

ing the release of the Canadian vessels unlawfully captured by the United States' cruisers in Behring's Sea? There seems no reason to doubt that the moment a semblance of order was restored in Hayti reparation would have been made. All the laws of chivalry demand extreme forbearance from a giant towards a pigmy. But chivalry and magnanimity do not seem to be specially characteristic of great republics, or indeed of great nations under any form of government.

THE fact that the new Russian loan has been enthusiastically taken up in France, after both London and Berlin had refused to touch it, is one whose political significance can scarcely be overestimated. More than three times the amount asked for, 100,000,000 francs, was promptly subscribed, amidst the greatest enthusiasm. That the investors were actuated solely by financial considerations it is impossible to believe. The incident points unmistakably to a growing sympathy between the two nations, far removed as they are from each other in political methods. France does not forget her bitter humiliation, and is ever looking forward to a day of revenge. Russia finds in Germany and the Triple Alliance an exasperating check upon her ambitious designs, and will not be slow to appreciate and accept so unmistakable an overture. Who can tell what 1889 has in store for the continent of Europe?

WITH the refusal of the French Chamber of Deputies to consider the bill postponing the payment of the Panama Canal Company's liabilities, and the consequent collapse of the company, ends one disastrous chapter of the history of this Herculean enterprise. Had M. de Lesseps confined himself to sounder and honester methods in attempting to raise the enormous amount of capital required, he would have had the sympathy of the world in his downfall. As it is, that sympathy will be better bestowed upon the 850,000 shareholders and their families, to many of whom the failure of the company means, doubtless, financial ruin. There is some reason to fear also that the Republic itself may be involved in the same ruin. The shareholders' extremity may be Boulanger's opportunity. Already, it is said, a dangerous agitation is springing up in the Provinces, and the loud-mouthed denunciation of the action of the Deputies, by Boulanger and his journals, show that he is only too ready to seize the occasion by the forelock and turn it to mischievous account. Dispassionate observers can but commend the refusal of the Chamber to involve the nation more deeply in the ruinous affair. The Government's fatal mistake was in its previous endorsement of the Lottery Scheme. The future of the canal itself must be well-nigh hopeless. Another company and another huge lottery are talked of, but the suffering peasantry are not likely to put their smarting hands a second time into the fire, while any Government which should undertake to complete the project would find itself in danger not only of bankrupting the nation, but of coming into fatal conflict with the Monroe doctrine of the United States.

EDUCATION.

"WE have now got to educate our Masters," said the Honourable Robert Lowe, when Lord Derby's or Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill had become law. It would probably have been better if it had been possible to educate them before they became masters; but, at any rate, the sooner that men who have the power of determining the government of a country through the ballot box, get a small measure of intelligence, the better it will be for themselves and the minority whom they govern.

Certainly there is no lack of education, at the present moment, in any countries which are open to the influences of modern civilization. How it may be in Russia, no one can be quite sure. Russia is comparatively unexplored; and those who have visited parts of it give us such different accounts that one can only believe that the one set of reports must be drawn up by Russian officials and the other by nihilists. But in Great Britain, in France, in Germany, in Holland, in Italy, education is certainly not neglected.

Perhaps the chief defect of modern educational systems, as far as the poorer classes are concerned, is that we attempt too much. We try to give the children too much information, or perhaps rather, information on too many subjects. What is really wanted by all classes is not a great accumulation of facts, but the power of gaining information, the habit of thinking with some approach to accuracy, the formation of orderly, methodical habits of thought and action. This, with the power of reading fluently, of writing with ease, and if possible legibly, and

of doing a little arithmetic, would really form a much better equipment for the business of life than is possessed by many who have been educated in a more pretentious and showy manner.

But it is not so much of these matters that we are thinking, although indeed these simple statements involve principles which lie at the foundation of all right education. We are thinking rather of education as a process which is for ever being carried on as long as we live, unless we are contented to forget our actual mental endowments and intellectual attainments. The subject has been suggested to us by an address delivered, some time back, at the Chautauqua assembly, by Professor Henry Drummond, the well known author of *Natural Law in Spiritual Life*. There are some important truths brought out in that address, and there are some statements which in our judgment, are either defective or exaggerated. In any case, the subject is of perennial importance, and we may as well make our contribution to the discussion.

Mr. Drummond remarks with perfect truth that, although a man may be too old to cherish the hope of becoming a scholar in the technical sense of the word, he is never too old to become an educated man. It is never too late, therefore, to begin an education, that is to say, it is never too late to undertake the training of the mind, to introduce order and discipline into its action, to give it right modes of working, and to provide it with such stores of information as may be necessary and useful.

The lecturer remarked quite truly that "one of the greatest enemies to self-education is excessive modesty or distrust of one's powers." Such a statement, although hardly credible to many, we believe to be strictly true. If most of us spoke our real sentiment, we should say that conceit and self-sufficiency were the greatest hindrances to knowledge and to the labour which is the condition of knowledge. The fact is that conceit is a conspicuous vice, whereas shyness and self-distrust are unobtrusive. We believe that a great deal of the neglect of study which is put down to sloth, might properly be attributed to want of faith in one's own powers. No doubt sloth is a very powerful negative factor (if such expression can be allowed) in human achievement; but very frequently sloth is nothing else than the paralysis that comes from a sense of inability.

To young or to old, to those at school who are preparing for their work in the world, to those who have left school and feel that they have brought very little away with them, to all and sundry we would say, Have some faith in yourselves, believe that education is possible for you, although you may have to work for it; it is worth attaining and it is attainable. Wise masters of the spiritual life declare that there are many more souls ruined by despair than by presumption. In a new world, where the majority seem so full of confidence, these principles may seem inapplicable. Let us not be quite so sure. The look of confidence may often be the covering which is cast over the feeling of distrust and foreboding.

