Review Section.

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The whole nineteenth century may be called a transition period in the history of the world, yet in a peculiar sense the two decades from 1830 to 1850 constitute an epoch of reform and revolution. It was a time of readjustment from the old to the new order of things. It saw so many inventions and striking developments that men were bewildered by the wonderful advances of civilization. Their minds were literally overwhelmed with vast acquisitions of knowledge. Fresh light was poured on a thousand subjects. The mass of facts accumulated too rapidly to be digested. The astonishing progress of science revolutionized the old, slow-going ways of thinking and living. Former theories were challenged and overturned. Time-honored conceptions were modified and many false notions corrected. Longaccepted views were revised. Venerable beliefs were weighed and found wanting. Myths, traditions, and cherished fancies melted away before the light of destructive criticism. The records and institutions of the past received a much-needed and violent shaking up.

There were men at Cambridge and Oxford in the 'thirties and 'forties who were possessed of the critical spirit, who determined "to sound things thoroughly," to shake themselves free from the restraints of prejudice and unreasonableness. "Be sure you distrust," was the motto of the Noetics of Oriel College. They rendered England and the world a service in dissipating the darkness of error and superstition. Such doubt was fruitful of good—it led to the clearing away of much antiquated rubbish.

On the other hand, there were some carried away by the revolutionary temper of the time, iconoclasts without learning or scientific method, who were not fitted by training or temperament to distinguish between the false and the true, who did an incalculable injury to the cause of science as well as to that of religion. In their eagerness to break with the past, they manifested a disposition to jump to conclusions not warranted by the facts. Even learned naturalists formed hasty generalizations and too often found their hypotheses unsupported by further observation. The feverish excitement of the time was not favorable to the cultivation of the scientific spirit, which proceeds cautiously and attentively. The process of verifying was too slow. As the poet sings in "Locksley Hall":

"Science moves but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point."

The genuine student, accustomed to painstaking research, is a conservative. It is the superficial thinker who is inclined to be revolutionary, who imagines himself fitted to make sweeping changes and to save mankind by impossible projects. The singer of "Locksley Hall" beheld a condition in which knowledge, the mere accumulation of details, had outrun reflection—it had not ripened into wisdom.

"Immediately on the passing of the Reform Bill," says Ward, "a general attack seemed imminent on the sacredness of tradition in

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