

ing to the masses. This fact is profoundly significant. If power is given to those who have not the intelligence to use it wisely, the result has always been disastrous. The very idea that the most ignorant and vicious classes may shortly be holding the balance of political power in our country, is truly alarming. It reminds us that we must educate the people, or else submit to let ignorance seize the helm of the ship of state, and steer her on the reefs of destruction. It was a suggestive fact, that immediately after the passing of the English Reform Act, an important educational measure is introduced, designed to afford the advantages of education to all classes of society not reached by previous agencies. I advert to this tendency, to call your attention to our obligation to educate the rising generation, intellectually and morally, if we would save our country from the evils of political degeneracy and corruption. As thistles on our neighbour's farm may shed their baneful seed on our soil, the ignorance and vice around us may, if unremoved, prove the ruin and blight of those in whom we are most deeply interested.

THE "WOMAN'S RIGHTS" QUESTION, VIEWED EDUCATIONALLY.

Fourth.—The tendency to recognize the rights and elevate the condition of woman, is one of these signs of an advancing civilization, that I hail with great satisfaction. I must confess that there is a good deal said in some quarters just now on this subject, with which I do not fully sympathize. But I freely confess that in many particulars the laws have treated her exceptionally; and social customs and prejudices have been equally unjust and severe. Neither law nor public sentiment should debar her from any sphere of remunerative labour or usefulness, which she may desire to occupy. She should be the best judge in every case, as to whether she should engage in any special work. I am always doubtful of that class of "friends" who think they know better what is good for you than you do yourself; and will oppose your attainment of some object because in their wisdom they think you are better without it. I especially think it is time that the distinctions in the provisions for the education for boys and girls should come to an end. There is no justice in endowing colleges and making ample grants for boys' schools, and leaving girls to grow up without any provision for continuing the education begun in the common school. I confess, however, I see no advantage likely to accrue from wives and mothers coming to the polls and taking part in the strife of political elections. Single women who hold property in their own right should not be denied the privilege of voting if they so desire. But there is no inferiority implied, when we maintain that woman is evidently designed to fill a different sphere of usefulness from man. Difference does not imply inferiority. I hold that in many respects she is vastly our superior. And if I would in any degree appear to exclude her from any employ to which men have access, it is not because I would deny her any privilege or right, but because I would, as far as possible, shield her from everything that would tend to make her more like the opposite sex, or in any degree rob her of that indefinable delicacy, tenderness, and gentleness that are the charm and glory of womanhood. In one thing we will all agree. If the new reformation should, by opening up new spheres of labor, deprive us of her gentle ministries in sickness and suffering, it will be a great loss to the world: and it will not be easy to find any one to take her place.

GROWTH OF BENEVOLENT AND PHILANTHROPIC ENTERPRISE.

Fifth.—One of the most marked features of the times is the extent to which all philanthropic efforts are carried on by the agency of organized associations. Nothing can be accomplished now without forming a society, with President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Committee of Management. Well, this popular method has its advantages. It organizes available resources. It enlists the feeble and indifferent, who if left to themselves would do nothing. It lays hold of the social element in our nature, and utilizes it by yoking it to some work of practical benevolence. And it gratifies a certain class of small persons with office and position, that probably could not be made to feel the force of any higher motives. And yet, this system has its disadvantages. It frequently causes delay; and the evil is allowed to remain uncorrected, as if nothing could be done till a sufficient number is enlisted to form an Association. Then, although these associations may organize and utilize power, and even in some instances increase it, they do not create power. You may have a well organized association on paper, that looks very imposing; but if there is not interest or zeal to work its machinery, it is just like a very large mill on a very small stream; there is not force enough to run it. But the worst thing about this system of working is that it tends to destroy individuality. There can be no real greatness of character without independence and individuality. And if we would have men to lead us onward and upward in knowledge and true progress, we must have less aping and imitation of those who have attained distinction, and more honest