On one point Mr. Drummond is guilty of exaggeration, perhaps unconscious, but certainly real. It is where he is pointing out the very important truth that the discipline gained in the pursuit of knowledge is more valuable than the particular items of knowledge acquired. This is quite true, and Mr. Drummond quotes some excellent remarks of Sir W. Hamilton on this subject; but he goes beyond this position, so as almost to declare that we do not care and need not care for the particulars of knowledge at all.

Sir William Hamilton's words are these: "The question—is truth, or is the mental exercise in the pursuit of truth the superior end?—is perhaps the most curious problem in the whole compass of philosophy. At first sight it seems absurd to doubt that truth is more valuable than its pursuit; for is not this to say that the end is less valuable than the means?—and on this superficial view is the prevalent misapprehension founded. A slight consideration will, however, expose the fallacy. Knowledge is either practical or speculative. In practical knowledge it is evident that truth is not the ultimate end; for in that case, knowledge is, *ex hypothesi*, for the sake of application. In speculative knowledge, on the other hand, there may indeed seem greater difficulty; but further reflection will prove that speculative truth is only pursued and is only held of value for the sake of intellectual activity."

These thoughts are not unfamiliar to any who have thought much on such subjects. We express them in many ways. We say, for example, that "the chase is worth more than the hare." But Mr. Drummond goes too far when he says that the hare is worth nothing. "Our idea is," he says, "that we want the knowledge itself. In reality we wish no such thing." This is much too strong. It is quite true that many men study from mere restless-

ness, many from the love of the exercise; but if there were not the conscious pursuit of an end, and if that end were not regarded as of value, the student would know himself to be as one that beateth the air.

It is very much the same here as in the formation of character. When a man is living, and thinking, and acting, he has no special consciousness that he is weaving the web of his life, that he is building up a character which will be eternal. Yet this is what he is doing, and this is the best result of all his actions. Yet surely we do not reckon the good which he does to others, or the right actions which he performs, to be of no account. Besides—to return to the subject of education—the knowledge obtained by the student is in itself good, and useful, and necessary. It becomes to him the light in which he lives and walks, although, as he progresses in the acquisition of it, he gets something more precious and more permanent.

We are protesting against the exaggeration chiefly because of our firm belief in the importance of the general truth enunciated. The often quoted words of Malebranche and Lessing are exactly to the point. "If," said the French thinker, "I held truth captive in my hand, I should open my hand and let it fly, in order that I might again pursue it and capture it." And the German writer puts it even more strongly: "Did the Almighty, holding in His right hand *Truth*, and in his left, *Search after Truth*, deign to tender me the one I might prefer; in all humility but without hesitation, I should request *Search after Truth*."

The importance of these considerations is manifold. In the first place it enables us to understand that a man's education is not to be measured by his actual acquirements. Sometimes it may even be in the inverse ratio. A boy or a man may go on cramming himself full of facts and theories, and may get very little benefit by the process; whereas another, by the manner in which he acquires and the use which he makes of the knowledge acquired, may be disciplining and educating his mind in a very effectual manner.

So, again, there is comfort here to many—to all of us—who are conscious that many of our past acquisitions and attainments are slipping from us. So it must be; but we remain. The contents of the mind may change; but the mind itself matures. It is the work which tells. The food which a man eats is soon forgotten, the drill, the exercise, with the attendant pleasures and painful sensations—all these have passed away; but the well-trained frame retains, as long as the decay of nature is postponed, the result of all the training. It is the same with the mind, only that, when the earthly tabernacle is dissolved, we believe that it goes forth to a new life and to nobler employment—to a life for which all its earthly discipline has been a preparation.

LONDON LETTER.

THIS afternoon, wandering in some Temple rooms, with all sorts of ghostly noises echoing about me—eager words oddly pronounced, a stave of *Johnny Armstrong*, a few bars of a queer Irish jig—I passed by an open window close to which small, dingy London sparrows were fluttering and perching. As I looked into the quiet court where already the evening lamps were beginning to shine, there came trooping in the dim grey light the figures of those dear folk, who, never dying, whatever their epitaphs may choose to say, are to-day as much our companions as ever they were once the comrades of our fathers. And among this brilliant crowd, to the full as real as any poet, author, wit, you may like to mention, I saw—ah, whom did I not see? Friends one knows so well and cares for so much; whose names are household words, and who, filling these quaint squares and cloisters and green gardens with their delightful presence, are quickly recognized and gazed at smilingly even before we take off our hats with a profound bow to the wraiths of their creators. I watched Sir Roger De Coverley with his hands folded behind him for state—like Lamb's Samuel Salt—laughing as the short-faced gentleman talked, sighing as the widow was remembered; and Pen and Warrington on their way to Lamb Court, (don't you know the tones of their voices, the cut of their coats?) and poor Provis slouching to Pip's rooms, starting with a scowl at every shadow, every passer by; and Traddles walking briskly, his barrister's black gown flying in the wind; and Ruth, Tom Pinch, and John Westlock strolling to that famous dinner in Farnival's Inn. There is no more suggestive place than the Temple of a November afternoon, when the river-mists are drifting across and across past every decaying porch, past each begrimed casement, while above the bells of St. Clement Danes—the same bells, by the way, which pealed the cheerful psalm-tune what time Laura worked by Pen's bedside and the Major played