

which have an extensive sea-board, have been almost without exception, great commercial nations; and consequently not only much wealthier than their less active inland neighbors, but also, by coming in constant contact with other people, not less advanced than themselves, have necessarily made more rapid social progress. From this then we would infer, that social intercourse is one of the most powerful agents for the propagation of civilization. Why is it then, that this theory is less true of the nations of the present day, than those of antiquity, or indeed, of a hundred years ago? The reason is simply this: that while in ancient times navigation was almost the only means of social intercourse, to-day it occupies but a secondary place in our immense systems of travel and transport. The attainment of perfection in all means of intercommunication has been the great object of this century. For this has science searched and art labored. To this task has the mind of man been bowed. And how stupendous are the results. How overpowering is the feeling which comes over us, as we contemplate the achievements of human intellect. First and grandest of these, is the subjugation to the service of man of steam, at once one of the subtlest and most irresistible forces in the universe. By attending to the laws of science, man is now enabled to take hold of this tremendous power, which since the creation has been idly expending its strength in rending rocks or upheaving mountains, and subdue it to his will. With it he transforms stretches of sea into fertile land, or makes the barren desert a miniature ocean. With it he tears the rocks out of the sea, or travels fathoms beneath its bottom. With it there is no limit to what he may do. Already he is girding the continent with roads of steel, over which with the speed of the wind, he diffuses throughout the whole world the productions of every clime. Physical obstacles, are as nothing to him. He tunnels the Alps as a boy would a snow-

bank. He outrides the wildest storm of the Atlantic as calmly as the infant sleeps in its cradle. We who live in the midst of these victories of mind over matter, cannot appreciate them at their true value. They have become the every day events of our lives. But with what reflections would the shade of Aristotle regard them. How mighty the contrast would appear to him between the slow, sleepy life of his own times and the tremendous vim of the nineteenth century. Nay, how aghast would he stand to see the thunderbolts of his own Jove curbed to do the errands of man; to see the very lightning quietly illuminating the darkest recesses of a coal mine, or speeding its way along the bottom of the ocean, with pledges of peace and good, will between the different continents. How sceptically he would shake his head when told, that with our telephone he might have disputed with Plato though they were miles apart, or that we have a means by which the eloquence of Demosthenes might have been bottled up and handed down to all posterity. Ah yes! Aristotle, if we cannot surpass thine age in purity of language and true delineation of nature, we have far outstripped you in the real business of life. Surely and speedily we are ascending the incline to perfection. Man's comforts are multiplying, and his social happiness is becoming more refining and elevating. Steadily barbarism is vanishing before the combined advance of steam, electricity, and the hundred other forces of nature which human intelligence is daily becoming master of. And, judging by the immense strides we have taken since George Stevenson laid the first railroad, we cannot but believe, that ere another century have elapsed, universal civilization shall no longer be the dream of the philanthropist, but a fact to stir the soul of the Macaulay of the future as he records it in the pages of the world's history.

By a knowledge of the established religion of a country, we can always