

must know whenever it thinks. Thus a process of thought becomes an indispensable part of education, and the mind, by a voluntary observation of truth, is seen to collect those treasures of science so essential to its dignity and usefulness. Diligence here often displays itself in favour of mediocrity of talents, while genius, regardless of the law of improvement, and unconscious of its relative superiority, or vainly relying upon its powers, falls behind through idleness. We must not, however, suppose that education is intended to teach the mind how to think. Such assistance must be superfluous, as nature furnished the requisite skill for every intellectual process, when it formed the mind a cogitative being. Then the power of thought was placed beyond the reach of contingency, and to education was assigned the humbler office of directing, in some measure, the application of our faculties.

From these observations it is evident that education begins with the first, and ends only with the last attempt to learn. But we usually employ the term to express those acquisitions of knowledge which are the results of a more special application of the intellectual powers. Such efforts are made at school, and hence we properly speak of acquiring education at places of this kind; not that we can acquire it no where else, for that would be to suppose, either that we had no minds except at school, or that they were useless in every other place. An attempt to confine the use of the word to such acquisitions as are made at school, can only have the effect to destroy its meaning. With many, education has now become altogether an ambiguous term, in consequence of its being so frequently misapplied. According to the present usage the dunce who passes a few years in some literary institution is considered educated; while the talented and faithful, but secluded student, may spend his whole life in intellectual pursuits, and yet die uneducated. Judged by this rule, such men as Franklin, Bunyan, Baxter, and Shakespeare, had no education; they are believed to have been persons of great mind and great industry, but cannot be allowed a place among educated men.

The acquisition of knowledge is the great object, and whatever conduces to this, whether it is literature or the want of literature, the presence or absence of

any assignable advantage or disadvantage, is a means of education, and valuable just in proportion to its efficiency in accomplishing the desired results.—All that the prevalent system of instruction can claim, is that it aids to some extent in the work; it pretends to no sovereign efficiency, nor can it boast of any triumph over constitutional impediment. Its aim is to be a servant of mind, and aid it in gathering the treasures of science by means of those faculties, which, without some foreign assistance, are too apt to be concealed even from their possessor, and useless both to him and the world.

### THE WANT OF EDUCATION.

For the last half century, perhaps, there is no subject which has occupied so large a share of public attention—on which so much has been written and so many eloquent speeches have been made, as on the subject of national education. The advantage and the blessings resulting from the spread of education amongst the people have been so universally admitted by all parties, that to attempt to argue the matter now would be quite as uninteresting as it would be necessarily unprofitable and useless. It is, however, much to be feared that, although a great deal has been said, yet that comparatively but little has been done in the way of spreading education among the masses. While philanthropists—and, no doubt, sincere and conscientious philanthropists—have been declaiming at public meetings as well as within the walls of parliament, about the benefits that would flow from a properly conducted system of education, the masses have still been left in the same state of darkness and hopeless ignorance. It is true that, as far as education is concerned, the country is in a much better state now than it was fifty years ago, when the *Edinburgh Review* first began to enlighten the public on the subject. But what we contend for is, that the means which have ACTUALLY been taken to educate the masses are not at all in proportion to what might have been expected from the earnestness with which the matter has been discussed, the frequency of appeals which were made to the public, and the extraordinary degree of attention which the subject has appeared to excite. On Friday last, Mr Baron Rolf, in addressing the Grand