seek, are the great hindrance to the attainment of those ends; and that whoever has the attainment really at heart, must expect a war of extermination with all such confederacies.

[The moral effects of civilization]

Thus far as to the political effects of Civilization. Its moral effects, which as yet we have only glanced at, demand further elucidation. They may be considered under two heads: the direct influence of Civilization itself upon individual character, and the moral effects produced by the insignificance into which the individual falls in comparison with the masses.

One of the effects of a high state of civilization upon character, is a relaxation of individual energy: or rather, the concentration of it within the narrow sphere of the individual's money-getting pursuits. As civilization advances, every person becomes dependent, for more and more of what most nearly concerns him, not upon his own exertions, but upon the general arrangements of society. In a rude state, each man's personal security, the protection of his family, his property, his liberty itself, depend greatly upon his bodily strength and his mental energy or cunning: in a civilized state, all this is secured to him by causes extrinsic to himself. The growing mildness of manners is a protection to him against much that he was before exposed to, while for the remainder he may rely with constantly increasing assurance upon the soldier, the policeman, and the judge; and (where the efficiency or purity of those instruments, as is usually the case, lags behind the general march of civilization)---upon the advancing strength of public opinion. There remain, as inducements to call forth energy of character, the desire of wealth or of personal aggrandizement, the passion of philanthropy, and the love of active virtue. But the objects to which these various feelings point are matters of choice, not of necessity, nor do the feelings act with anything like equal force upon all minds. The only one of them which can be considered as anything like universal, is the desire of wealth; and wealth being, in the case of the majority, the most accessible means of gratifying all their other desires, nearly the whole of the energy of character which exists in highly civilized societies concentrates itself on the pursuit of that object. In the case, however, of the most influential classes----those whose energies, if they had them, might

be exercised on the greatest scale and with the most considerable result---the desire of wealth is already sufficiently satisfied, to render them averse to suffer pain or incur much voluntary labour for the sake of any further increase. The same classes also enjoy, from their station alone, a high degree of personal consideration. Except the high offices of the State, there is hardly anything to tempt the ambition of men in their circumstances. Those offices, when a great nobleman could have them for asking for, and keep them with less trouble than he could manage his private estate, were, no doubt, desirable enough possessions for such persons; but when they become posts of labour, vexation, and anxiety, and besides cannot be had without paying the price of some previous toil, experience shows that among men unaccustomed to sacrifice their amusements and their ease, the number upon whom these high offices operate as incentives to activity, or in whom they call forth any vigour of character, is extremely limited. Thus it happens that in highly civilized countries, and particularly among ourselves, the energies of the middle classes are almost confined to money-getting, and those of the higher classes are nearly extinct.

There is another circumstance to which we may trace much both of the good and of the bad qualities which distinguish our civilization from the rudeness of former times. One of the effects of civilization (not to say one of the ingredients in it) is, that the spectacle, and even the very idea, of pain, is kept more and more out of the sight of those classes who enjoy in their fulness the benefits of civilization. The state of perpetual personal conflict, rendered necessary by the circumstances of former times, and from which it was hardly possible for any person, in whatever rank of society, to be exempt, necessarily habituated every one to the spectacle of harshness, rudeness, and violence, to the struggle of one indomitable will against another, and to the alternate suffering and infliction of pain. These things, consequently, were not as revolting even to the best and most actively benevolent men of former days, as they are to our own; and we find the recorded conduct of those men frequently such as would be universally considered very unfeeling in a person of our own day. They, however, thought less of the infliction of pain, because they thought less of pain altogether. When we read of actions of the Greeks and Romans, or of our own ancestors, denoting callousness to human suffering, we must not think that those who committed these actions were as cruel as we must become before we could do the like. The pain which they inflicted, they were in the habit of voluntarily undergoing from slight causes; it did not appear to them as at an evil, as it appears, and as it really is, to us, nor did it in any way degrade their minds. In our own time the necessity of personal collision between one person and another is, comparatively speaking, almost at an end. All those necessary portions of the business of society which oblige any person to be the immediate agent or ocular witness of the infliction of pain, are delegated by common consent to peculiar and narrow classes: to the judge, the soldier, the surgeon, the butcher, and the executioner. To most people in easy circumstances, any pain, except that inflicted upon the body by accident or disease, and upon the mind by the inevitable sorrows of life, is rather a thing known of than actually experienced. This is much more emphatically true in the more refined classes, and as refinement advances: for it is in avoiding the presence not only of actual pain, but of whatever suggests offensive or disagreeable ideas, that a great part of refinement consists. We may remark too, that this is possible only by a perfection of mechanical arrangements impracticable in any but a high state of civilization. Now, most kinds of pain and annoyance appear much more unendurable to those who have little experience of them, than to those who have much. The consequence is that, compared with former times, there is in the more opulent classes of modern civilized communities much more of the amiable and humane, and much less of the heroic. The heroic essentially consists in being ready, for a worthy object, to do and to suffer, but especially to do, what is painful or disagreeable: and whoever does not early learn to be capable of this, will never be a great character. There has crept over the refined classes, over the whole class of gentlemen in England, moral effeminacy, an inaptitude for every kind of struggle. They shrink from all effort, from everything which is troublesome and disagreeable. The same causes which render them sluggish and unenterprising, make them, it is true, for the most part, stoical under inevitable evils. But heroism is an active, not a passive quality; and

