

COST OF IGNORANCE—VALUE OF EDUCATION.

"You will confer the greatest benefit on your city," says Epictetus, "not by raising the roofs, but by exalting the souls of your fellow-citizens; for it is better that great souls should live in small habitations, than that abject slaves should burrow in great houses."

I can conceive of no more degrading position for a human being to occupy, than that of independence in fortune and poverty of mind. An individual thus conditioned, is little above the mere animal; he has means for reaching the highest intellectual and spiritual attainments, and yet he is indifferent with regard to his mental advancement. He has houses and lands, rich liveries and costly adornments to attract the gaze of his fellows and tempt their admiration; he is courted and flattered by an ignorant world, and he feels himself great in his littleness. He little dreams that mind is the characteristic of man, and that a human being is only man in proportion to the development of this mind, the high conceptions formed of God and his stupendous Universe, and the happiness enjoyed in consequence of mental cultivation and patient study. We call the culprit degraded; but the rich man who lives in splendid ignorance is no more so, because he has the means of ennobling himself, but applies them not; and moreover, the vanities that encompass him, are destructive in their influence upon his fellow-men. His household is not a "household of faith," nor yet of inquiry, looking forward to a brighter destiny for Humanity, and upward to the Good and the Perfect. Has he a son or a daughter? Instead of being found in the library, reading the thoughts of the great, thinking of the wonderful things that fill heaven and earth, and enjoying that sweet communion of pure and cultivated minds, the one is generally found wasting both soul and body in folly, luxury and extravagance, and the other is occupying a large portion of her time in arranging her toilet, to attract the attention of the foolish. Some of the wealthy, though ignorant, have, notwithstanding, some conceptions of the dignity of human nature, and are solicitous for the intellectual and moral elevation of their children. But the mass who have the means of suitably disciplining their offspring, have no higher estimation of education than as a kind of highway to aristocracy or wealth. They educate them according to the business they are to pursue, not to make them great or good. Accordingly, money, in their view, is wasted, when expended in the good education of a farmer or mechanic. Such ought to be reminded of the reply of Aristippus to a father who wished him to educate his son, but complained of the price demanded, which was fifty drachmas. "Fifty drachmas!" exclaimed the father, "why that's enough to purchase a slave." "Indeed!" replied Aristippus, "buy him, then, and you will have two."

Ignorance, though not without price, is yet the most costly thing we have. It costs vastly more to support an ignorant than an educated people; so that in the matter of pecuniary economy alone, money invested in education is profitable stock. How shall we estimate the cost of ignorance? This requires a general survey of society. We may state some of the items of expenditure on account of ignorance, thus:

1. The expense of Law. This includes all the money paid to the Legal Profession, and in support of all our courts of justice. Every one can form some estimate of the amount of money which annually passes through the