

of Playfair was against the English universities.¹ "That science has long been neglected and declining in England is not an opinion originating with me, but is shared by many, and has been expressed by higher authority than mine."² The author then proceeds to give extracts from the writings of Davy, Herschel, and others on this subject. "It cannot," he says, "have escaped the attention of those who have had opportunities of examining the state of science in other countries, that

¹ Some of the causes of the decline as given by Babbage are interesting, the more so if we remember that they were written at the period which marked the culmination of *Wissenschaft* in another country (p. 10): "The pursuit of science does not in England constitute a distinct profession, as it does in many other countries. . . . Even men of sound sense and discernment can scarcely find means to distinguish between the possessors of knowledge merely elementary and those whose acquirements are of the highest order. This remark applies with peculiar force to all the more difficult applications of mathematics; and the fact is calculated to check the energies of those who only look to reputation in England." In 1794 Professor Waring of Cambridge wrote: "I have myself written on most subjects in pure mathematics, and in these books inserted nearly all the inventions of the moderns with which I was acquainted; . . . but I never could hear of any reader in England, out of Cambridge, who took the pains to read and understand what I have written;" and "he then proceeds to console himself under this neglect in England by the honour conferred on him by d'Alembert, Euler, and Lagrange"

(see Todhunter, 'History of the Theory of Probability,' p. 453). Babbage remarks (p. 13) that "in England the profession of the law is that which seems to hold out the strongest attraction to talent," that science is pursued as a favourite pastime, and that mathematics "require such overwhelming attention that they can only be pursued by those whose leisure is undisturbed by other claims." "By a destructive misapplication of talent we exchange a profound philosopher for but a tolerable lawyer" (p. 37).

² One of the causes given by the Edinburgh Reviewer of 1822 (vol. xxxvii. p. 222) is the following: "In Cambridge there must always be a great number of men devoted to scientific pursuits; but from the want both of the facilities and the excitements furnished by such an association, apt to lose the spirit of original investigation,—a remark peculiarly applicable to those young men who yearly distinguish themselves in the favourite studies of the University, and who, after the laborious course of discipline by which they have attained the first object of their ambition, are prone, if left alone, to become the mere instruments for enabling others to pursue the same course."