

While, therefore, the study of the sciences should be of the greatest practical value to all, there are certain forms of thought or study which are by many supposed to be possessed of more elevating tendencies as regards the development of the mind than others. Yet it seems scarcely fair to make any such invidious distinction in the value of scientific knowledge itself, but if any such peculiar tendency is apparent among the mass of mankind in general, to attribute such peculiarity rather to the particular bias of the individual himself, since it is a well recognized fact that the tendency of the human mind in different individuals is exceedingly diverse, so that to some the study of the most intricate problems pertaining to the sciences of pure mathematics or metaphysics is capable of affording the highest type of mental delectation, while to others such studies are conducive only of weariness and even of disgust itself.

It is evident, I trust, from what has already been said, that there is nothing in the study of the natural sciences which is not of a character to elevate both the physical and moral condition of mankind, and yet, in regard to some of these, there is a certain feeling of hostility displayed which occasionally finds expression, but which is due apparently rather to a lack of conception of the principles involved in their study than to any other cause; so hard is it even among those who are generally considered as enjoying the advantages of a liberal education to cut entirely free from the old leaven of mediæval superstition, belief in which very often proves stronger than the exercise of the strongest common sense. As an illustration I may merely mention the fact that, not many years ago, one of the most popular lecturers of this city, at that time, assured me that he had read everything which he thought had a bearing upon the subject of the creation of the world and on the doctrine of evolution, and yet retained the impression that all the phenomena which have taken place since the period of chaos down to the beginning of the seventh day, could be easily included within the space of six literal days of twenty-four hours each, from which we may realize in what exceedingly narrow grooves some minds, excellent in other respects, are cast. We may be disposed to regard this as a somewhat exceptional case, and wonder how any one, possessed of even a moderate share of common sense, can prefer to cling to the exploded and