when it is necessary not to bear pain but to seek it, little needs be expected from the men of the present day- They cannot undergo labour, they cannot brook ridicule, they cannot brave evil tongues: they have not hardihood to say an unpleasant thing to any one whom they are in the habit of seeing, Or to face, even with a nation at their back, the coldness of some little coterie which surrounds them. This torpidity and cowardice, as a general characteristic, is new in the world: but (modified by the different temperaments of different nations) it is a natural consequence of the progress of civilization, and will continue until met by a system of cultivation adapted to counteract it.

If the source of great virtues thus dries up, great vices are placed, no doubt, under considerable restraint. The *régime* of public opinion is adverse to at least the indecorous vices: and as that restraining power gains strength, and certain classes or individuals cease to possess a virtual exemption from it, the change is highly favourable to the outward decencies of life. Nor can it be denied that the diffusion of even such knowledge as civilization naturally brings, has no slight tendency to rectify, though it be but partially, the standard of public opinion; to undermine many of those prejudices and superstitions which made mankind hate each other for things not really odious; to make them take a juster measure of the tendencies of actions, and weigh more correctly the evidence on which they condemn or applaud their fellow-creatures; to make, in short, their approbation direct itself more correctly to good actions, and their disapprobation to bad. What are the limits to this natural improvement in public opinion, when there is no other sort of cultivation going on than that which, is the accompaniment of civilization, we need not at present inquire. It is enough that within those limits there is an extensive range; that as much improvement in the general understanding, softening of the feelings, and decay of pernicious errors, as naturally attends the progress of wealth and the spread of reading, suffices to render the judgment of the public upon actions and persons, so far as evidence is before them, much more discriminating and correct.

But here presents itself another ramification of the effects of civilization, which it has often surprised us to find so little attended to. The individual becomes so lost in the crowd, that though he depends more and more upon opinion, he is apt to depend less and less upon well-grounded opinion; upon the opinion of those who know him. An established character be, comes at once more difficult to gain, and more easily to be dispensed with.

It is in a small society, where everybody knows everybody, that public opinion, so far as well directed, exercises its most salutary influence. Take the case of a tradesman in a small country town: to every one of his customers he is long and accurately known; their opinion of him has been formed after repeated trials; if he could deceive them once, he cannot hope to go on deceiving them in the quality of his goods; he has no other customers to look for if he loses these, while, if his goods are really what they profess to be, he may hope, among so few competitors, that this also will be known and recognised, and that he will acquire the character, individually and professionally, which his conduct entitles him to. Far different is the case of a man setting up in business in the crowded streets of a great city. If he trust solely to the quality of his goods, to the honesty and faithfulness with which he performs what he undertakes, he may remain ten years without a customer: be he ever so honest, he is driven to cry out on the housetops that his wares are the best of wares, past, present, and to come; while, if he proclaim this, however false, with sufficient loudness to excite the curiosity of passers by, and can give his commodities 'a gloss, a saleable look', not easily to be seen through at 'a superficial glance, he may drive a thriving trade though no customer ever enter his shop twice. There has been much complaint of late years, of the growth, both- in the world of trade and in that of intellect, of quackery, and especially of puffing: but nobody seems to have remarked, that these are the inevitable fruits of immense competition; of a state of society where any voice, not pitched in an exaggerated key, is lost in the hubbub. Success, in so crowded a field, depends not upon what a person is, but upon what he seems: mere marketable qualities become the object instead of substantial ones, and a man's labour

and capital are expended less in doing anything, than in persuading other people that he has done it. Our own age has seen this evil brought to its consummation. Quackery there always was, but it once was a test of the absence of sterling qualities: there was a proverb that good wine needed no bush. It is our own age which has seen the honest dealer driven to quackery, by hard necessity, and the certainty of being undersold by the dishonest. For the first time, arts for attracting public attention form a necessary part of the qualifications even of the deserving: and skill in these goes farther than any other quality towards ensuring success. The same intensity of competition drives the trading public more and more to play high for success, to throw for all or nothing; and this, together with the difficulty of sure calculations in a field of commerce so widely extended, renders bankruptcy no longer disgraceful, because no longer an almost certain presumption of either dishonesty or imprudence: the discredit which it still incurs belongs to it, alas! mainly as an indication of poverty. Thus public opinion loses another of those simple criteria of desert, which, and which alone, it is capable of correctly applying; and the very cause which has rendered it omnipotent in the gross, weakens the precision and force with which its judgment is brought home to individuals.

