

mind—which, probably, when they first presented themselves, he had welcomed as great discoveries, likely to contribute to his own fame and to the advantage of mankind, but which, after having subjected them to that rigid and unsparing criticism which he felt it his bounden duty to apply to the offspring of his own brain, he had found to be worthless and rejected. Now, unquestionably, the powerful intellect of Watt went for much in this matter: unquestionably his keen and practised glance enabled him to detect flaws and errors in many cases where an eye equally honest but less acute, would have failed to discover them; but can we doubt that a moral element was largely involved in the composition of that quality of mind which enabled Watt to shun the sunken rocks on which so many around him were making shipwreck—that it was his unselfish devotion to truth, his humility, and the practice of self-control, which enabled him to rebuke the suggestions of vanity and self-interest, and, with the sternness of an impartial judge, to condemn to silence and oblivion even the offspring of his own mind, for which he doubtless felt a parent's fondness, when it fell short of that standard of perfection which he had reared.—(Cheers.) From this incident in the life of that great man, we may draw, I think, a most useful lesson, which we may apply with good effect to fields of inquiry far transcending those to which the anecdote has immediate reference. Take, for instance, the wide region occupied with moral and political, or, as they are styled, social questions; observe the wretched half truths, the perilous fallacies, which quacks, greedy of applause or gain, and speculating on the credulity of mankind, more especially in times of perturbation or distress, have the audacity to palm upon the world as sublime discoveries calculated to increase in some vast and untold amount, the sum of human happiness; and mark the misery and desolation which follows, when the hopes excited by these pretenders are dispelled. It is often said in apology for such persons, that they are, after all, sincere; that they are deceived rather than deceivers; that they do not ask others to adopt opinions which they have not heartily accepted themselves; but apply to this reasoning the principle that I have been endeavouring to illustrate from the life of Watt, and we shall find, I think, that the excuse is, in most cases but a sorry one, if, indeed, it be any excuse at all. God has planted within the mind of man, the lights of reason and of conscience, and without it, he has placed those of revelation and experience, and if man wilfully extinguishes those lights, in order that, under cover of the darkness which he has himself made, he may install in the sanctuary of his understanding and heart, where the image of truth alone should dwell, a vain idol, a creature of his