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THE TENDENCY OF MODERN SCIENCE.

"GIVE you joy oh sons of men, that Truth is altogether wholesome" is Plato's greeting to the age; an age imbued with the spirit of truth; when the air is full of a scepticism that rests not till transformed into belief; when the philosopher does not, as of old, put out his eyes, that he may know, but creates for himself new eyes, with which he reads the secrets of the universe.

The inductive method has made science the genius of the age. It is the leaven that has given life to modern thought, the torch that has carried light and order where all was darkness and confusion. Man no longer affects humility in his study of the universe, nor regards it as a matter of exultation that he finds himself in a world of mystery, but aspires to see through the earth, to touch the stars and to discourse with all life. Science opens to his mind a boundless field of activity; for her stores are inexhaustible, and life is vastly richer from the treasures mind exercises from stubborn facts when touched by the philosopher's stone of thought. Science touches our life at every point, and with a magic hand transforms the forces of the universe into light and heat. Philosophy is imbued with its spirit; all thought of the past, metaphysics, theology, literature and art are overshadowed by this modern Titan. Man's mission is to generalize, to resist particulars; to see the past with the eyes of the present, and the present with the eyes of the past. The age is steeped in a science which is changing man's conception of the world and his destiny, and that has filled him with a fanaticism for veracity such as the world has never before seen.

The science of the day says,—"Why trouble ourselves about matters, of which, however important, we do know nothing and can know nothing?" Shall all speculation then be sacrificed to bare empiricism. The difficulties of metaphysics lie at the root of all science, says G. H. Lewes. That metaphysics has been barren, heretofore, is only too evident, but it is not for science to fix arbitrarily the limits of knowledge. Give to metaphysics a beating heart by infusing into it some of this new life which animates all thought of the day and, in searching for the unknown that is yet knowable, we shall be vastly better, braver, and more industrious, than if we despaired of all knowing.

To-day all thought is rejected that does not bear the seal of this ruler of the times, yet science forgets that, with all her knowing, she has often gone no farther than the old philosophers, who sought within for a theory of the universe. There is coming to be such an unquestioning faith in all that science proclaims, that we are in danger of leaving our thinking to be done by a few specialists in science, and of losing the benefits of a healthy doubt. What has science done for man to deserve such confidence? She has freed him in one direction only to imprison him in another; she has placed the intellect in insurrection against the heart, and, while giving him continually a higher, nobler, and more perfect view of life, tends to crush him under the fa-

talities of physical forces. But Fate has been called unpenetrated causes; should not science then in her successful penetration of causes free man from the prison house of necessity? No, man in the height of his power, feels himself bound by inexorable law; and will only cease to be under paralyzed subjection to nature when, in viewing her, he adds to the telescope of the intellect the specterscope of the heart.

The divorce between the understanding and the heart has given birth to a marked uncertainty in the thought and actions of men. A Cromwell is not born in an age when doubtings and perplexities weaken and unnerve man. In a time when the subtlest and most universal problems are met by so many daring theories, opinions and beliefs are too transient to be crystallized into action; and that oscillation which all progress demands, marks this as eminently a progressive age. Yet when the time comes for prompt and decisive action, will this halting between two opinions produce men equal to the exigencies of the times?

What answer does science give to the sphynx-like questions, What am I, Whence am I, Whither am I going? What questions we have learned to ask! Yet though we have penetrated into the innermost chambers of the pyramid of the past no answering hieroglyphic meets the eye. "Nor can baffled seers impart the secret of earth's laboring heart." Microscope, crucible, telescope are alike silent in the presence of this. And writing on the wall. The positive philosopher does not seek an interpretation but affects indifference to these questions, and, recognizing the lawless curiosity of much of modern science, aims to direct all thought towards the erection of an altar to Humanity. He rejects all theology and metaphysics, as having outlived their usefulness, but the termination of his philosophy is in a theology and metaphysics. Positive philosophy, as a protest against the destructive tendency of the age may serve to check its one-sided development, but as a destroyer of all the past it will fail to find a response in the hearts of men. The time indeed calls for some constructive effort that shall reconcile conduct with belief, but it is not sufficient to build it upon one man's conception of the needs of humanity.