It is not solely on the private virtues, that this growing insignificance of the individual in the mass is productive of mischief. It corrupts the very fountain of the improvement of public opinion itself; it corrupts public teaching; it weakens the influence of the more cultivated few over the many. Literature has suffered more than any other human production by the common disease. When there were few books, and when few read at all save those who had been accustomed to read the best authors, books were written with the well-grounded expectation that they would, be read carefully, and if they deserved it, would be read often. A book of sterling merit, when it came out, was sure to be heard of, and might hope to be read, by the whole reading class; it might succeed by its real excellences, though not got up to strike at once; and even if so got up, unless it had the support of genuine merit, it fell into oblivion. The rewards were then for him who wrote *well*, not *much*; for the laborious and learned, not the crude and unformed writer. But now the case is reversed.

`This is a reading age; and precisely because it is so reading an age, any book which is the result of profound meditation is, perhaps, less likely to be duly and profitably read than at a former period. The world reads too much and too quickly to read well. When books, were few, to get through one was a work of time and labour: what was written with thought was read with thought, and with a desire to extract from it as much of the materials of knowledge as possible. But when almost every person who can spell, can and will write, what is to be done? It is difficult to know what to read, except by reading everything; and so much of the world's business is now transacted through the press, that it is necessary to know what is printed, if we desire to know what is going on. Opinion weighs with so vast a weight in the balance of events, that ideas of no value in themselves are of importance from the mere circumstance that they *are* ideas, and have a *bonâ fide* existence as such anywhere out of Bedlam. The world, in consequence, gorges itself with intellectual food, and in order to swallow the more, *bolts* it. Nothing is now read slowly, or twice over. Books are run through with no less rapidity, and scarcely leave a more durable impression, than a newspaper article. It is for this, among other causes, that so few books are produced of any, value. The lioness in the fable boasted that though she produced only one at a birth, that one was a lion. But, if each lion only counted for one, and each leveret for one, the advantage would all be on the side of the hare. When every unit is individually weak, it is only multitude that tells. What wonder that the newspapers should carry all before them? A book produces hardly a greater effect than an article, and there can be 360 of these in one year. He, therefore, who should and would write a book, and write it in the proper manner of writing a book, now dashes down his first hasty thoughts, or what he mistakes for thoughts, in a periodical. And the public is in the predicament of an indolent man, who cannot bring himself to apply his mind vigorously to his own affairs, and over whom, therefore, not he who speaks most wisely, but he who speaks most frequently, obtains the influence.' {[Ref](#)}

Hence we see that literature is becoming more and more ephemeral: books, of any solidity, are almost gone by; even reviews are not now considered sufficiently light; the attention cannot sustain itself on any serious subject, even for the space of a review article. In the more attractive kinds of literature, novels and magazines, though the demand has so greatly increased, the supply has so outstripped it, that even a novel is seldom a lucrative speculation. It is only under circumstances of rare attraction that a bookseller will now give anything to an author for copyright. As the difficulties of success thus progressively increase, all other ends are more and more sacrificed for the attainment of it; literature becomes more and more a mere reflection of the current sentiments, and has almost entirely abandoned its mission as an enlightener and improver of them.

There are now in this country, we may say, but two modes left in which an individual mind can hope to produce much direct effect upon the minds and destinies of his countrymen generally; as a member of parliament, or an editor of a London newspaper. In both these capacities much may still be done by an individual, because, while the power of the collective body is very great, the number of participants in it does not admit of much increase. One of these monopolies will be opened to competition when the newspaper stamp is taken off; whereby the importance of the newspaper press in the aggregate, considered as the voice of public opinion, will be increased, and the influence of any one writer in helping to form that opinion necessarily diminished. This we might regret, did we not remember to what ends that influence is now used, and is sure to be so while newspapers are a mere investment of capital for the sake of mercantile profit.

