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MATHEMATICS A MEANS OF CULTURE.

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I do not think that we who labor in the Department of Mathematics should lose our tempers when one who is ignorant of our subject ventures to attack it, or to comment adversely on its usefulness; for, from the very character of our subject, we are more exempt from such causes of irritation than are the laborers in other departments. A part of knowledge that for upwards of two thousand years has been most intimately identified with all that is most valuable in human progress needs no defenders, and can be indifferent to attack. But sometimes a statement is made that exhibits an ignorance not merely of the details of mathematics, which is pardonable, but even of the general character of the subject and of its relations to other departments of knowledge, with which general character and relations every cultivated man should enjoy an acquaintance. Thus it is not infrequently said that mathematics is most valuable as a discipline, but of little value as a means of culture. I wish to reply to such views to-night; I wish to offer instruction to those who entertain such views.

I take it for granted that I am speaking to an audience composed not necessarily of mathematicians. You will accordingly recognize that I am restricted in the means of presenting the case. Numberless illustrations which I could offer to a company