

we may estimate the importance of the work done by further considering in what way it tends to promote and elevate the whole man, and to what extent.

With these principles then we turn to the medical profession, and we look out for what we may call its special purpose. Can we, in one word, say what it aims at; and if we can, will our standard help us to estimate the relative importance of the aim? Now I do not think any one will accuse me of going far wrong if I define the aim of the medical profession to be the cure of diseases. Its aim is not to promote the physical well-being of man directly. It waits until some great wrong has taken place in the frame, and then it steps in and attempts to overthrow the obstruction, and send man again on in his ordinary course. It does not, properly speaking, cover the whole of a man's physical career, but when that physical career swerves from the right path, then it comes forward to turn it again into the right path. Now for my part I do not think that this aim is in itself so high an aim, nor is the healing work so high a work, as keeping the body out of disease. A higher art, in every way a nobler art, would be the maintenance of the body in sound health. Medical men have contributed much to a knowledge of those laws which are the conditions of health, and for this they deserve the gratitude of mankind; but as the medical profession is at present constituted, this work of prevention does not lie in their way as a profession. The nobler part of the work really lies in teachers' hands, though the work is very imperfectly done, for it is their business to inculcate on their pupils those laws of health which will keep them out of the hands of the doctor.

Nor has the medical man much to boast of in regard to the certainty of his operations. The subject of investigation is perhaps the most difficult of all the subjects submitted to man's consideration. He has to experiment in the dark, he can see the most vital parts only after they have lost their vitality, and he can ascertain most of the results of experiments on living beings, only when life has ceased to exist, and the conditions are entirely altered. Hence it is that, while skilful medical men are well able to recognise most diseases, their methods of cure are purely empirical, and they will themselves be among the first to confess that their skill is human, and that they work at a peradventure.

Let us look now for a moment at law. What should we say is the aim or purpose of the legal profession? We must here divide its aim according as lawyers have to deal with criminal or civil cases. The aim of the legal profession then, as far as criminal cases are concerned, is to put down scoundrels. It deals only with those who break, or are supposed to break, the laws of their country. In other words, it deals with some of the mental diseases of the lowest class of people. But it does not go the length to which medicine goes in dealing with bodies. The lawyer does not grapple with the mental disease. He does not, professionally at least, attempt to elevate the scoundrel. He merely puts an extinguisher on him for the time; but the scoundrel may remain a scoundrel, nay, may be a worse scoundrel than before. In civil cases it is somewhat more difficult to give in one word the aim of the legal profession. But here also for the most part it is to prevent the action of the violent passions of one class from doing injury to other men. The aim is not to change the mind of the grasping or quarrelsome litigant, but to prevent him doing harm. And the character of the work done may be fairly gathered from the advice given by sensible lawyers, that he is the wisest man who has nothing to do with law. I have in these remarks made no mention of what perhaps should be stated as the real aim of the legal profession, to protect the great mass of the community from the depredations of scoundrels and rogues. This is a grand result. But as I am speaking of professional activity, and as this is a purely negative result, it does not come exactly within my range. Positively lawyers have to deal with the lowest portions of the community for the most part, they have to deal with the lowest phases of human life; and they have to deal with these, not in the way of radical reformation, but of temporary forcible repression of outward manifestation.

We turn to the third class of learned professions, that of the minister or clergyman. It is much more difficult to state the aim of this profession, because people conceive the aim differently according to creed and tradition, and because he may, if he is so minded, identify his aim as a man with that of his profession. Thus, for instance, I hold that it is not an especial aim of the clergyman's profession that he should turn the souls of men to God. This I consider the grandest and noblest work on earth. This work, too, I take it, assumes two forms in the present day in Christian countries. The first, and I believe the highest, is when the preacher, or teacher, or parent, or whoever he be that can do it, takes the child from the earliest years, and through God's blessing, so trains him in God's ways that he is a child of God from his childhood. The other form is when the preacher, teacher, or whoever else it be, through God's blessing, turns a man who has been self-seeking and selfish to see the necessity and pleasure of having God's reign in his heart, and thus turns him from an earthly and selfish life to a heavenly and divine life. But this is not specially the work of the minister or clergyman. This is the work of every Christian, whatever be his profession; and it is a work accomplished most frequently, not by words, but by the beauty, consistency, and force of a noble Christian life. But then he may identify his duty as a Christian with his duty as a Christian minister, and use the facilities of his professional life for the advancement of this greatest of all objects. But what is his special professional work, what is the

