

sary, and when the desire to acquire it is sufficient to make us submit to the great privations, the science which teaches the means by which its acquisition may be best promoted and how we may obtain the greatest amount of wealth with the least difficulty, must certainly deserve to be carefully studied and meditated. There is no class of persons to whom it can be considered as either extrinsic or superfluous. There are some, doubtless, to whom it may be of more advantage than to others; but it is of the utmost consequence to every one. The prices of all sorts of commodities; the profits of the farmer, manufacturer, and merchant; the rent of the landlord; the employment and wages of the labourer; the influence of regulations affecting the freedom of industry; the incidence and operation of taxes and loans,—all depend on principles which it belongs to this science to ascertain and elucidate.*

To the same effect are the following graphic remarks of the Right Honourable THOMAS WYSE—an old and able advocator of Popular education, and the present British Ambassador to the Court of Greece. "Can we advance, (says Mr. WYSE) a step in any of the walks of life, without feeling its influence? Is it not another term for the laws, which regulate our whole social resistance? Is it not the regulation of every portion dependent, in the first instance, on due acquaintance with those laws? And all this being true, is it possible we can permit—I will not say approve—its reclusion, even from Elementary Education?"

"In the middle and upper schools, the justice of this reasoning is not even contested; but, as in the instance we have been just discussing, the principle is not visible in the practice. Professorships have been founded—courses are given,—a great preliminary step certainly, but still a preliminary. It should be made an integral part of Education. Though a representative be altogether ignorant of the controversy, of axioms or no axioms, in Geometry, he may yet be capable of giving an excellent vote on a district or provincial railway; but if ignorant of the great principles which determine wages, rent, currency, &c., he may, with the best intentions reduce the majority of his constituents to ruin.

"But what have the lower classes to do with these functions, and this education? We might as well be asked what have they to do with rents, with labour, with prices? What have they to do with almost every interest of their social life? This department is theirs, if any be theirs:—if they are to have any education at all, this ought to be their education. Why do they pass—often in a single night—from people to populace, and from populace to mob,—but from some supposed infringement of their rights and interests—some panic, in which their ignorance has a far larger share, than their malignity? Why do they run after gold? or cut off this or that intercourse with their neighbours, at the *dictum* of this or that Sir Oracle—such oracles upon such subjects! but from the notorious confidence which uneducated men usually place in every audacious quack who takes the trouble to dupe them,—a confidence quite natural, from their want of knowledge and consequent total incapacity to judge whether his nostrums will kill or cure. To extinguish charlatanism, you must show the people where it lies, and what it is;—to detect falsehood, they must early be accustomed to truth. Half the evils of your poor law system, would probably have been neutralized, by the diffusion of sound economical knowledge, at an early period of society;—by such knowledge, chiefly, are their consequences to be healed now."

3. The third reason why political economy should be made a branch of public education is, that it involves questions on which the people at large are required to pronounce judgment. It involves, indeed, the chief functions of government. The principles of our civil policy having been settled—the relations and power and duties of the different branches of the government having been established by common consent, together with the wide extension and full enjoyment of the elective franchise, and right of free discussion among the people, the chief duties of government and legislation are now directed to economical questions—the development of the resources of our country and the application of those resources—the advancement of agriculture, the promotion of manufactures, the increase of trade, the diffusion of knowledge; and how can men be qualified to govern, to legislate, or to select and judge of the conduct and measures of responsible rulers and legislators, respecting the various questions which are embraced in the agricultural, the manufacturing, the commercial, the intellectual and social interests of the people? The youth at our schools will soon be

the rulers of the land; and in a country where the road to public station is open to all classes, their general acquaintance with the principles of political economy must be of high importance. "If a free government, (says the able American author of the *Science of Government*), the people have in their own hands the right of correcting the evils which result from unwise laws; but without a knowledge of political economy, a people might ignorantly oppose measures adapted to promote public prosperity." "If it be said (says Lord BROUGHAM) that there is no reason for all the community learning Political Philosophy [of which political economy is an essential part] any more than there is of all a landowner's family inspecting his accounts and undertaking agriculture; the answer is obvious, that all the community, and not particular classes, are the parties interested in State affairs; and that if a family can be found in which all the members, servants included, have their several shares in the property of the State, then beyond all question, each member, down to the humblest menial, however inconsiderable his share of the property, would be entitled to inspect the accounts—would be directly interested in superintending the management—and would be unspeakably foolish to remain in ignorance of the principles on which farms should be managed, and the condition and management of the estates in the neighbourhood."*

While much evil results from ignorance on the part of citizens invested with the elective franchise respecting the economical principles which form the basis of, and are interwoven with, our whole system of legislation and government, nothing is more absurd, as well as pernicious, than for persons to discuss, and oracularly decide upon questions of which they are utterly ignorant. It would be a farce, if it were not a calamity, to see some newspapers writers, who have perhaps never even read a work on the polity and economy of civil government,—much less studied the doctrines of it—flippantly dictate to a whole country on questions involving the vital interests of society. Every person would pronounce it supremely absurd for a man to attempt to discuss the philosophy of language who was ignorant of the elements of grammar,—or to write on philosophy, or medicine, or navigation, or military tactics, who knew nothing more of any of those subjects than what he had picked up in the newspapers and reviews; yet with no better preparation, how often do we see persons discussing the philosophy of human society at large, together with its most complicated diseases and their infallible remedies—the minutest details for navigating the Ship of State in all seas and in all seasons, and for rendering a nation safe, prosperous and triumphant, against all foes, domestic, or foreign? Archbishop WHATELY, with his characteristic wit and felicity of illustration, has exhibited this kind of quackery in public affairs in its proper light. In the third of his Introductory Lectures on Political Economy, delivered before the Oxford University, he remarks as follows:—

"The most difficult questions in Political Economy are every day discussed with the most unhesitating confidence, not merely by empty pretenders to science, (for that takes place and must be expected in all subjects,) but by persons not only ignorant, but *professedly* ignorant, and designing to continue so, of the whole subject; neither having, nor pretending to have, nor wishing for, any fixed principles by which to regulate their judgment on each point.—Questions concerning taxation, tithes, the national debt, the poor laws—the wages which labourers earn or ought to earn—the comparative advantages of different modes of charity, and numberless others belonging to Political Economy, many of them among the most difficult, and in which there is the greatest diversity of opinion, are debated perpetually, not merely at public meetings, but in the course of conversation, and decisions of them boldly pronounced, by many who utterly disclaim having turned their attention to Political Economy.

"The right management of public affairs in respect of these and such like points, is commonly acknowledged to call for men of both powerful and well cultivated mind; and yet, if every man of common sense is competent to form an opinion, at the first glance of such points, without either having made them the subject of regular study, or conceiving that any such is necessary, it would follow that the art of Government, (at least that extensive and multifarious department of it pertaining to national wealth) must be the easiest of all arts;—easier than even the common handicraft trades; in

* Political Philosophy, Part First, p. 29