

Every step in intellectual advancement, the mastery of every new branch of literature, or science, while it adds to knowledge, extends the view to a wider and unknown sphere. Ignorance may shield itself with dogmatism and presumption, but the learned man is never opinionative—he is willing to listen and be informed. Paley and Newton never attacked an adversary—Scott never answered a critique.—The surest proof of advancing wisdom is the growing consciousness that we know less. The Earl of Chatham told his son Pitt, after he had finished the course of the schools, that he had yet *all* to learn, and that he would require to read an Encyclopedia. No insinuation could be more severe, and yet it was just. There is this further distinction between money and learning, that we cannot impart the one to others without lessening our old stock, but we may give freely of the last, and that which remains will be undiminished and purified. Communion polishes intelligent minds. Without books society becomes a continuation of business—a conversation upon the transactions of the day, or it descends to the fortunes and the foibles of our friends. Then comes satire and the ready censure, the uncharitable construction of conduct. We cannot speak praises always, soft and dulcet sounds offend by the very sweetness of their harmony, the most sensitive and delicately attuned ear. If we talk continually about other men, the tongue will dip itself in the bitter of scandal, and the mind catch the darkening hues of sarcasm. Philosophy and the temper and disposition it creates, shrinks from such topics, retains to its own fair and ideal world. A knowledge of books gives to character a new amiability, to society a fresher and holier charm. Exceptions there are, but this is the rule. No man therefore who regards his own happiness—the part he is to play in the world's stage—the charms of domestic life—his standing in the social circle—his capability of receiving or imparting enjoyment to others, ought to despise the graces of learning and of philosophy, for without them he is barren of the most affluent sources of social enjoyment, and with them he is independent of fortune and circumstance. D'Israeli has written a curious chapter upon the literary labours of authors, while placed in confinement. Charles I. wrote the 'Icon Basilike' during his imprisonment at Holmsby. Sir Walter Raleigh never discovered the force and impress of his own genius until the fickle Queen had consigned him to the Tower. His elaborate History of the World was there designed and perfected. The *Henriade* of Voltaire, and the 'Pilgrim's Progress' of Bunyan, were both composed under similar circumstances. Don Quixotte was written by Cervantes to brighten a period of captivity.—When Horne Tooke was threatened with imprisonment for his political offences, he said, 'give me light, books, and my pen, and I care not how soon you close the doors of the dun-

geon upon me.' Wakefield, who is publishing now a new edition of the *Wealth of Nations*, wrote his *England and America* in Newgate, and Cobbett produced also his admirable essays of Paper against Gold. Beranger is at this hour delighting France with his national songs, although the inmate of a cell, through the tyranny of Louis Phillippe. Thus does the mind rise superior to situation by the fertility of its own revelations, and bring the 'landscapes of thought' bright and admirable as they are, to give variety and enjoyment to solitude. But let it not be supposed that I wish to cast my undeserved odium upon the disposition of mind and habits which leads to accumulation. Far be it from my purpose to convey any personal discontent. Some of the richest men I have ever known, have been the most generous and amiable. All I wish to point out is, the fallacy and fruitlessness of a *too* exclusive pursuit of it, of making the acquisition of money a sordid occupation. Fortune to a certain extent is essential, and it ought to be the ambition of every man to acquire it, but let not the means be made the end, so as to sacrifice in its attainment those more rational acquisitions which give to their possessor dignity and enjoyment. I wish not to place the spirit of accumulation and the love of books as opposite and conflicting aptitudes or principles, for I intend now to reason out the proposition, that the best educated and most intelligent nations have been, in all past ages, the most industrious and wealthy.

In the age of Alexander the arts and sciences had reached their zenith in Athens, and at that time the Piereus was crowded with a vast and busy commercial marine. Never before or since did the *Ægean Sea* or *Archipelago* exhibit a scene of such active and prosperous commerce. The Romans never were an industrious or commercial people, and hence they furnish no analogy for the present argument. In the Augustan and golden age, they prosecuted trade,—but Rome was only a *depot* for the productions of the Provinces, and was itself the *situs* of exchange. The Italian Republics, in the middle ages, when literature and eloquence were ripe amongst them, were the store-houses of Europe, many of the practical arts and manufactures were carried to a high perfection, and in silks and in steel they were unrivalled.

The Genoese blade in the age of chivalry was famed for the battle-field and tournament. In Venice, where Tasso dwelt and Dante sung, a Bank was first established. The Lombards invented the *bill of exchange*. The inhabitants of the low countries, when famed for their fairs and manufactories and the extent of their commerce with the East, had the reputation of being a shrewd, sagacious, and highly intelligent nation. The struggles and heroism they displayed under Wm. of Orange, in the reigns of the Phillips, evinces their order of mind, by the just appreciation in which they held their