

than a solemn trifling with the question, to say that men should be taught to labor from higher inducements than a hope of advancement or reward. Granting the abstract truth of the principle, we must, notwithstanding, allow that the hope of reward and the desire of praise is universally implanted in the human breast. We must deal with man as we find him. I propose to myself to prove that a system of general examination would be the most powerful instrument we could employ to promote a true national education. There is nothing new however in the principle, whatever there may be in its applications.—It is the principle on which our universities, without any external supervision or control, continue to provide an admirable training for the minds of those committed to their charge. Experience has forced it on our older universities: it is exclusively the system of the university of London. It was no part of the original university system.—The professional element was the original feature. The tutorial was afterwards introduced, and has practically superseded the former.

But it is not in the universities alone that examination is used as an instrument to promote education. In the learned professions, as they are called, with the exception of the bar (which is, indeed, no longer an exception, and which might continue an exception without much practical injury, for practice at the bar is nothing less than an arduous and continuous public examination), in the royal navy, and lately in the army and in our commercial marine, and still more recently in the East India Company, examination has been used as the great instrument for promoting and testing proficiency in the acquisition of knowledge.

But by far the most important move in this direction is the proposal on the part of the Government, which has been formally recommended in the speech from the throne at the commencement of the present session, to throw open to public competition the appointments which are now the private patronage of the ministers of the crown. Although this measure has been advocated by its great promoters, Sir Charles Trevelyan and Sir Stafford Northcote, solely on the ground of its tendency to improve the education, and thus to increase the efficiency of those employed in the public offices, yet I will boldly assert that no measure, however popular, could be devised, no grant of money, however large, could be voted, which would at all to the same extent, or in any like degree, promote the education of every class in the community.

Such a measure as this, voluntarily proposed by a government, not with a view to escape from external pressure, nor to conciliate popular support, bears unimpeachable testimony to the disinterested spirit of public men at the present day.

In no respect would the operation of such a plan be more beneficial than in stimulating voluntary exertions, the building of schools, the appointment of masters, the adjustment of salaries, the choice of plans of instruction; while the religious teaching would continue in the hands of the local promoters, it should be the duty of some recognized established authority to pronounce whether the provision made in any locality was adequate or otherwise, the progress of education satisfactory or the opposite.

If the effect of such examinations on the character of school-teaching would be so manifestly beneficial, much more important would be their influences over the pupils themselves. As matters now stand, for the youth not intended for college, incentives to exertion are as few as they are feeble. There is but little to stimulate him to exertion. He knows that he must remain at school until he is old enough to proceed to business, but he cannot see why he should weary himself with study. Now were he certain that on leaving school he must go before an impartial examiner, be subjected to a searching examination, be compared with boys from other schools, that he would have his attainments and deficiencies brought out clearly before his neighbors and friends,—what motives to exertion would not be at once supplied? What habits of industry and perseverance would not be encouraged? Above all, the practice of self-instruction would be strengthened, a habit far more valuable than any amount of school acquirements. The latter will gradually drop out of the mind or be crushed out by the business of life, but the habit will remain, ready to be applied to any subject which may require patient investigation or continued attention. Schools and schoolmasters, lectures and examinations, prizes and certificates, are useful so far as they promote this; it is the necessary adjunct, and, I may say, also the necessary condition of intellectual development.

If, then, the formation of habits of patient study and of persevering application are among the primary objects of a wise education when applied even to the highest, so should they, in an especial manner, be looked upon as such in the education of the poor. On those whose education extends over no inconsiderable portion of their lives, such habits will, from the very nature of things, force themselves imperceptibly into vigour; they will grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength, and this too whether much or little external pains be taken; but with the children of the poor the case is different. They cannot wait for the slow development of good habits; they must be forced into maturity. As the stay of the poor at school must, under

