

supplies the want, so that, in time, this position of dependance engenders a feeling of respect which oftentimes approaches veneration. The author is regarded as a being beyond the criticism of every-day mortals, and his statements become infallible. That a certain respect is necessary, no one will attempt to deny. To eradicate this feeling altogether, would throw into confusion, and revolutionize entirely, our present system of education. We think, however, that the trust may be too implicit, and that a blind reliance is calculated to damp, if not destroy, the germs of originality. Sooner or later in the life of every educated and thinking man there comes a time when confidence in the statements of authors becomes weakened, and it is seldom till this period of independant thought arrives that much is achieved. The multiplication of books is often only the multiplication of errors, and, according to our opinion, we cannot begin to think for ourselves too early—to enquire into and question our text-books, to try every statement that admits of doubt; not with unsettled mind and shaken confidence swallowing a statement *cum grano salis*, but endeavouring to prove all things, holding fast to that which is good.

On this subject we have never met with anything which better represents our views than a portion of the last opening address delivered by Dr. Payne, to the students of St. Thomas's Hospital, London.

"Scientific books," said the lecturer, "may be like books of travel, intended to describe what the reader has not seen and is never likely to see; or, again, they may be like maps, which give a general outline of a number of objects, too many or too large to be easily embraced in one field of view; or, finally they may be like handbooks for travellers, to draw attention to what the reader can observe for himself. Now, there can be no question about the utility of all these classes of books. No one can see for himself a tenth part, or even, in some sciences, a thousandth part, of the facts upon which any science rests. Hence a great part of our knowledge must always rest upon testimony. This is unavoidable; but still we should endeavour to test such books by our own experience whenever we are able, and at least to gain a direct knowledge of a sufficient number of facts to form a sample of the rest. Without these correctives, feeding on other people's experience—or, as Professor Huxley tersely put it, 'getting up hearsay'—has a very demoralizing effect on the mind. The examination system has much to answer for in requiring so much of it. Original and inventive genius instinctively revolts from second-hand learning. Faraday