[The possible improvements in cooperation]

Is there, then, no remedy? Are the decay of individual energy, the weakening of the influence of superior minds over the multitude, the growth of charlatanerie, and the diminished efficacy of public opinion as a restraining power,---are these the price we necessarily pay for the benefits of civilization; and can they only be avoided by checking the diffusion of knowledge, discouraging the spirit of combination, prohibiting improvements in the arts of life, and repressing the further increase of wealth and of production? Assuredly not. Those advantages which civilization cannot give---which in its uncorrected influence it has even a tendency to destroy---may yet coexist with civilization; and it is only when joined to civilization that they can produce their fairest fruits. All that we are in danger of losing we may preserve, all that we have lost we may regain, and bring to a perfection hitherto unknown; but not by slumbering, and leaving things to themselves, no more than by ridiculously trying our strength against their irresistible tendencies: only by establishing counter-tendencies, which may combine with those tendencies, and modify them.

The evils are, that the individual is lost and becomes impotent in the crowd, and that individual character itself becomes relaxed and enervated. For the first evil, the remedy is, greater and more perfect combination among individuals; for the second, national institutions of education, and forms of polity, calculated to invigorate the individual character.

The former of these desiderata, as its attainment depends upon a change in the habits of society itself, can only be realized by degrees, as the necessity becomes felt; but circumstances are even now to a certain extent forcing it on. In Great Britain especially (which so far surpasses the rest of the old world in the extent and rapidity of the accumulation of wealth) the fall of profits, consequent upon the vast increase of population and capital, is rapidly extinguishing the class of small dealers and small producers, from the impossibility of living on their diminished profits, and is throwing business of all kinds more and more into the hands of large capitalists---whether these be rich individuals, or joint-stock companies formed by the aggregation of many small capitals. We are not among those who

believe that this progress is tending to the complete extinction of competition, or that the entire productive resources of the country will within any assignable number of ages, if ever, be administered by, and for the benefit of, a general association of the whole community. But we believe that the multiplication of competitors in all branches of business and in all professions---which renders it more and more difficult to obtain success by merit alone, more and more easy to obtain it by plausible pretence---will find a limiting principle in the progress of the spirit of co-operation; that in every overcrowded department there will arise a tendency among individuals so to unite their labour or their capital, that the purchaser or employer will have to choose, not among innumerable individuals, but among a few groups. Competition will be as active as ever, but the number of competitors will be brought within manageable bounds.

Such a spirit of co-operation is most of all wanted among the intellectual classes and professions. The amount of human labour, and labour of the most precious kind, now wasted, and wasted too in the cruellest manner, for want of combination, is incalculable. What a spectacle, for instance, does the medical profession present! One successful practitioner burthened with more work than mortal man can perform, and which he performs so summarily that it were often better let alone;---in the surrounding streets twenty unhappy men, each of whom has been as laboriously and expensively trained as he has to do the very same thing, and is possibly as well qualified, wasting their capabilities and starving for want of work. Under better arrangements these twenty would form a corps of subalterns marshalled under their more successful leader; who (granting him to be really the ablest physician of the set, and not merely the most successful impostor) is wasting time in physicking people for headaches and heartburns, which he might with better economy of mankind's resources turn over to his subordinates, while he employed his maturer powers and greater experience in studying and treating those more obscure and difficult cases upon which science has not yet thrown sufficient light, and to which ordinary knowledge and abilities would not be adequate. By such means every person's capacities would be turned to account, and the highest minds being kept for the highest things, these would make progress, while ordinary occasions would be no losers.

But it is in literature, above all, that a change of this sort is of most pressing urgency. There the system of individual competition has fairly worked itself out, and things can hardly continue much longer as they are. Literature is a province of exertion upon which more, of the first value to human nature, depends, than upon any other; a province in which the highest and most valuable order of works, those which most contribute to form the opinions and shape the characters of subsequent ages, are, more than in any other class of productions, placed beyond the possibility of appreciation by those who form the bulk of the purchasers in the book-market; insomuch that, even in ages when these were a far less numerous and more select class than now, it was an admitted point that the only success which writers of the first order could look to was the verdict of posterity. That verdict could, in those times, be confidently expected by whoever was worthy of it; for the good judges, though few in number, were sure to read every work of merit which appeared; and as the recollection of one book was not in those days immediately obliterated by a hundred others, they remembered it, and kept alive the knowledge of it to subsequent ages. But in our day, from the immense multitude of writers (which is now not less remarkable than the multitude of readers), and from the manner in which the people of this age are obliged to read, it is difficult for what does not strike during its novelty, to strike at all: a book either misses fire altogether, or is so read as to make no permanent impression; and the good equally with the worthless are forgotten by the next day.

