

remarks in another place,* that so far is the "increase of natural knowledge" from being hurtful to religion, that it "leadeth to the greater exaltation of the glory of God," by making us better acquainted with His "great and wonderful works."

There is one argument against the pursuit of knowledge which may receive a moment's consideration. It is sometimes said that it is of no use striving to increase one's knowledge, since "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Eccl. i. 18); in other words, the more a man learns the more he becomes aware of his own ignorance, the less contented he is with his actual attainments, the more also he feels how arduous is the way which has to be trodden before we reach the clear heights of truth. But surely we have here no argument which can prevail with men who know aught of true human dignity. Is it well that we should be ignorant, and satisfied with our ignorance? Is slothful ease and self-indulgence to be put into competition with truth gained with the sweat of the face? Every noble impulse within us protests against this supposition. In every age the men of royal minds have told us that there is something better than ease and freedom from pain.

"The happy man," says Aristotle,† "is not he who sleeps, but he who works; and the gods themselves are happy only when they are in action, for apparently they are not always sleeping, like Endymion." To the same general effect, Plato declares, "No one would wish to be always a child, even though he were promised all the pleasures which can be enjoyed at that age." And a writer of our own times,‡ has declared in language

deeper and stronger, because it has a higher inspiration: "All dignity is painful, and a life of ease is not for any man, nor for any god. The life of all gods figures itself to us as a sublime sadness—earnestness of infinite battle against infinite labour. Our highest religion is named the 'Worship of Sorrow.' For the son of man there is no noble crown, well-worn, or even ill-worn, but is a crown of thorns." It will not be easy to convince men who have drunk in such thoughts of human capacity and achievement, to forsake the pursuit of knowledge because it involves labour and sorrow.

But it is time to turn to the positive advantages of knowledge. And they are great and numerous. Even if we could not enumerate them, could we not say that knowledge in itself is a delight, a delight to the heart and mind as light is to the eye? "Truly," says the preacher,* "the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." When its rays are pouring upon us, we do not stop to consider how many advantages it confers upon us; we rejoice in them simply because they are a joy. And this is most emphatically true of real knowledge, for, as Shakespeare says, "there is no darkness but ignorance."†

And the longer we think on the subject, the more clearly does its greatness stand out before our view. Perhaps the one advantage which suggests itself first to almost every reflecting mind is the strength which comes from knowledge. Whilst ignorance is weakness, knowledge is power. Knowledge, as Bacon reminds us, is a part of God's power,‡ and so it is a principal element in human power. Knowledge itself is power. "Nam et ipsa scientia potentia est." So Shakespeare says, "Ignorance is the curse of God; knowledge, the

* "Interpretation of Nature." Works, iii. 221.

† Ethics, i.

‡ Carlyle, "Past and Present." Bk. iii. c. 4.

* Eccles. xi. 7.

† Twelfth Night

‡ Med. Sacr. Works, vii. 253.