

other sport, try with all his heart to win or do his part towards winning. Is there not something wrong—I would almost say something base—in our standard of action if, while bone and muscle are thus developed, and most properly developed, to the uttermost, the mind is allowed to wither and to dwindle for want of manly exercise? You, who have successfully shown your disposition to excel, I congratulate cordially on your success. But that success would be a misfortune and a snare to you if you rested in it; if, to use a homely expression, you went to sleep upon it. It is like the meal which the traveller enjoys upon his way, but the purpose of which is to strengthen him for his further journey. The prize is good, but the efforts made to gain the prize are far better. (Cheers.) What is most valuable in these competitions is the defeated share with the conquerors. Nay, further yet, one who is defeated after a hard and bracing struggle gains more in the true work of education, the strengthening of his mind, than the easy winner who canters in without exertion. (Cheers.) And such defeat, in a mind of true British temper, only strengthens the resolution, which never in the long run fails to try yet more manfully next time. For, do what you will, your life, because it is a human life, will be a trial.

“So it is willed above, where will is power.”

And this world-old truth seems, as the world grows older, to grow more vividly and pointedly true with the ever growing strain and noise and haste and waste of life. Trial cannot be escaped by flying from it; but it may be conquered by facing it. (Cheers.) On an occasion like this, I should not have desired, even before those of you, my younger friends, who are on the threshold of active and responsible manhood, to dwell in a marked manner on the trials you will have to encounter. But the incidents of the time are no common incidents; and there is one among them so obstructive that youth cannot long enjoy its natural privilege of unacquaintance with the mischief, and at the same time so formidable, that it really requires to be forewarned against the danger. I refer to the extraordinary and boastful manifestation in this age of ours, and especially to the year which is about to close, of the extremest forms of unbelief. I am not about to touch upon the differences which distinguish and partially sever the Church of England from those communions by which it is surrounded, whether they be of Protestant Nonconformists, or of those who have recently incorporated into the Christian faith what we must suppose they think a bulwark and not a danger to religion, the doctrine of Papal infallibility. For handling controversies of such a class, this is not the time; I am not the person, and my office is not the proper office. It is not now only the Christian Church, or only the Holy Scripture, or only Christianity which is attacked. The disposition is boldly proclaimed to deal alike with root and branch, and to snap the ties which under the still venerable name of religion unite man with the unseen world, and lighten the struggles and the woes of life by the hope of a better land. (Cheers.) I will not pain and weary you with a multitude of details. But no reference ought to be made lightly to such a subject as this, and to show that I have not referred to it lightly, I will allude by name to a single writer and one who is not a British writer—to the learned German, Dr. Strauss. He is a man of far wider fame than any British writer who marches under the same banner. He has spent a long life in the promotion of what, doubtless, he thinks a good cause; and I mention him with the respect which is justly due not only to his ability and knowledge; but to his straight-

forward earnestness, and to that fairness and mildness towards antagonists in argument with which, so far as I have become acquainted with his works, he has pursued what I believe to be an ill-starred and hopeless enterprise. He has published during the present year a volume entitled, “The Old Belief and the New.” In his introduction he frankly raises the question whether, considering the progress which culture has now made, there is any longer a necessity to maintain religious worship in any form whatever. “Why,” he asks on behalf not only of himself but of a party in Germany for which he speaks, and for which he claims that it best answers to the state of modern thought, “should there be a separate religious society at all, when we have already provision made for all in the state, the school, science, and fine art?” In his first chapter he puts the question, “Are we still Christians?” And after a detailed examination, he concludes, always speaking on behalf of modern thought, that if we wish our yea to be yea, and our nay nay—if we are to think and speak our thoughts as honorable, upright men, our reply must be that we are Christians no longer. This question and answer, however, he observes, are insufficient. The essential and fundamental inquiry with him is, whether we are or are not still to have a religion? To this inquiry he devotes his second chapter. In this second chapter he finds that there is no personal God, that there is no future state. The dead live in the recollection of survivors—this is enough for them. After this he has little difficulty in answering the question he has put. “A religious worship ought to be abolished. The very name of divine service is an indignity to man.” Therefore, in the sense in which religion has been heretofore understood, his answer is that we ought to have no religion any more. But proceeding, as he always does, with most commendable frankness, he admits that he ought to fill with something the void which he has thus made. This accordingly he proceeds to do. Instead of God, he offers to us the All or Universum. This All or Universum, he tells us, has neither consciousness nor reason; but it has order and law. He thinks it fitted to be the object of a new and true piety, which he claims for his Universum, as the devout of the old style did for their God. If any one repudiates this doctrine, to Dr. Strauss’s reason the repudiation is absurdity, and to Dr. Strauss’s feelings he says it is blasphemy. These are not the ravings of a maniac, nor are they the mere dreams of an imaginative, high-wrought enthusiast such as Comte appears to be; they are the grave conclusions, after elaborate reasoning, of a learned, a calm, and, so far as form is concerned, a sober-minded man who in this very year has been commended to us in England by another apostle of “modern thought” as one of the men to whose guidance we ought, if we are wise, to submit in matters of religious belief. I would not, even if I had the capacity and the time, make an attempt in this place to confute them; for I have no fear that by their exhibition they will attract or beguile you. (Hear, hear.) Neither do I search for the hard names of controversy to describe them, for they best describe themselves. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Neither can I profess to feel an unmixed regret at their being forced thus eagerly and thus early into notice; because, it is to be hoped that they will cause a shock and a reaction, and will compel many who may have too lightly valued the inheritance so dearly bought for them, and may have entered upon dangerous paths, to consider, while there is yet time, whither those paths will lead them. (Loud applause.) In no part of his writings, perhaps, has Strauss been so effective as where he assails the inconsistencies of those who adopt his premises, but decline to follow him to their conclusions. Suffice it to say, further,