

and then leaves him a free agent to complete the building up of his own intellectual structure. This enlargement of intellect is a slow, gradual, but, if proper means be used, a sure process, and in the human race as a whole may be for aught I know to the contrary carried on *ad infinitum*. With the poet we believe that,

"Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,

"And the thoughts of men are widened as the process of the suns."

but no such *unlimited* development of intellect can take place in the individual, at least not in this life, and with intellect after this life I pretend not to deal. Man can only reach a certain point of intellectual excellence, when the elements of decay in his physical organism begin to weaken and impair his mental faculties. The point at which the intellectual powers of a man begin to deteriorate differs as the individual. In some men it is as early as thirty, in others, forty and fifty, while others still retain all their power of mind even until seventy and eighty.

Again, no unlimited enlargement of intellect can take place in the individual even up to the time when his natural powers begin to be impaired. Every intellectual horizon is to some extent circumscribed. Some men, for instance, might study mathematics, enlarge their mathematical vision, until the end of life, and yet never be able to comprehend Newton's *Principia*; while other men might spend a life time in studying the philosophy of the human mind, and never be able to understand the metaphysics of Socrates. No more can any sort of art make the average intellect approximate in size that of a Cuvier, Bonaparte or Webster.

The quality of human intellect may be also, to a certain extent, improved upon by human art. The child at school is a good illustration of this. In its case it is evident that not only does intellectual growth consist of enlargement of intellectual quantity, but likewise of improve-

ment in the quality, and the whole is included in that *forming* to which the poet has reference in the often-quoted passage—

"'Tis education forms the common mind."

But while art may enlarge intellect and improve its quality, it cannot but in a limited degree *change* it; or, in other words, intellect will not undergo any complete transformation and appear under totally new and distinct form. The man who seems specially adapted by nature for the study and practice of law, might without doubt make a physician of himself, but he could never attain to the degree of excellence in the latter profession that he might in the former, because it is quite impossible for him to change that natural bent of his own intellect which fitted him admirably for success as a lawyer. Nature sets her stamp upon every intellect; to attempt to change or obliterate this work were only to attempt an impossibility or else to impair intellectual power. Nature intended Thomas Edward, a poor shoemaker of Aberdeen, for a naturalist. Remonstrance in childhood, the being apprenticed to a shoemaker in youth, and poverty which compelled him to labor hard at his trade in manhood, all failed to change the natural adaptation of his mind for natural science. He became a naturalist in spite of every discouragement and difficulty. It is impossible for art to change or obliterate the stamp which Nature has set upon such intellects, for she has shaped them for a special purpose, and all that human skill can do is to enlarge and improve them. That education which shapes common minds would scarcely have restrained Agassiz from becoming a naturalist, Byron from becoming a poet, or Henry Shaw, *alias* Josh Billings, from becoming a writer of funny paragraphs. Such men have only one talent, but that one is excessively developed. Perhaps they are not wiser than men who can boast of more talents, but yet they are more likely than the latter to make a