For this there is no remedy, while the public have no guidance beyond booksellers' advertisements, and the ill-considered and hasty criticisms of newspapers and small periodicals, to direct them in distinguishing what is not worth reading from what is. The resource must in time be, some organized co-operation among, the leading intellects of the age, whereby works of first-rate merit, of whatever

class, and of whatever tendency in point of opinion, might come forth with the stamp on them, from the first, of the approval of those whose names would carry authority. There are many causes why we must wait long for such a combination; but (with enormous defects, both in plan and in execution) the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was as considerable a step towards it, as could be expected in the present state of men's minds, and in a first attempt. Literature has had in this country two ages; it must now have a third. The age of patronage, as Johnson a century ago proclaimed, is gone. The age of booksellers, it has been proclaimed by Mr. Carlyle, has well nigh died out. In the first there was nothing intrinsically base, nor in the second anything inherently independent and liberal. Each has done great things; both have had their day. The time is perhaps coming when authors, as a collective guild, will be their own patrons and their own booksellers.

[Improving British education]

These things must bide their time. But the other of the two great desiderata, the regeneration of individual character among our lettered and opulent classes, by the adaptation to that purpose of our institutions, and, above all, of our educational institutions, is an object of more urgency, and for which more might be immediately accomplished, if the will and the understanding were not alike wanting.

This, unfortunately, is a subject on which, for the inculcation of rational views, everything is yet to be done; for, all that we would inculcate, all that we deem of vital importance, all upon which we conceive the salvation of the next and all future ages to rest, has the misfortune to be almost equally opposed to the most popular doctrines of our own time, and to the prejudices of those who cherish the empty husk of what has descended from ancient times. We are at issue equally with the admirers of Oxford and Cambridge, Eton and Westminster, and with the generality of their professed reformers. We regard the system of those institutions, as administered for two centuries past, with sentiments little short of utter abhorrence. But we do not conceive that their vices would be cured by bringing their studies into a closer connexion with what it is the fashion to term 'the business of the world'; by dismissing the logic and classics which are still professedly taught, to substitute modern languages and experimental physics. We would have classics and logic taught far more really and deeply than at present, and we would add to them other studies more alien than any which yet exist to the 'business of the world', but more germane to the great business of every rational being---the strengthening and enlarging of its own intellect and character. The empirical knowledge which the world demands, which is the stock in trade of money-getting-life, we would leave the world to provide for itself; content with infusing into the youth of our country a spirit, and training them to habits, which would ensure their acquiring such knowledge easily, and using it well. These, we know, are not the sentiments of the vulgar; but we believe them to be those of the best and wisest of all parties: and we are glad to corroborate our opinion by a quotation from a work written by a friend to the Universities, and by one whose tendencies are rather Conservative than Liberal; a book which, though really, and not in form merely, one of fiction, contains much subtle and ingenious thought, and the results of much psychological experience, combined, we are compelled to say, with much caricature, and very provoking (though we are convinced unintentional) distortion and misinterpretation of the opinions of some of those with whose philosophy that of the author does not agree.

``You believe' (a clergyman *loquitor*) 'that the University is to prepare youths for a successful career in society: I believe the sole object is to give them that manly character which will enable them to resist the influences of society. I do not care to prove that I am right, and that any university which does not stand upon this basis will be rickety in its childhood, and useless or mischievous in its manhood; I care only to assert that this was the notion of those who founded Oxford and Cambridge. I fear that their successors are gradually losing sight of this principle---are gradually beginning to think

that it is their business to turn out clever lawyers and serviceable Treasury clerks---are pleased when the world compliments them upon the goodness of the article with which they have furnished it---and that this low vanity is absorbing all their will and their power to create great men, whom the age will scorn, and who will save it from the scorn of the times to come.'

``One or two such men', said the Liberal, `in a generation, may be very useful; but the University gives us two or three thousand youths every year. I suppose you are content that a portion shall do week-day services.'

``I wish to have a far more hard-working and active race than we have at present', said the clergyman; `much more persevering in toil, and less impatient of reward; but all experience, a thing which the schools are not privileged to despise, though the world is---all experience is against the notion, that the means to procure a supply of good ordinary men is to attempt nothing higher. I know that nine-tenths of those whom the University sends out must be hewers of wood and drawers of water; but, if I train the ten-tenths to be so, depend upon it the wood will be badly cut, the water will be spilt. Aim at something noble; make your system such that a great man may be formed by it, and there will be a manhood in your little men of which you do not dream. But when some skilful rhetorician, or lucky rat, stands at the top of the ladder---when the University, instead of disclaiming the creature, instead of pleading, as an excuse for themselves, that the healthiest mother may, by accident, produce a shapeless abortion, stands shouting, that the world may know what great things they can do, `we taught the boy !'---when the hatred which worldly men will bear to religion always, and to learning whenever it teaches us to soar and not to grovel, is met, not with a frank defiance, but rather with a deceitful argument to show that trade is the better for them; is it wonderful that a puny beggarly feeling should pervade the mass of our young men? that they should scorn all noble achievements, should have no higher standard of action than the world's opinion, and should conceive of no higher reward than to sit down amidst loud cheers, which continues for several moments?" {[Ref](#)}

