

life that we have passed through, and through the same school discipline, with its perils, its opportunities, its responsibilities, and its advantages. This contact brings to mind the reflection, "What is the meaning of the English Public School?" and in this address you have most appropriately reminded me of its character by your reference to your own position, and by the comparison which you draw with the position of another great public school. You could not have made an allusion more grateful to my feelings than your allusion to Eton. You know, gentlemen, what your own impressions would be about anybody who did not look back in an enthusiastic gratitude on the public school to which he had himself belonged. That is characteristic of us all. We are none of us impartial judges, and I would almost say we ought not to be impartial judges of the relative position of those public schools separately taken and judged. As to Eton, perhaps I might say without offence that she has obtained in many, if not all respects, a kind of primacy among the public schools of England, and such is her position, such the incidents of her history, her situation, her visible and palpable features, that if a foreign friend consulted me upon the objects that he should make a point of seeing in a visit to this country, I should say to him, "Unless you see Eton you will not have seen England." (Loud cheers.) But that does not create any tendency to injustice or indifference in the estimate of other schools. The public schools of England correspond in the general character of the picture Eton presents in bringing into most interesting association what is old and what is new. At the beginning of this century they could hardly be called more than about four or five in number. Since that time the population of Great Britain has fully doubled in number, but the public schools of the country have increased in a much larger proportion, and might probably be called now four times as many as they were at the beginning of the century. Continuing, the right hon. gentleman gave the scholars the following advice:—The great business of this training is not merely to

enable you to obtain professional success, it is to make you men—men in the highest sense, and in the highest degree. It is to bring out all your capacities, not for the sake simply of the purposes they are to serve in life, but for their own sake. The whole of life is, after all, simply an education, and the professions and businesses to which you may be hereafter devoted, are only part and portion of that education. Don't suppose they are ends in themselves. Their ends, as far as you are concerned, are the effects that they produce upon your character and your faculties, and there comes into view what undoubtedly must be admitted to be the danger of the new system—of the modern spirit in education. I know not whether it is owing to our degeneracy—I am afraid it is the truth that we have a much smaller amount in this 19th century of the disinterested, ardent, enthusiastic love of knowledge for its own sake than our forefathers had five hundred years ago. But our system of education is now marked by a method of sharp competition and of immediate rewards. I acknowledge all the benefits of that method. I see the great results that it has produced; but there is a peril in it also, and that is the peril of your believing that when you have gone through the school, when you have obtained the prize, when you have realized the professional success as the consequence of early distinction, you should look upon that success as the end of your education. It is not the end of your education. The end of your education is in the effect it produces upon yourselves, upon the state to which it brings you, and in which it leaves you; and the distinction is a very real one, for there are many who acquire much knowledge, yet whose minds remain comparatively barren, simply because they have been content to look upon knowledge as a mere commodity, as a mere tool intended to work out some exterior purpose, and they have forgotten that it is only part of a great, comprehensive, and noble process to which we are all subjected in this life for the unfolding, the ripening, and the purifying of character, for enabling us in the highest sense to discharge our