object or aim in setting apart a certain number of men for what is called the ministry? I shall set down two aims, according to different opinions. One is, where much value is attached to preaching, that there should be a special set of men, thoroughly masters of all theological learning, who shall be able at once to defend the faith against attacks, and fully expound the Bible in its true meaning. Part of their business is of course to urge men to a change of life, as all Christians are bound to do, and to give to those who are attempting to live a heavenly life full directions in their career, encouragement or admonition as may be needed. Then again there are those who think that preaching is of comparatively little use, but who think that the clergyman ought to visit all his flock, to encourage, direct, guide, and console them. Whichever view is taken of the clergyman's functions, it seems to me that their importance and dignity are of the highest. His aim may be defined in one word, to awaken the greatest amount of spiritual life that he possibly can, and no aim could be greater or grander. I am afraid, however, that if we take average cases, we shall find that his work is not so important as its aim would lead us to expect, and that owing to some circumstances connected with his hearers. His hearers may be so ignorant or so hard-worked during the week that they prefer a good nap to his sermon. Or they may have gathered round him because they approved of his views, not to listen to his instructions, but to be pleased with hearing their own opinions well expounded. And their habits and ways of thinking and acting may be so confirmed, that his most eloquent appeals produce no effect.

These are the three learned professions; I might have added two others, which, for real spiritual influence, rank with the clerical, and far above the medical or legal, the press, and the profession of literature. But my purpose served by taking those usually denominated learned.

Now take the teaching profession, and let us see what is its aim? Its special aim is to give a thorough cultivation to the intellectual powers of man, but through the intellectual it aims also at just ideas, and right habits, in regard to physical well-being and all spiritual well-being. The parents are the persons specially bound to look after the whole culture of their children; but the teacher steps in to take part of his work entirely from him, and to help him in all the rest. Now I need not say that, by the very statement of the aim, I have really exhibited the superiority, in importance and dignity, of the teaching profession to those either of medicine or law. I do not think it superior in aim to that of the clergyman. But I think that there are certain advantages on its side which give it strong claims to special prominence. The period of youth is the period when character is formed, when the mind, being flexible and pliant, is shaped. Some maintain that at the age of seven the bent of a man's mind is permanently fixed. I do not think this is true. But I think that not one in ten thousand alters to any considerable extent in the mould of his mind beyond the age of twenty; most are fixed at a much earlier period; and there are exceedingly few who, like Solon, go on learning new methods of thought, and open to new ideas, till old age. Now, the schoolmaster has hold of the child just at the age at which he can act most powerfully over him for good or for evil. He does not, like the clergyman, act upon the formed mind at comparatively long intervals. He has the child under his plastic hand, day after day for hours. In fact, no single person has anything like the same opportunity of influencing the child's mind, except the parents. I do not wish to attribute too much power to the schoolmaster. I believe that public opinion, the family circle, the companions of a child, and many other conscious or unconscious educational agencies, are more powerful than the school or the schoolmaster; but take any one single agent in the fashioning of the child's mind, and none, except the parents, and sometimes not even the parents, have the same opportunities and the same facilities for giving the direction to the child's mind. And this influence of the teaching profession is not merely great intensively, but it is equally great extensively. Medical men, as we have seen, after once helping people into the world, have to deal with the diseased only, and solely when they are diseased. Lawyers have to deal with scoundrels and litigious persons, and they see these generally in their worst aspects, or at least in very bad aspects. There are hundreds and thousands of our population who never hear a clergyman, who never see him in their houses. But most people actually have come through the hands of the schoolmaster, and have been for a considerable period, hours every day, under his influence; and those who have not, ought to have been, and I hope will soon be compelled to be. There, then, is a profession which wields mighty power, with vast facilities for influencing the destiny of every man in the kingdom. How does it happen that this profession should stand so low in public estimation?

Various reasons can be assigned for this. One especially stands forward. The public have not come to realise the immense spiritual force exerted by schoolmasters. They have not the slightest conception of what incalculable benefit would accrue to a nation were the whole body of its schoolmasters thoroughly fit for their work, and completely furnished with the best means and methods of carrying on their work. Professed thinkers have long ago seen the power that might thus be brought to bear on mankind, and it were easy for me to quote a long roll of testimonies to this effect. But the great mass of people have a difficulty in estimating spiritual forces, unless they shew their strength in some outward compact aggregate. Now, the teaching profession is not a compact