Nothing can be more just or more forcible than the description here given of the objects which University education should aim at: we are at issue with the writer, only on the proposition that these objects ever were attained, or ever could be so, consistently with the principal which has always been the foundation of the English Universities; a principle, unfortunately, by no means confined to them. The difficulty which continues to oppose either such reform of our old academical institutions, or the establishment of such new ones, as shall give us an education capable of forming great minds, is, that in order to do so it is necessary to begin by eradicating the idea which nearly all the upholders and nearly all the impugners of the Universities rootedly entertain, as to the objects not merely of academical education, but of education itself. What is this idea? That the object of education is, not to qualify the pupil for judging what is true or what is right, but to provide that he shall think true what we think true, and right what we think right---that to teach, means to inculcate our own opinions, and that our business is not to make thinkers or inquirers, but disciples. This is the deep-seated error, the inveterate prejudice, which the real reformer of English education has to struggle against. Is it astonishing that great minds are not produced, in a country where the tent of a great mind is, agreeing in the opinions of the small minds? where every institution for spiritual culture which the country has---the Church, the Universities, and almost every dissenting community---are constituted on the following as their avowed principle: that the object, is, *not* that the individual should go forth determined and qualified to seek truth ardently, vigorously, and disinterestedly; *not* that he be furnished at setting out with the needful aids and facilities, the needful materials and instruments for that search, and then left to the unshackled use of them; *not* that, by a free communion with the thoughts and deeds of the great minds which preceded him, he be inspired at once with the courage to dare all which truth and conscience require, and the modesty to weigh well the grounds of what others think, before adopting contrary opinions of his own: *not* this---no; but that the triumph of the system, the merit, the

excellence in the sight of God which it possesses, or which it can impart to its pupil, is, that his speculations shall terminate in the adoption, in words, of a particular set of opinions. That provided he adhere to these opinions, it matters little whether he receive them from authority or from examination; and worse, that it matters little by what temptations of interest or vanity, by what voluntary or involuntary sophistication with his intellect, and deadening of his noblest feelings, that result is arrived at; that it even matters comparatively little whether to his mind the words are mere words, or the representatives of realities in what sense he receives the favoured set of propositions, or whether he attaches to them any sense at all. Were ever great minds thus formed? Never. The few great minds which this country has produced have been formed in spite of nearly everything which could be done to stifle their growth. And all thinkers, much above the common order, who have grown up in the Church of England, or in any other Church, have been produced in latitudinarian epochs, or while the impulse of intellectual emancipation which gave existence to the Church had not quite spent itself. The flood of burning metal which issued from the furnace, flowed on a few paces before it congealed.

That the English Universities have, throughout, proceeded on the principle, that the intellectual association of mankind must be founded upon articles, *i. e.* upon a promise of belief in certain opinions; that the scope of all they do is to prevail upon their pupils, by fair means or foul, to acquiesce in the opinions which are set down for them; that the abuse of the human faculties so forcibly denounced by Locke, under the name of 'principling' their pupils, is their sole method in religion, politics, morality, or philosophy---is vicious indeed, but the vice is equally prevalent without and within their pale, and is no farther disgraceful to them than inasmuch as a better doctrine has been taught for a century past by the superior spirits, with whom in point of intelligence it was their duty to maintain themselves on a level. But, that when this object was attained they cared for no other; that if they could make churchmen, they cared not to make religious men; that if they could make Tories, whether they made patriots was indifferent to them; that if they could prevent heresy, they cared not if the price paid were stupidity---this constitutes the peculiar baseness of those bodies. Look at them. While their sectarian character, while the exclusion of all who will not sign away their freedom of thought, is contended for as if life depended upon it, there is hardly a trace in the system of the Universities that any other object whatever is seriously cared for. Nearly all the professorships have degenerated into sinecures. Few of the professors ever deliver a lecture. One of the few great scholars who have issued from either University for a century (and he was such before he went thither), the Rev. Connop Thirlwall, has published to the world that in his University at least, even theology---even Church of England theology---is not taught; and his dismissal, for this piece of honesty. from the tutorship of his college, is one among the daily proofs how much safer it is for twenty men to neglect their duty, than for one man to impeach them of the neglect. The only studies really encouraged are classics and mathematics; both of them highly valuable studies, though the last, as an exclusive instrument for fashioning the mental powers, greatly overrated; but Dr. Whewell, a high authority against his own University, has published a pamphlet, chiefly to prove that the kind of mathematical attainment by which Cambridge honours are gained, expertness in the use of the calculus, is not that kind which has any tendency to produce [superiority of intellect](#). The mere shell and husk of the syllogistic logic at the one University, the wretchedest smattering of Locke and Paley at the other, are all of moral or psychological science that is [taught at either](#). As a means of educating the many, the Universities are absolutely null. The youth of England are not educated. The attainments of any kind required for taking all the degrees conferred by these bodies are, at Cambridge, utterly contemptible; at Oxford, we believe, of late years, somewhat higher, but still very low. Honours, indeed, are not gained but by a severe struggle; and if even the candidates for honours were mentally benefited, the system would not be worthless. But what have the senior wranglers done, even in mathematics? Has Cambridge produced, since Newton, one great mathematical genius? We do not say an Euler, a Laplace, or a Lagrange, but such as France has, produced a score of during the same period. How many books which have thrown light upon the history, antiquities, philosophy, art, or literature of the ancients, have the two Universities sent forth

