

touch on practice also. They give sublime views on the universe, such as it is a refreshment and consolation to possess, and such as touch not remotely on the destiny and happiness of man. We in England, at any rate, are not hopeless of the reconciliation of these views with the religious ideal that we have received. But it is the apparent collision, on certain points, between the new and the old that has impeded the reception of these sciences in those respects in which they are so calculated to elicit human feeling, and therefore so appropriate as studies in our elder and chief Universities. In astronomy, indeed, the collision with religion has been long ago practically surmounted. But the observational side of astronomy has been rather sunk at Cambridge and Oxford in comparison with its mathematical side. It may be suspected that many students of astronomy (though not astronomers proper) have less knowledge of the actual face of the heavens than had those Chaldean shepherds who roamed the plains of the East thousands of years ago, in whom the science originated.

When we come to the poorer extreme of society, though the elementary education of the country does not quite ignore the cultivation of the observant faculties, neither does it, in our opinion, lay sufficient stress upon them. The arts of reading and writing, and the study of arithmetic, taken simply by themselves, have a tendency to withdraw the mind from the outer world, and it needs a corrective to restore the balance. That corrective may, in certain cases, be supplied by the subject-matter of the books read, if it is required that they shall be intelligently understood. At the same time, such a requirement must be very positive and direct in order not to be evaded. Though the Education Department does at the present moment require from children in elementary schools, not merely an intelligent style of reading, but also (in the upper standards) an acquaintance with the subject-matter of the books read, it would naturally be felt to be extremely hard that a child should be declared to have failed in reading because he or she showed a want of proper observation. But we should like to see this whole topic of intelligent acquaintance with the subject-matter of the books read removed from the mere art of reading, and constituted into a separate subject by itself—say into a class subject, such as geography and grammar are now. If this were done, it would not be hard upon a child to demand from it some