

The steam-engine, taken as an emblem of the various industrial inventions which have multiplied life's experience manifold, has set its mark upon the civilization of the nineteenth century. Industry in its legitimate definition means physical energy directed in the interests of progress. Progress is change accompanied by the due exercise and improvement of the feelings and capabilities of man. Man's true progress, therefore, depends upon his industry—not the industry of the machine, but the industry of progressive being—not the industry of the bee but the industry of imperfection, conscious of a perfection to be aimed at—an industry which re-acts upon the agent with no depressing, degrading effect on either mind or body, but which has within it the hopeful tendency that tends to lighten up the prospect of life.

It is, however, not difficult to see some imperfection in the steam-engine as a factor of true progressive industry. Some are more inclined to speak of it and similar inventions as provocative of an unhinging restlessness, producing elements of idleness and discontent. And certainly in the increasing activity of society there is a latent evil. The rapidity with which effects follow causes in the commercial events of our times, the suddenness with which a project can be developed into a reality, with which almost any plan can be carried into execution, has a powerful influence upon men's habits, causing them to demand a mere change at times when true progress is impracticable. On all sides there is to be seen a craving for novelty, which all but resembles the craving of the gambler and the epicure. Our scientists, impatient to tell us what they have discovered of truth, preach a seriously mixed, though somewhat physical psychology; our politicians pamper their constituencies

with laws that rest only upon the quicksand of expediency; our engineers and inventors, after creating a new world with their railways and electric wires, still encourage us to hope for more wonderful things; religious enthusiasts anxious to pave a new and easier highway to heaven formulate a self-seeking theology for the million: and thus on goes the world, planning something new, superseding something new, longing for something new.

And, yet, the counselling voice of truth and honesty is never drowned in the din and bustle. The current is in one and the same direction with true morality and the advance of intelligence. In a word the three great agencies, which are represented by Christianity, the printing-press, and the steam-engine, are leading men towards a higher and better mode of existence than the world has yet witnessed. They fittingly indicate in their results the tendency of true progress. As forces they are directed towards the development of the moral, the intellectual and the physical in society, and as such they seem to approach, even in these days, towards a co-ordination which prevents society from being lopsided in any of these three directions. Their co-operation runs as a treble-stranded thread through society in its regular or crystalline form, just as man's personal being and destiny depend upon his moral, intellectual and physical activity. Christianity directs society toward the ultimatum of ethics, the absorption of man in the good of society, the moral sublimed by the religious, by the spirit and example of Christ. The printing-press has provoked a war against ignorance and prejudice, and may be recognized as the forerunner of a millennium of intelligence; while the steam-engine has elevated the pursuits of industry, and through its higher