

Buchan by road or canal will appreciate the difference and those who go to Edinburgh or Glasgow in the morning, transact a full day's business, and come home at night, can reckon the enormous stride. There is thus an immense mingling of people, a constant movement, and an amount of intercourse that cannot fail to influence the mental and moral constitution, partly for good, partly for ill. In connection with this we note the increased means of communication. The postal service, the electric telegraph, and the telephone, have made communication easy, cheap and effective, have annihilated distance, and made of the dwellers in the land one community, the members of which are in closest daily contact. Here also we see an influence continuously modifying modes of life, and intimately affecting character.

Comforts and luxuries are much more widely disseminated. Housees even for wage-earners have more conveniences than the mansions of the gentry could boast sixty years ago. The furniture of "the room" vies in elegance with that of the west end residence. Articles of dress no sooner appear at one end of the scale than they flash forth at the other. Games, which once were the amusement of the aristocrat, are now open to every rank. Even the lordly horse must yield the monopoly of the highway to the democratic bicycle.

Holidays were once the perquisite of the cultured few. Now they are claimed and enjoyed in ever increasing measure by all. It used to be the privilege of the upper classes to devote time and attention to amusement. Amusement is now the passion, the intoxication of every social grade. These changes lie on the surface : but they imply much deeper changes, affecting the very springs of character.

3. The Enlargement of Political Liberty. The initial step had been taken in 1832, five years before the Queen's accession, of the passing of the first great Reform Bill, by which "pocket burghs" were abolished, and Parliament was made more truly a representative body. The electorate was largely extended by the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884. The Ballot Act of 1872 gave to every voter the protection of secrecy, and rendered him independent of the great man's power or favor. Political power is now vested in the people inhabiting these realms. The man in the street governs the British Empire. The Press expresses and influences public opinion. What the citizens wish, the Government must execute. This means that the average man is in certain profound respects a different being, from what he was sixty years ago. A new sphere of action opens to him. A new dignity belongs to him. New responsibilities devolve upon him. It still remains to be seen how he will use his new position and privileges.

4. The Advance of Science. Not even the slightest review of the Victorian Era can omit mention of the marvellous strides which have been made in every department of research. The Science of Medicine is advancing in knowledge and skill year by year. The discovery of anæsthesia, and of the anti-septic treatment belong to this period : and the discovery of the Roentgen rays has added another to the fairy tales of science. In Biology, the great name of Darwin stands pre-eminent. His discoveries, and his method have opened up a limitless field of successful enquiry. Every department of Science has shared this quickening. Never before in the history of the world, was truth so loved or so passionately sought after. The modern man stands in the midst of a universe, whose immensity, beauty, and