

of him, would the contractor spend money to improve them? Remember, that once this monster gets a hold on you—once let these books in—and they will be like the Old Man of

the Sea; you will be unable to shake them off. For the sake of the schools, for the sake of the children, let us unanimously protest against any and all such legislation.

THE SECURE HOLD OF EDUCATION.

ONE of those controversies about education which break out from time to time, no one knows how, is now raging in England. Everything seems to be quiet, all the principles settled, the schools and the universities going serenely about their work; when suddenly all is confusion and turmoil. The trouble usually arises from a radical or startling utterance by some innovator or lover of paradox. He perhaps questions or denies one or more of the fundamental theories of modern education. Thereupon the whole learned world at once agog; the air is thick with big-wigs and lexicons; the entire subject of education is threshed out again, to the last straw, with a young zeal as if nothing had ever been said or written about it before. Then a long breath is drawn, and quiet reigns again until the next disturber of the peace comes along.

Prof. Mahaffy appears to have been the one to fire the train this time. He chose the occasion of giving some prizes at Mason College, Birmingham, not to congratulate the lucky recipients on their attainments and advantages, but to take up a doleful parable against modern education in general. He doubted if the schools gave as good an education as they did thirty years ago; at any rate, he had discovered frightful ignorance among graduates of his acquaintance. Anyhow, even if the education of to-day were skilfully conducted, what were its results? He had himself known students of his own in Trinity College, Dublin, to turn out remark-

able criminals. Did that not argue something wrong with the system? He modestly said nothing about what it argued in the teachers. But, however that might be, he had the gravest doubts whether the diffusion of education had diffused morality or happiness. We looked about, and on all hands what did we see? Discontent, degeneracy, loose thinking and looser morals, wretched lives, and a hopeless outlook.

Perhaps the most effective comment upon these gloomy remarks of Prof. Mahaffy's was that made a little later by the Duke of Devonshire in opening a new technical school. He declined to enter into an abstract discussion of the question whether education was essential or really conduced to happiness. The practical truth to recognize was that the people had pronounced for popular education, and that, therefore, it must go on. They have the power to decide, and they will never decide to allow themselves or their descendants to fall back into the state of general ignorance which marked the time when, some are saying, people were happier, if more ignorant. The secure hold of education in the modern world is due to the fact that, whether or not it makes people happier or better, it is necessary for them, if they are to continue to exist. Thus education takes its place as a necessary part of the struggle for existence.

This is, of course, especially true of technical education. Science and art enter more and more intimately into the conduct of every one of our