since the Reformation? Compare them not merely with Germany, but even with Italy or France. When a man is pronounced by them to have excelled in their studies, what do the Universities do? They give him an income, not for continuing to learn, but for having learnt; not for doing anything, but for what he has already done: on condition solely of living like a monk, and putting on the livery of the Church at the end of seven years. They bribe men by high rewards to get their arms ready, but do not require them to fight. {[Note](#)}

Are these the places of education which are to send forth minds capable of maintaining a victorious struggle with the debilitating influences of the age, and strengthening the weaker side of Civilization by the support of a higher cultivation? This, however, is what we require from these institutions; or, in their default, from others which should take their place. And the very first step towards their reform should be to unsectarianize them wholly---not by the paltry measure of allowing Dissenters to come and be taught orthodox sectarianism, but by putting an end to sectarian teaching altogether. The principle itself of dogmatic religion, dogmatic morality, dogmatic philosophy, is what requires to be rooted out; not any particular manifestation of that principle.

The very corner-stone of an education intended to form great minds, must be the recognition of the principle, that the object is to call forth the greatest possible quantity of intellectual *power*, and to inspire the intensest *love of truth*: and this without a particle of regard to the results to which the exercise of that power may lead, even though it should conduct the pupil to opinions diametrically opposite to those of his teachers. We say this, not because we think opinions unimportant, but because of the immense importance which we attach to them; for in proportion to the degree of intellectual power and love of truth which we succeed in creating, is the certainty that (whatever may happen in any one particular instance) in the aggregate of instances true opinions will be the result; and intellectual power and practical love of truth are alike impossible where the reasoner is shown his conclusions, and informed beforehand that he is expected to arrive at them.

We are not so absurd as to propose that the teacher should not set forth his own opinions as the true ones and exert his utmost powers to exhibit their truth in the strongest light. To abstain from this would be to nourish the worst intellectual habit of all, that of not finding, and not looking for, certainty in any teacher. But the teacher himself should not be held to any creed; nor should the question be whether his own opinions are the true ones, but whether he is well instructed in those of other people, and, in enforcing his own, states the arguments for all conflicting opinions fairly. In this spirit it is that all the great subjects are taught from the chairs of the German and French Universities. As a general rule, the most distinguished teacher is selected, whatever be his particular views, and he consequently teaches in the spirit of free inquiry, not of dogmatic imposition.

Such is the principle of all academical instruction which aims at forming great minds. The details could not be too various and comprehensive. Ancient literature would fill a large place in such a course of instruction; because it brings before us the thoughts and actions of many great minds, minds of many various orders of greatness, and these related and exhibited in a manner tenfold more impressive, tenfold more calculated to call forth high aspirations, than in any modern literature. Imperfectly as these impressions are made by the current modes of classical teaching, it is incalculable what we owe to this, the sole ennobling feature in the slavish, mechanical thing which the moderns call education. Nor is it to be forgotten among the benefits of familiarity with the monuments of antiquity, and especially those of Greece, that we are taught but to appreciate and to admire intrinsic greatness, amidst opinions, habits, and institutions most remote from ours; and are thus trained to that large and catholic toleration, which is founded on understanding, not on indifference---and to a habit of free, open sympathy with powers of mind and nobleness of character, howsoever exemplified. Were but the languages and literature of antiquity so taught that the glorious images they present might stand before

the student's eyes as living and glowing realities---that instead of lying a *caput mortuum* at the bottom of his mind, like some foreign substance in no way influencing the current of his thoughts or the tone of his feelings, they might circulate through it, and become assimilated, and be part and parcel of himself!---then should we see how little these studies have yet done for us, compared with what they have yet to do.

