

THE POWER OF RIGHT THINKING AND RIGHT CONDUCT.

*Stare super vias antiquas.*



O come before an Academic audience without an academic address in one's pocket is never wise, since an audience of that kind is nothing if not critical. Therefore when I was invited to prepare a paper for the Christmas number of the University organ, it was natural I should cast about for a subject which would justify me in asking a reader's notice. Now, in a world which resounds day and night with heated debate, and rancorous contention, with earnest appeals from every sort of pulpit and platform, from the thunder of the quarterlies to the penny-whistles of the press, from the steps of the Vatican and the sanctum of Henry George, there can be no great difficulty in finding a subject in which men trained to think seriously upon serious subjects as well as merrily upon merry subjects, shall be reasonably interested. And on this very question of right thinking, and the right conduct which is the necessary and natural result, in general, of right thinking, it is proposed here to say some few words. It may be that they will not be academic words, for, although I have been in Arcady, it is long ago, and I but dimly remember the way to the land and have forgotten the tongues of the people.

As a good letter of introduction is of great value to one who goes into a strange society, so let me recommend myself thus early by a quotation from Cardinal Newman who may be always trusted to have said the best thing on the greatest questions. "I say," he writes "that one main portion of intellectual education, of the labours of both school and university, is, to remove the original dimness of the mind's eye; to strengthen and perfect its vision; to enable it to look out into the world, right forward, steadily and truly; to give the mind clearness, accuracy, precision; to enable it to use words aright, to understand what it says, to conceive justly what it thinks about, to abstract, compare, analyse, divide, define, and rea-

son correctly." To communicate this quality to the mind is the business of a university. To acquire this quality of mind is the business of every man who proposes to himself a career in which the right use of his intellect for the guidance or the governing of men, in any direction, will be necessary.

How best shall we set about obtaining this quality of mind? One way, at least, has long been in my mind the best way, and that is by setting up in all directions a steady Standard of Authority, and by maintaining always a constant loyalty to that standard.

To proceed regularly, let us see how desperate the need is for some such standard.

In religion, we see the need every day. I shall not dwell upon this subject because I am not inclined to pose as that pestilent nuisance, an amateur theologian. But this much may be said, that outside of the Catholic Church the absence of a standard of authority leaves the so-called religious world in a state of hopeless confusion. The Lord Chancellor of England is correctly said to have "dismissed Hell with costs"—*i.e.* that a man may deny its existence, yet remain a preacher and even become a Bishop. A prominent clergyman publicly questions the doctrine of Eternal punishment, but his brethren support him, by a majority, and so the question was—defeated at the polls. A new American Bishop is popularly described as having "strong leanings towards Christianity." Christianity is, in fact, among large masses of men outside the Church, on the defensive; and the mental attitude of many "educated" people is much like that of the Englishman at Rome, who paused before the statue of Jupiter, and said: "Sir, if you ever get your head above water again, I hope you will remember that I paid my respects to you in your adversity."

Next to religion, Politics affects most deeply the fortunes of mankind. Indeed nations have lost the Faith, but have never parted with their political tendencies and traditions. Yet in politics what confusion,