Science attacks the conservative in thought, and that irreconcilable conflict between the existing and the ideal continues with accumulated energy. But the new soon grows old, and the revolutionist is revolutionized, while all the vast theories remain only as examples of higher generalizations. "Keep your mind open to the truth" is the motto of science; but scientists grow old and age is always averse to the new. Who then shall determine truth, the great past or the ambitious present? That mind is the greatest, that can the most happily combine the two, as the springtime adds to the oak with its thousand years of growth new buds and blossoms. Science does not make a bigoted man less bigoted unless he can be able to see the truth with its accompanying falsehood for man ever sees but half truths except in the perspective of years.

Mind has deserted the altars of form and sacrifices to the mechanical deity of the age. The Corliss engine usurps the Laocoon; *The Origin of Species* is supplanting *Homer's Iliad*; the microscope and scalpel replace the palette and chisel; the poet mourns that "Philosophy would clip an angel's wings." All hail! to the

spirit of inquiry that freed man from servile admiration of a few great minds of the past and opened to him a perennial spring of life and beauty; but woe! to that spirit that forgets, as Emerson says, that the human heart is of more account than peering into microscopes, and is greater than can be measured by the pompous figures of the astronomer. Joy to the enchantress that delivers man from the tyranny of nature, but away with that philosophy that would imprison him in an icy materialism. The minds of Homer and Newton meet at the summit and the grand truths in science surpass in beauty all that man can create in the imagination, so that one fully alive to this beauty need not lose all human sympathy by gazing into the heavens, or by companionship with dry bones, but will say with Seneca, "I count all that is human as part of myself;" so the poet may well sing:

"In spite of all that time is bringing
Treasures of truth and miracles of art,
Beauty and love will keep the poet singing
And song shall live—the science of the heart."

Comparative science is the magnetic current, that binds together the past and the present. Greek, Roman, Hindoo, Teuton become united in a common brotherhood for comparative science has discovered the lost genealogy of the European races; proud Roman and a thetic Greek no longer engross the attention of mankind. This new star culogued in the firmament of mind has converted mere idle curiosity of past into a noble zeal for the why; wherefore of their existence, and historical investigation is no longer a patchwork of rude guesses and false theories. To resist the deductions of the comparative method is to shut from the mind the grandest and broadest views of life and the universe. Why array mere opinion against the strongest of internal evidence; evidence that exalts and ennobles our ideas of man and nature, and that fills us with toleration, charity and sympathy for every movement of mankind towards truth, whether it be that of a Buddha in the historic East or a Socrates in the cultured West.

Carlyle has said, "The poorest day among us is the influx of two eternities." To-day carries the fruits of the past in its bosom and contains the germs of the future. Science has elevated this present to an eminence, such as no present has ever before known, and has made of this a concerted age; yet they tell us "that the mass of creatures and qualities are still hidden waiting like the enchanted princess for a human deliverer." Will science continue to be this deliverer? The specialist is doomed to solitary confinement with one absorbing thought, hence truth becomes distorted, and science is exposed to dangers from within. Again, she has been charged with hating the name of love and moral purpose, and, in so far as this is true, science will fail and decline, as has all thought that neglected any part of man's nature.

Give ear, oh science! to Plato when he says, "God invented sight, that, on surveying the circles of intelligence in the heavens, we might employ those of our own minds, and by imitating the uniform revolutions of divinity, set aright our own wanderings and blunders." Pursue, then, thy wondrous course oh science! Free man from the fatality of ignorance; teach him the sweet humanities; fill his life with noble and still nobler aims and reveal to him more and more of that holy trinity—matter, mind and spirit. E. P.