the most favorable circumstances, be short, it is of incomparable importance to them to be taught to exercise their faculties, to form habits of self labor, assiduous perseverance, and voluntary application. In truth, the amount of facts committed to memory at school is of very inferior value indeed, when compared with the habits which may be formed by their acquisition. When a boy, in whom habits of self-instruction and industry are thoroughly formed, leaves school, they stick to him with all their characteristic adhesiveness. He is qualified by his acquired habits to turn his mind with effect to any subject of study for which he can find time and has the inclination; while another lad we shall suppose of equal natural ability, and with a far more varied stock of facts, is quite helpless. He has been taught everything he knows by others and has learned nothing by himself—when his corks are removed and he is cut adrift, at first he probably endeavors to add to the little stock of knowledge which he had so easily acquired. But not knowing how to set about it, unskilled in the use of his faculties, looking always for help from some one or other, he flounders on, until at last he gives up all hope of learning—he becomes disgusted with reading, and sinks at last into a state of ignorance little removed from what we may suppose it would have been, had he never received an hour's instruction. How often may one hear the laborer saying, "I was taught all these things when I went to school, but somehow I have forgotten them all." To what cause, other than this, was it owing that the old grammar schools, with all their antiquated absurdities, so often sent out men of energy, learning, and talent; for while the matter learned was often worthless, the habits formed during its acquisition were invaluable. Habits well set, so to speak, would be of more value to a youth leaving school, than if he had been crammed with all the facts contained in all our popular compendiums of useful knowledge. It is, it must be granted quite true, that little can be done without earnest and zealous teachers, carefully and systematically instructed in the duties of their calling. I say systematically instructed, because it would be as hopeless to expect to train efficient schoolmasters without the aid of normal institutions, as it would be to teach the art of healing without hospitals or theatres of anatomy. It is, however, true that the schoolmaster cannot accomplish every thing—the hearty co-operation of the pupil is, at least, as equally essential to success.—Another great advantage would result from the adoption of a plan like this,—boys would be induced to remain longer at school, and not to leave it as they now do, when not more than twelve or thirteen years of age, in a half educated state, without a single valuable habit formed, or any useful acquirement made. Of all the evils which beset the education of the middle and lower classes, this is perhaps the greatest; unless this be amended, other reforms are comparatively valueless.—What is the use, for example, of providing new schools, or a better class of teachers, or improved apparatus for those who will not use them? Now, for this admitted and deprecated evil, the plan proposed would supply a thorough, prompt, and universal remedy. Though a parent might despise education and deny its utility, though he might make little of learning, and look with suspicion and dislike on the public examinations, yet the consideration that the future progress in life of his son might depend on his obtaining the royal certificate, would compel him to leave his son at school that he might qualify himself to secure it.

Influenced by views not very different from those which I have now placed before you, the Council of the Society of Arts appointed a committee of its own members, in the early part of last year, to investigate the subject of industrial instruction, and to report thereon to the council. The committee took the opinions of the most eminent manufacturers in the kingdom, of the principal engineers, of the great employers of labor, of the head-masters of the grammar schools, of those engaged in the duties of instruction generally, and of the best known friends of education. In reply to their inquiries, which they divided under eight heads, they received a very large amount of the most valuable correspondence, bailing almost without a single exception the advent of reform, or even of change in the present state of things.

The committee embodied a large portion of this correspondence in an appendix which they added to their report, presented to the council a little more than twelve months ago. Among other points referred to, the question of examination was discussed at much length, and the strength of public opinion in its favor shown. More recently, the question has been noticed in the address from the chair at the opening of the last session—it now remains to be seen whether the proposal of the Council of the Society of Arts to appoint a board of examiners, will receive that amount of public sympathy and general support which would justify them, in the eyes of society at large, in proceeding with the development of so important a measure. With regard to the moral character of the candidates, and their state of religious knowledge, it is obvious the examiners could make no direct investigation. This, however, is but little to be regretted, because it is precisely the point on which examination is least efficacious; for however valuable a searching examination may be to test a candidate's critical knowledge and intellectual apprehension of the truths of revelation or of the