

do so. They have neither the desire, nor, in the imperfect state of their educational arrangements, the means, to do so. But no one can doubt that this mutual ignorance of each other's language, and the consequent inability to understand each other's views and aspirations, and habits of thought and feeling, are fruitful and dangerous sources of misunderstanding and consequent friction between the two peoples. Who can estimate the effects that would follow in the way of mutual enlightenment were a large percentage of our English writers and speakers able to address their French fellow-citizens in their own language, and to read their books and newspapers? It is needless to add, what new stores of literary treasure would be opened up to our children had they the mastery of that language. And then how easily and profitably could this knowledge be acquired by the young were there only provision for carrying on the study of it *pari passu* with that of English in the public schools.

At one point we are half disposed to take issue with Dr. Bourinot. We refer to those paragraphs near the end of his address in which he deprecates the tendency of the age to get as much knowledge as possible by short cuts, and to spread far too much learning over a limited surface. The tendency is no doubt unfriendly to the classical culture and patient scholarship which he admires. But then what are we to do? We are in our own age and must face its conditions. The days in which one could hope, even by a lifetime of study, to overtake the march of either science or literature, or to compass in a studious and scholarly fashion the whole world of known literature and philosophy, are forever past. The sphere, even of the knowledge which might fairly be expected of every educated man, has been expanding through the century until the alternatives for even the profoundest intellect are either to circumnavigate that sphere at railroad and steamboat speed, or to spend a lifetime in taking soundings in some one little bay or roadstead. It is necessarily the age of superficiality and of specialization. Nor is it so clear that for the great majority the former is not better than the latter, just as the mechanic who has a working knowledge of the steam engine is a broader as well as a more useful man than the one who knows everything about some minute part of it, but nothing of other parts or their correlation for practical use. Then, again, it must not be forgotten that ours is emphatically an age of great problems. The race of man has been discovered. The new science of humanity is superseding the old study of the humanities. Tremendous social, industrial, political, and religious issues stare us in the face at every turn. That man must needs be almost more or less than human who, with the consciousness of superior talents and a due sense of responsibility for their use, could turn his back on all these

problems which are questions of life and death for the millions, and give himself up to a life of literary leisure. Of course the President of the Royal Society could not bring all the points of the compass within the focus of a single address. What we wish to ask is simply whether the pressure of these great questions of a democratic age must not seriously modify in kind the future of literature, and of all intellectual development?

THE BOY AND THE FARM.

"What shall we do to keep the boy on the farm?" is a cry which is heard on every side. Would it not be well to change the form of the query sometimes and say, What shall we do to induce the town and city boy to go to the farm? It always seems to us that the question is too often discussed as if it were the natural and desirable thing that the sons of farmers should invariably choose their father's pursuit; as if, in fact, the accident of having been born in the country should determine the future occupation and career of farmers' children. Many speak and write almost as if there were something abnormal and sinful in the inclination or ambition which prompts so many country-born children to choose business or professional pursuits. We fail to recognize, in this particular case, that the old order of things which decreed that the child should not quit his father's guild has changed. In almost every case we recognize the fact that the greatest good of the greatest number will be best promoted by encouraging every youth to choose the calling for which he seems by nature best adapted, and to which he is, in consequence, most strongly drawn by taste and inclination. Why not permit the law of natural selection to operate freely in the case of farmers' sons as well as in that of the sons of merchants and professional men in the cities? And why should not parents in town and city, tradesmen, business men, professional men, on the same principle, note carefully the tastes and aptitudes of their boys, and encourage those, of whom there are doubtless many, who seem specially fitted for agricultural or horticultural pursuits, to choose their future callings accordingly; not, indeed, by stinting their education, but rather by giving them every facility for thorough culture, both general and special, to fit them for successful and honorable lives in those congenial lines. How many a boy's life is to a large extent a failure in consequence of his having been forced into a business or profession for which he lacked inclination and ability, when there is every reason to believe that the same boy might have lived usefully and happily in some more congenial occupation which would have taken him into the outdoor life and country air for which he longed? On the other hand, every one knows that nothing is more common than for the country boy for whom the farm has no at-

tractions, to rise speedily to the top in some business or profession to which he was drawn by inclination or instinct.

If it be said that neither the conditions nor the emoluments of farm life are such as to make it worth while for men of position and means in the cities to educate their sons with a view to it, the ready rejoinder is, why should not the farmer be just as free and just as ambitious to choose the most eligible calling for his sons as the merchant or the lawyer in the city? As we have intimated, daily observation proves that the city boys have no advantage in the matter of brains over those of the country. On the other hand, many considerations indicate that the change from city to country, and from country to city, would have the best possible effect in developing both the physical and the intellectual strength of the nation. The tendency of those who are brought up and live in the city from generation to generation, to physical and mental degeneracy is well known, as is also the fact that constant reinforcement from the sturdy physique and equally sturdy mentality of the country is the most important factor in keeping up the standard of brain and brawn in the teeming city populations.

The reference to the lack of sufficient financial inducement to make it worth the while of city parents in good positions to educate their sons for country life and pursuits, suggests the further query whether this fact, if such it be, does not take away the basis of complaint in respect to the alleged growing disinclination of country boys to remain on the farms. Unless we are to except agricultural and other rural pursuits from the operation of the law of supply and demand which rules in all other departments of active life, the low prices realized for products of these industries, proves that the number of those who still devote themselves to them is sufficient to meet the world's requirements in those lines. There can be no doubt that if, as a consequence of a great European war or some other cause, there should arise a scarcity of food products, and a corresponding rise in prices, there would be a speedy revival of the popularity of the farming industry and a speedy reversal of the city-ward currents which we now so much deplore.

While, however, we would vindicate the right of our country-bred youth to the same freedom of choice in the matter of their life-work which the city-bred claim for themselves, and while we cannot see that the fact that their fathers were professional or business men gives the latter any just claim to pre-emption or monopoly of the pursuits which are believed to offer the best chances for future distinction or opulence, we deem it equally obvious that the standards of success which are nowadays set up in city and country alike, are by no means the highest or best. Any influence which could be brought to bear to prevent the narrowing "lust of lucre" from