daring to be ourselves, and to do the work we have to do in our own way. There is a paralyzing slavery to popular opinion widely prevalent. The majority of people are a great deal more anxious to know what is popular in good society, than what is right and true. All the great movements that have lifted humanity up to a higher place, have been inaugurated by the zeal and energy of individuals; and all the great minds who have indicated their right to be held in everlasting remembrance, and stamped their influence on the history of the world's progressive life, have been distinguished by a brave independence, which developed strongly marked individuality of character. If the society aims at achieving any worthy work, join it and co-operate with it by all means. But don't wait for others before you attempt to do anything. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." An earnest soul soon reproduces its convictions in others. And remember that the highest attainable force of character is won not by slavish conformity to popular prejudices or imitation of great men—but by bravely and independently acting out in our own way our convictions of what is right and true.

HERO AND IDOL AND MAMMON WORSHIP.

Sixth.—Among those features of the times, that can only be mentioned to be condemned, is the disposition to worship any form of power, without regard for the spirit in which it is wielded. There is an extensive proneness to idolatry of mere intellect or genius. Let it be a poet gifted with original genius—a musician of witching melody—an artist of exquisite skill—an engineer of marvellous ingenuity—or a writer of fertile genius, and multitudes are ready to render a homage and applause, little short of idolatry, without regard for the motives that govern the life. And not only so, but if a man wins distinction in any one department of science, there is a strange disposition to set him up as an oracle, and regard his utterances on other matters, of which he may be profoundly ignorant, as unquestionable and decisive. What is splendour of talent without purity of purpose or nobleness of character? Great genius cannot make wrong right, nor free its possessor from the obligations of the divine laws. On the contrary, the more numerous the talents bestowed, the greater the obligations of the receiver. He that possesses rare endowments of intellect and ample stores of knowledge, qualifying him to be a leader and teacher of men, has certainly weightier obligations to obey the laws of purity and rectitude than the ungifted and ignorant. And if such an one be false to his high trust, his rare gifts will not lighten, but deepen his condemnation. This homage and idolatry, bestowed on mere intellect without regard to the use made of it, corrupts and bewilders alike those who render it, and those who receive it. If "he builds too low who builds beneath the skies," he is false to the dignity of his nature who renders to talent what is due to goodness alone. Closely allied to this idolatry or intellect, and springing from the same root, is the prevailing idolatry of wealth, and the respect rendered to those who possess it. Wealth represents generally success, and men idolize success. It represents power, and men worship it as a form of power. This tendency is as widespread as it is pernicious. The intense desire for wealth is the fruitful source of many of the evils which afflict society. It may well be called "the root of all evil." It inspires a large portion of the falsehood and dishonesty that prevail among men. It petrifies the heart against the appeals of want and suffering; and bribes the conscience to forget the claims of charity and brotherhood. It is as inimical to the culture of the intellect, as it is to the improvement of the heart; and it perverts powers which if rightly exercised might have lifted us near to heaven, into instruments of mere sordid, selfish acquisition. It gilds over the most glaring faults of character, and the most reprehensible courses of conduct. It has inspired that wild spirit of speculation, that has given birth to the enormous dishonesties of many corporate bodies, and the fraudulent measures adopted in companies by men who would individually recoil from such expedients. And it erects a false standard of worth and respectability in every community; and makes poverty a greater fault than crime. That wealth is a potent means of usefulness, an instrument of civilization and comfort all must admit. But to make it the great object of life is to bind down the eagle powers of the soul to an object unworthy of our high birth right, as heirs of immortality. Assuredly there are grander objects of ambition than wealth. The men of imperishable fame, as benefactors of humanity, are not the millionaires; but men "who knew no standard of superior worth, but wisdom, truth, and nobleness of soul." There are many other features of the period in which we live, that would repay our thoughtful study; but time will not permit us to discuss them at present.

LESSONS OF INSTRUCTION AND WARNING.—TEACHERS FOR THE TIMES.

But even in this rapid glance we have seen enough to convince us that these are times, in which it is at once a glorious privilege and a