

tive men of the eighteenth century, and comparing them with the leaders of thought in our own day, one cannot but be struck with the presence in the one case and the absence in the other, of a narrow dogmatism or an equally narrow scepticism. However different may be the personal characteristics of the writers of last century, they seem to us, looking back upon them now, to have had a simple and superficial way of dealing with questions that we feel must be approached with the greatest deliberation and care. What could exceed the easy indifference with which David Hume proves to his own satisfaction that there is no proper foundation upon which an edifice of truth may be reared, and that God, Freedom and Immortality are therefore beyond the reach of verification. No two men could be more unlike each other than David Hume and Samuel Johnson, and yet their method of thought was at bottom the same, diverse as were the conclusions to which they came. Hume was good-natured and Johnson was imperious and dictatorial, but both alike were satisfied with a view of things that to us seems merely to skim the surface, or at the most to go but a very little way beneath it. The same thing may be seen in other branches of literature besides those of philosophy and morals. We find it in the superficial optimism of Pope's *Essay on Man*. In Goldsmith, whom we may take as a type of the man of letters of the century, we meet with the same general cast of thought. Goldsmith has all the simplicity and grace that charm us so much in his own *Vicar of Wakefield*, but we look in vain in him for any perception of the seriousness and importance of the great questions that perplex the present age. These names have not been purposely selected to bear out a foregone conclusion, for the same superficiality and the same simple acceptance or rejection of customary ideas will be found in other writers of the century—in Addison, Swift and Gibbon, not less than in Goldsmith, Pope and Hume. Between the names I have mentioned, and writers of our own day, there comes a group of literary men, among them Burns, Wordsworth and Shelley, forming the connecting link between the two centuries, and displaying in varying proportions the simplicity and indifference of the one, combined with the critical spirit of the other. When we come to such representatives of our own age as Carlyle, Spencer, Tennyson, Arnold and Froude we see at once that the whole aspect of things has changed, and that we have to do with men who, however they may differ from each other in temperament and in belief, are bound together by the common characteristics of intense seriousness.

UNHAPPINESS OF AN AGE OF SEARCH.

An age of search is always more or less an unhappy one. Thought must have a body of doctrine to give it definiteness, shape and consistency. If thought, as Carlyle has said, is a sort of disease at least it is disease that cannot be escaped by taking thought. To counsel a man to stop thinking, and to adopt without criticism the beliefs that satisfied the men of the past, is to go against the rational nature with which it is man's glory, if also his misery to be endowed. It is easier to believe altogether, or to disbelieve altogether,—to accept some definite formula of things in "childlike faith," or to reject it in childlike unbelief, than it is to hang poised in doubt.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

It is a marked characteristic of modern thought that, while the immense accumulation of knowledge has compelled a greater division of labour than ever before, so that no man can hope to be equally at home in all branches of knowledge,—there is a not less marked tendency to combine all modes of existence in one, so as to give some sort of theory of the world as a whole. The effort to unify

knowledge is as persistent as the effort to specialize it. It is not my intention to trace out the wide and varied applications of the notion of development. I shall confine myself to a consideration of that most striking of all the tendencies of the present age, the tendency to regard the whole intellectual development of the race as the successive steps by which the conclusion has been at last reached that all real knowledge, or at least all definite knowledge, is confined to the realm of science, and must be sought for by the scientific methods of observation and experiment. A great deal of useless antagonism to the advance of science, and many bitter attacks upon theology, might have been spared had a clear view been first obtained of the topics that fall within the realm of science as distinguished from those that fall outside of it. It is difficult to say who is most to blame for the confusion of thought. I think we shall do well to blame neither the theologian nor the scientist but rather to see in the attitude of both another illustration of the extreme difficulty there is in adjusting the relations of new and old conceptions. The nebular theory, as an explanation of the way in which the worlds we know have come out of a primeval mist, is a scientific theory; it is a philosophical theory masquerading in the garments of science when it pretends to have swept away all explanations of the world that recognize the presence in nature of an Infinite Intelligence. The doctrine of evolution is a scientific theory so long as it only proposes to explain the gradual way in which all living beings have been formed by the slow accumulation of slight increments of difference; but it ceases to be scientific and becomes philosophical when it is supposed to render superfluous the existence and operation of the living God. But while it is proper to resist the false philosophy of scientific men, that is no reason for contemplating with a vague alarm, born chiefly of ignorance of its true nature, the bounding steps of science itself. The very idea of a "conflict between science and religion" is as absurd as the idea of a "conflict" between the two powers that never cross the border line of each other's territory. Religion can have nothing to fear from science, although it has much to thank it for. As the plant lives upon inorganic substances, and the animal upon the plant, so philosophy and theology take up and absorb the rich materials furnished by the sciences. For this reason I am unable to regard recent scientific theories, so far as they do not present themselves as philosophies in disguise, in any other light than as valuable aids in the comprehension of the infinite wisdom and power of God. When I am told that millions of ages ago the earth on which I dwell existed in the form of a "congeries of diffused nebulous atoms," I do not feel as if I had heard anything to shake my faith in the presence of intelligence in the universe, since the process by which the earth has come to be what it is implies the existence and operation of the same natural laws that exist and operate now, and law does not operate of itself but only intelligence wrapped up in law. And when scientific men tell me that the earth has existed, not for six thousand years as Bishop Usher supposed, but for millions of ages, so far from feeling as if I had lost anything I feel that I have greatly gained—that, just as the wonder of the universe grew upon men's minds, when for the ancient fiction that the over-arching vault of heaven was part of a closed sphere, covering in the earth as the central object there was substituted the conception of a space stretching to infinity and studded with worlds of vast dimensions, so by running back the history of our world into the illimitable past the universe has become for me wider and more spacious, and more worthy the habitation of the Ancient of Days. Nor, when I am told that the whole race of living beings, including man, is bound together by the tie of a "long descent," do I feel as if I must surrender my belief in the