

period, with constant changes. Moreover, all that they got in their purchases for the museum at South Kensington was also circulated in the same way. He had, perhaps, now said enough to show the nature of the assistance given to art instruction throughout the kingdom. He would only say, that all that was being done was not done with the view of educating artists. No doubt artists would come out of such education, but this education was given with a view to produce an intelligent appreciation of art, and a right taste in matters of art.

## II. BENEFITS OF UNITED ACTION FOR SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT.

(Extract from a Speech, at Birmingham, by Lord Brougham, in October last.)

Upon the beneficial effects of united action in its different applications I can venture to speak from an experience of some duration and considerably varied. It may suffice to mention two instances of this successful operation. About 30 years ago the society was founded for Diffusing Useful Knowledge, its object being to bring the different branches of science and of literature within the reach of the great bulk of the community by reducing the cost of books, maps, and prints to a very moderate scale, and by preparing various works at once didactic and attractive. The committee which carried on these operations consisted of 60 persons, among the most eminent in science and literature, ancient and modern, with members of three learned professions, and distinguished statesmen. Regular meetings were held to receive reports of sub-committees charged with preparing the various works composed either by their own members or by authors who were employed. Every matter was discussed by the general committee, both on the writings submitted and on the new works to be undertaken. The most severe examination had been applied by the sub-committees, but the proof-sheets were further submitted to the whole of the members, who had to consider both the substance and the manner of treating it; and even those who on any subject might not feel competent to criticize the scientific part, exercised a vigilant superintendence over the style, so that errors in composition and offences against correct, even severe, taste were sure to be detected. Now, the great number of our members, profiting, moreover, by the communications of about 70 local committees and the advantage of constant intercourse among the members of the central body, enabled the society in the 20 years of its active operations to publish not only with unbroken regularity treatises twice a month, but various other works not given periodically. Above 200 volumes have thus appeared. The circulation of the scientific works frequently reached 25,000; of those in more general use 40,000, while of the preliminary discourse the circulation was 100,000, and of the weekly or *Penny Magazine* it exceeded 200,000; and this gave rise to works of a like description, as did also the scientific treatises, so that the effects of the society's labors were not circumscribed within the classes among whom its works circulated. And it further had the satisfaction of finding that the price of books, maps, and prints was exceedingly lowered, while their numbers were greatly multiplied. Cheap literature was found to be the true interest of authors as well as publishers, and was no longer confined to light reading, but extended to works of science and art, prepared with unremitting attention to the explanation of all technical terms and all obscure allusions, and removing whatever obstructions are found in the path of the learner; so that the youth of humble station could no longer be met by those distressing difficulties, both in expense and in the want of truly didactic works, which had before made the pursuit of self-education all but hopeless. A still more important service, however, was rendered by teaching professional authors and publishers that there is a market for true and substantial knowledge among the people at large. Other important incidental advantages accrued from the society's labours. One of these advantages was that many works, some of them periodical, remarkable for their ignorance and folly, and others filled with ribaldry and scurrility, and of a hurtful tendency towards the interests of both church and state, were discontinued. Another beneficial consequence was, that the translation of several of the society's works into many European languages, as of the preliminary discourse into six of them, and some Oriental tongues, gave rise to the establishment in some countries—as France, Holland, and America—of institutions on a similar principle, and leading to similar publications. But the other experience to which reference may be had is that of the body whose objects approach most nearly to our own—the Society for Promoting the Amendment of the Law. It would not be easy to describe the many pernicious attempts at legislation which it has stopped in their earliest stages—attempts tending to the injury, not to the amendment of the law; and, if ending in failure and its attendant exposure, calculated to bring the great cause of legal improvement into disrepute. But it is more pleasing to dwell upon the signal benefits that have accrued from the measures maturely digested and strenuously promoted which have obtained the

