

sciences which that knowledge requires, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind: and we ought not" he adds, "to turn off attention from life to nature, as if we were placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the stars."

That a violent shock had been given in the sixteenth century to certain time-honored dogmas, by what is here slightly called "watching the motions of the stars," was an historical fact with which Johnson was of course familiar; but if it had been adduced to prove that they who exercise their reasoning powers, in interpreting the great book of nature, are constantly arriving at new truths, and occasionally required to modify preconceived opinions, or that when habitually engaged in such discipline, they often acquire independent habits of thought, applicable to other departments of human learning, such arguments would by no means have propitiated the critic, or have induced him to moderate his disapprobation of the proposed innovations. In the mind of Johnson there was a leaning to superstition, and no one was more content to leave the pupil to tread forever in beaten paths, and to cherish extreme reverence for authority, for which end the whole system then in vogue in the English schools and colleges was admirably conceived. For it confined the studies of young men, up to the age of twenty-two, as far as possible to the non-progressive departments of knowledge, to the ancient models of classical excellence, whether in poetry or prose, to theological treatises, to the history and philosophy of the ancients rather than the moderns, and to pure mathematics rather than their application to physics. No modern writer was more free from fear of inquiry, more anxious to teach the millions to think and reason for themselves, no one ever looked forward more enthusiastically to the future growth and development of the human mind, than Channing. If his own education had not been cast in an antique mold, he would have held up Milton as a model for imitation, not only for his love of classical lore and poetry, but for his wish to cultivate a knowledge of the works of nature.

Certainly no people ever started with brighter prospects of uniting the promotion of both these departments, than the people