

more exquisite, or the perception of the harmony of numbers more nice, since the age of the *Æneid*. Science is cumulative in its character; and so its votaries in modern times stand on a higher pedestal than their predecessors. But though nature produced a Newton some two centuries ago, as she produced a Goliath of Gath at an earlier period, the modern philosophers, as a class, do not exceed in actual stature the worse informed ancients, — the Euclids, Archimedeses, and Aristotles. We would be without excuse if, with the Bacon, Milton, and Shakspeare of these latter ages of the world full before us, we recurred to the obsolete belief that the human race is deteriorating; but then, on the other hand, we have certain evidence, that since genius first began unconsciously to register in its works its own bulk and proportions, there has been no increase in the mass or improvement in the quality of individual mind. As for the dream that there is to be some extraordinary elevation of the general platform of the race achieved by means of education, it is simply the hallucination of the age, — the world's present alchemical expedient for converting farthings into guineas, sheerly by dint of scouring. Not but that education is good; it exercises, and, in the ordinary mind, developes, faculty. But it will not anticipate the terminal dynasty. Yet further, — man's average capacity of happiness seems to be as limited and as incapable of increase as his average reach of intellect: it is a mediocre capacity at best; nor is it greater by a shade now, in these days of power-looms and portable manures, than in the times of the old patriarchs. So long, too, as the law of increase continues, man must be subject to the law of death, with its stern attendants, suffering and sorrow; for the two laws go necessarily together; and so long as death reigns, human creatures, in even the best of times, will continue to