sanction first of the public assent—that is the approval of those who are capable and well informed—and, finally, the assent of the Legislature itself. I am bound to state that since its establishment in 1844, most of the Bills which I have brought forward, and of which many have been passed, making a great change in our jurisprudence, either originated in the enquiries and reports of the society's committees, or owed to the labors and authority of that body valuable help towards, first, their preparation, next, their adoption. Of the nine Bills presented by me to the House of Lords in 1845, and six of which are now the law of the land, two of the six were suggested by the society, and another, the most important of the whole, and which has entirely changed the course of procedure, the Act for the Examination of Parties in all Suits, I never should have succeeded in carrying but for the society's correspondence with all the County Court judges, and their almost unanimous testimony in favor of the change. Take another instance. Of the legal improvements in the session that has just closed, the most important are the Divorce and Fraudulent Trustees Acts.

## III. PERMEATING TENDENCY OF THE DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE—ITS HEALTHFUL INFLUENCE.

(Extract from the same speech.)

In the attempts that have been made for so many years to effect the more general diffusion of knowledge, the necessity has been too much overlooked of beginning with the upper classes of society. When these are well imbued with the taste for acquiring knowledge, they have a natural tendency to make those in other ranks partake of the same great benefits. It is not that the whole or even the greater part of one class will become educators, but some will be inspired with the desire, not more benevolent than wise, of bearing the torch to the regions still without those lights which they themselves enjoy. Thus is sound and useful instruction propagated by a sure and natural process. Nor is it more certain that the various layers of the great social structure are bound together by the mighty clamp of justice administered to all, and binding on all, from the broad basis of the people upwards, through the middle classes and the aristocracy to the Crown itself, on the narrow summit, than it is certain that knowledge pervades the vast pyramid by successively imbuing and disposing the couches of which it is formed. Knowledge thus diffused, but especially knowledge of social interests and rights and duties, even more than the firm and temperate distribution of justice itself, possesses the great, the cardinal virtue of insuring the stability of the social system. It is, to use the language of the day, in the very greatest degree Conservative, and in the highest sense of the phrase. But this diffusion has another and most happy tendency,—it leads to the improvement of the system, because it inspires all classes with the desire of promoting measures shown to be safe as well as effectual, in a word, wholesome reforms. Nor can anything be more groundless than the fears of progress entertained by some—affected by more. It is, in truth, ignorance continued, not knowledge advanced, which they have to fear—nay, which, when we come to an explanation with them, they really do fear. Knowledge is power; but its natural ally is the friendly power of virtue, with which its dominion is willingly shared. This is above all true of the knowledge which we shall seek to improve and to impart. The Supreme Disposer and Preserver, who "decketh himself with light as it were a garment, but defendeth all the earth as it were with a shield," has provided that the false steps into which we are led by the twilight will be prevented or retraced when the day dawns. If any one is still alarmed at the force which the people seem to gain when their faculties are expanded by cultivation, let him recollect that this happy process cannot be continued and further knowledge acquired, without a new security being given by that very increase of knowledge against the delusions and the excesses from which the peace of the community has most to fear. We are reminded by the subject, as well as by the place where we are assembled, of the exquisite invention, the happiest perhaps in the history of science, which makes the power of steam provide by its expansion for its own control, the one very nicely proportioned to the other. Knowledge is thus both power and safety—it exercises this self-control; it gives to the mighty social engine both the movement and the governor—

"Unmeasured strength with perfect art combined,  
Awe, serves, amazes, and protects mankind."

But it is not safety alone that we expect; we fondly hope for more; we confidently look higher. Undaunted by the resistance of adversaries, undismayed by the obstructions which the bias of prejudice, or the conflicts of faction, or the strife of controversy raise to impede social progress or to retard, its friends lift up their view to the loftier heights where religious and moral truth sheds an eternal light. Piercing the darkness of ignorance that shrouds one region, the mists of doubt that obscure, the storms of passion that vex, the instinct of selfishness that chills another, the eye loves to repose on that bright