

the right are the poised balances. By the side of this square hangs an hour-glass, whose sands are half run, and a bell. Seated on a mill-stone is a small winged boy with tablet and pencil. In the distance is seen the sea, with towns and castles on the shore. The sun has set, and a fiery comet menaces the world below, but over it arches a rainbow, and across it flies a bat with outstretched wings bearing a scroll, on which is written "Melancholia."

In this engraving Durer has translated into symbol the words of the Preacher: "In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." At whatever time the words were written, they express the sadness which always invades the soul of an age or an individual, when the simple, child-like faith of an early period has been broken and "the heavy and the weary weight of all the unintelligible world" presses upon the soul. Hence, again, in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, Goethe, in the beginning of his *Faust*, expresses the melancholy which springs from a consciousness of the failure of the quest for knowledge. And again, in our own day, Matthew Arnold tells us how the 'sea of faith,' which was once 'at the full,' had for him ebbed, so that he only heard,

*Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating to the breath*

*Of the night-wind down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.*

Now, it is not my intention to dwell upon this melancholy side of the pursuit of knowledge, but rather to indicate how it may be overcome. There is something morbid in the lament of the past; or rather, it becomes morbid, when it is dwelt upon and rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue. The Preacher did not find, in his lament over the sorrow which is increased by knowledge, the last word: he went on to argue that he who fears God and keeps his commandments will find a remedy for it. Durer, familiar as he must have been with many lives, apparently wasted in the vain pursuit of unattainable knowledge, yet hangs a rainbow in the sky to indicate his faith in the future realization of hopes that for the time had failed of accomplishment.

Goethe draws from the failure of the past, not the pessimistic creed that, "all is vanity,"—not complete despair of a reconstruction of the 'beautiful world' that had been shattered in fragments,—but the inspiring impulse to build it up in the soul again; and Arnold at least came to see that there is a "Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness."

Durer's picture indicates to some extent the source of the melancholy which accompanies the love of knowledge as its shadow. Mathematics, as he indicates by his symmetrical sums of figures, and the poised balances, is precise and certain; but all the other sciences, and the whole civilization, symbolized by the castles and cities which line the shore of the vast unexplored sea of being, are but fragments 'won from the void and formless infinite.' Thus it is the small progress which knowledge has made, when we rest from labour and cast our glance back upon the past, which saddens our spirits. Long and unremitting toil has taken us such a very little way! Beginning, like the small genius seated on the mill-stone, with contentment in his task, and flushed with brilliant visions of what he may achieve, man at middle age is saddened to find that he has achieved so little: that his glorious dreams, iridescent as the rainbow, have faded into the light of common day! This is the reflection that is apt to come to him, when for the moment he has put his work aside, and his hand plays idly with the instruments of daily use. But Durer reminds him that, though for the moment he has turned his back upon it, up in the heavens there gleams the bow of hope, and he intimates that the gloom and sadness of knowledge will be dispelled, when the moment of rest and retrospect is past, and once more the genius of knowledge and trial is absorbed in his beneficent labours.

The members of this association do not need to be convinced of the importance of an enlightened community: their attendance at this University indicates their conviction that the pursuit of knowledge is a duty which cannot be avoided by them, if they are to reach the full stature of the Christian. The days when a Harriet Martineau could only carry on her