

WHAT SCIENCE IS DOING FOR MODERN THOUGHT.

ONE of the most important influences now at work is doubtless that of science, which is of course as old as human curiosity, and is only new in its results. That the effect of the great advance in scientific thought has been to modify considerably most forms of religious belief cannot be denied: and, in spite of the many attempted reconciliations of the two, it is not difficult to see that some of the leading dogmas of Christianity are doomed. Fortunately, one of the rewards of the freedom that is given to science is a lack of venom in its attack; and, on the other side, there is an absence of bitterness in those whose opinions it unavoidably alters. There are, of course, exceptions; modern science has not expelled arrogance from the world, and enlightenment has not wholly driven out bigotry. Yet, in the calmness with which the controversy is carried on, we see how widespread is the belief that dogmas are less essential than the truth which all men alike are seeking. As Prof. Asa Gray puts it: "No sensible person now believes what the most sensible people believed formerly. Settled scientific belief must control religious belief." It is one of the time-honoured jests which the late Lord Beaconsfield thrust into his last novel, that the religion of sensible people is what sensible people never tell. They may not, but their tolerance of new truths and the altered position of ecclesiasticism declare all that need be known.

The present interest in science is distinctly part of the revolutionary movement which demands, with restless curiosity, why everything should be as it is. This is the question that is put to every existing institution, and science often gives a serviceable answer. The answer is a levelling one to all conventionalities, because science concerns itself only about facts, and it is heard now because science can only exist where thought is free. Freedom of thought is a powerful solvent, and it is especially destructive to all the conventionalities which exist by means of the common agreement that they shall not be examined. We see that in politics the divine

right of kings is called in question, and in the uniform tendency of modern times towards democracy the assumption of government by those who are governed. In social matters we perceive a similar movement towards the emancipation of the individual. All knowledge advances from vague generalities to the comprehension of particulars, and as human beings have succeeded in understanding themselves they have thrown aside the convenient habit of dividing the rest of the world into vast homogeneous classes, and have recognized the dignity and importance of each individual of the race.—*Popular Science Monthly*.

It is reported that already one hundred thousand copies of "Peck's Bad Boy" have been sold, and that the author has received in one year a larger royalty than was paid to Washington Irving for all his writings. The fact, if it be a fact, should make us blush for American civilization. It seems amazing that an intelligence capable of reading words of three syllables at sight should not be surfeited and disgusted at the end of one chapter of such dreary and pointless platitudes and improbable lies as appear in that book. Such a wretched failure in a weak attempt to be funny was surely never before printed unless perhaps in the weakest effusions of the *Detroit Free Press*. The institutions for feeble-minded children must be filling up in this country.—*Ex*.

NORTH HASTINGS UNIFORM PRO- MOTION EXAMINATIONS.

(Continued from MONTHLY for April.)

COMPOSITION.

1. Write words that mean the opposite of—a coward, humility, smallest, lose, grief, folly, abundant.
2. Write statements correctly each of which shall contain one or more of the following words:—eight, ate, reins, rains, reigns, peace, piece, residence, off, of.
3. Write the full names of five of your schoolmates and their initials.