

versally found to make a correspondent improvement of them. On the other hand, the honours of science have been sustained, and its bounds enlarged, in the greater number of directions, and, in superior degrees, by those who, nearly or altogether unaided, have risen to eminence by their own diligence and perseverance in the cultivation of talent.

The advice has been often and very properly given, that you should beware of satisfying yourselves with superficial acquirements. But this recommendation needs to be better understood than it sometimes is. A vicious superficialism is when self-fondness persuades a man, and urges him to endeavour to persuade others, that his knowledge is something great; that he has studied to an extent which he has not done, and has made attainments which he has not made. Such affectation involves the guilt of falsehood; and it is sure to defeat its own end, and bring its merited punishment.

But there is a sense in which it must be said that most, even of cultivated minds, possess but superficial knowledge. It is one of our blessings, by God's kind providence, to live in a time when literature, science, and the arts are cultivated so assiduously; and their results are proclaimed so widely; that the necessity of acquiring general knowledge is strongly impressed, and the means of the acquisition are afforded with unexampled facility. To many, however, the measure of such acquisition must be imperfect. The indispensable cares and labours of our earthly condition present insurmountable obstacles: and there are duties of personal religion and of social life which possess an infinitely higher obligation, and the neglect of which would bring guilt upon our own consciences, and injury upon our dearest connexions. Far from happy would be the possession of even great attainments, purchased at such a cost.