An important place in the system of education which we contemplate would be occupied by history: because it is the record of all great things which have been achieved by mankind, and because when philosophically studied it gives a certain largeness of conception to the student, and familiarizes him with the action of great causes. In no other way can he so completely realize in his own mind (howsoever he may be satisfied with the proof of them as abstract propositions) the great principles by which the progress of man and the condition of society are governed. Nowhere else will the infinite varieties of human nature be so vividly brought home to him, and anything cramped or one-sided in his own standard of it so effectually corrected; and nowhere else will he behold so strongly exemplified the astonishing pliability of our nature, and the vast effects which may under good guidance be produced upon it by honest endeavour. The literature of our own and other modern nations should be studied along with the history, or rather as part of the history.

In the department of pure intellect, the highest place will belong to logic and the philosophy of mind: the one, the instrument for the cultivation of all sciences; the other, the root from which they all grow. It scarcely needs be said that the former ought not to be taught as a mere system of technical rules, nor the latter as a set of concatenated abstract propositions. The tendency, so strong everywhere, is strongest of all here, to receive opinions into the mind without any real understanding of them, merely because they seem to follow from certain admitted premises, and to let them be there as forms of words, lifeless and void of meaning. The pupil must be led to interrogate his own consciousness, to observe and experiment upon himself: of the mind, by any other process, little will he ever know.

With these should be joined all those sciences, in which great and certain results are arrived at by mental processes of some length or nicety: not that all persons should study all these sciences, but that some should study all, and all some. These may be divided into sciences of mere ratiocination, as mathematics; and sciences partly of ratiocination, and partly of what is far more difficult, comprehensive observation and analysis. Such are, in their *rationale*, even the sciences to which mathematical processes are applicable: and such are all those which relate to human nature. The philosophy of morals, of government, of law, of political economy, of poetry and art, should form subjects of systematic instruction, under the most eminent professors who could be found; these being chosen, not for the particular doctrines they might happen to profess, but as being those who were most likely to send forth pupils qualified in point of disposition and attainments to choose doctrines for themselves. And why should not religion be taught in the same manner? Not until then will one step be made towards the healing of religious differences: not until then will the spirit of English religion become catholic instead of sectarian, favourable instead of hostile to freedom of thought and the progress of the human mind.

With regard to the changes, in forms of polity and social arrangements, which in addition to reforms in education, we conceive to be required for regenerating the character of the higher classes; to express them even summarily would require a long discourse. But the general idea from which they all emanate, may be stated briefly. Civilization has brought about a degree of security and fixity in the possession of all advantages once acquired, which has rendered it possible for a rich man to lead the life of a Sybarite, and nevertheless enjoy throughout life a degree of power and consideration which could formerly be earned or retained only by personal activity. We cannot undo what civilization has

done, and again stimulate the energy of the higher classes by insecurity of property, or danger of life or limb. The only adventitious motive it is in the power of society to hold out, is reputation and consequence; and of this as much use as possible should be made for the encouragement of desert. The main thing which social changes can do for the improvement of the higher classes---and it is what the progress of democracy is insensibly but certainly accomplishing---is gradually to put an end to every kind of unearned distinction, and let the only road open to honour and ascendancy be that of personal qualities. The question often is, which is least prejudicial to the intellect, uncultivation or malcultivation. For, as long as education consists chiefly of the mere inculcation of traditional opinions, many of which, from the mere fact that the human intellect has not yet reached perfection, must necessarily be false; so long as even those who are best taught, are rather taught to know the thoughts of others than to think, it is not always clear that the poet of acquired ideas has the advantage over him whose feeling has been his sole teacher. For, the depth and durability of wrong as well as of right impressions, is proportional to the fineness of the material; and they who have the greatest capacity of natural feeling are generally those whose artificial feelings are the strongest. Hence, doubtless, among other reasons, it is, that in an age of revolutions in opinion, the contemporary poets, those at least who deserve the name, those who have any individuality of character, if they are not before their age, are almost sure to be behind it. An observation curiously verified all over Europe in the present century. Nor let it be thought disparaging. However urgent may be the necessity for a breaking up of old modes of belief, the most strong-minded and discerning, next to those who head the movement, are generally those who bring up the rear of it.