

them can say right away how many Baptists there are, or would hear without surprise that the sect would not fill Leeds, and is even then tenfold more numerous than the recognised Unitarians? To pass from an Anglican to a Nonconformist household is to pass into a new world, united by many ties, yet separated by such distances that the very "news" of the one, the events it thinks important, are unintelligible to the other; while it is meaningless to the outside world, till a strong Nonconformist, or Anglican, or Catholic may live years, and never once see the intelligence which has most interested him mentioned in the newspapers which yet he considers a microcosm of the world. There are, we believe, entire strata of our society into which any newspaper proprietor who let down a shaft would find, to his own astonishment, that he had "struck ile," but the instinct of separateness is too strong even for enterprise. Even as regards politics, we doubt if the interest is anything like so universal as is believed. There are entire classes which never attend to politics in the slightest degree, or for the most transient half-hour; large circles in which no one could, under any temptation, name half the members of the Cabinet, or any of the subordinate Ministers. We are not speaking, be it remembered, of the ignorant, but only of the men, in many respects as wise as their neighbours, to whom, from temperament, or occupation, or habit, politics are a sealed book. The best proof that this is the fact is the excessively limited sale of newspapers, as compared with the numbers of those who could read them, and who would pay for them, if they cared enough to consider them a pleasure. A journal with 100,000 subscribers is rich, but there are 600,000 houses in the Metropolitan District alone. Look, too, how circulation increases in war-time, or when events are of the kind which interest all human beings capable of taking interest at all. The man, or the event, or the occupation, that interests the whole community, or even any large section of it, is exceedingly rare, and each "world" much more limited than itself deems, or even than outsiders are apt to think. Chess-players all fancy that everybody knows chess, though they know that their servants cannot set a table, and that no chess newspaper ever succeeds. As a matter of fact, we believe that even among the cultivated not one in a thousand knows chess, except as a name.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

"THE DREAD AND DISLIKE OF SCIENCE."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Mr. Lewes, in the current number of the *Fortnightly Review*, brings forward the agitation against Vivisection, in an article with the above title, as a proof of the feeling thus described. There is no doubt, he says, that cruelty inflicted in the cause of Science rouses a feeling of hostility quite special to itself, such as is not called forth, for instance, by cruelty in the cause of sport. It is more disliked, *because* its object is to increase the knowledge of mankind. Thus far I agree so entirely with Mr. Lewes, that I need hardly fear misquoting him, though I do not copy his exact words. I think cruelty in the cause of knowledge is regarded by very many as a thing more to be fought against than cruelty in the cause of amusement, and I am myself one of those many. I hope, therefore, you will allow me, as their representative, a little space to say why I consider that this special objection to cruelty in the cause of science ought to be taken as an instance not of the dread and dislike of science, but of the contrary. And if in this discussion I am obliged to use the language of emotion, and dwell more on the sentiments excited by particular actions than on the direct results of those actions, this is a simple necessity of the case. I am obliged to dwell upon certain emotions, if I am to answer what I think a false inference from those emotions. Whether they are or are not to be the ultimate causes for action is a question on which I do not enter.

I suppose most people feel, as I do, that of all the cruelties a reader of history has to remember, none are so painful to the imagination as those which have been committed in the name of Religion. I can, for my part, think more calmly of that mutilated garrison—some thousands of men—whom Cæsar turned out of their conquered town, their hands cut off, to perish of starvation and misery, than of a single victim of the Inquisition. Pain of body is much the same thing in one cause and in another, and death comes sooner or later to all; but that Christians have invented new and strange forms of suffering in order to spread Christianity is to me a more terrible thought than any other reflection that history suggests. That the holiest impulses

of our being have been placed at the service of the most devilish—the purest pearls cast beneath the feet of the vilest swine—is surely as legitimate a cause for sorrow as any in this sorrowful earth. The pearls are as real as the swine. When Simon de Montfort sprang from his knees to rush to indiscriminate slaughter, with the cry, "Let us die for him who has died for us!" I cannot imagine how any one can refuse to recognise either an absolute loyalty to the unseen Monarch under whose banner he believed himself to be fighting, or a passionate indulgence of those impulses which ally man with the tiger. It is the possibility of this alliance which is so terrible a fact. Such deeds as were done in the crusade against the Albigenes would be a dreadful object of contemplation, no doubt, whatever their motive. But they have to my mind a peculiar horror, as being the offspring of a fervent and perfectly sincere religion.

"That is because of their futility," it may be replied; "we have all heard that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." It would be far too lengthy a matter to inquire to what degree this is true, it is enough to say here that a very large proportion of the witnesses history has to produce would appear on the opposite side. The way in which we take it for granted that persecution is necessarily self-defeating is a strange instance of our readiness to believe what we wish to believe. It would be as impossible to maintain that the persecutors of old were baffled as that they were hypocrites. There is no doubt that in many cases they did the thing they meant to do,—they really did uphold for the time what they believed to be truth, and I see no reason to suppose that if the most ruthless of Inquisitors could have looked forward to the triumph of the spirit he opposed, he would have wished his actions other than what they were. "I have saved many souls," he might have said; "if an inscrutable Providence has willed that a tide of Atheism should overflow the earth, those whom my severity has shielded will not be the less blessed." I am sure, at any rate, that any attempt to bring forward the futility of cruelty in the cause of religion as a bar to the parallel I am trying to suggest with cruelty in another cause, where it is said not to be futile, would break down utterly.

But is it in the dread and dislike of religion that we keep our liveliest horror for the cruelty that is allied with religion? So far as I can put myself in the place of one who does dread and dislike religion, I find this special horror disappear. If the pearls are, after all, not pearls, I do not object to their being cast to the swine. I must grieve over the tiger in man getting the upper hand in any case, but I see no special reason for bewilderment or horror in the fact that one wrong feeling is mixed up with another wrong feeling. Nay, I understate the case in putting it thus. I do not, in my new character, lose humanity and pity. I do not contemplate the untold agonies of many generations without emotion. But I look beyond this to the discredit of the evil thing in whose name these men suffered, and I can bear to contemplate what was to "céraser l'infâme." Every pang of theirs, I feel, is a blow to the thing I wish to see ruined. In that conviction there is surely a fund of strength, which enables us to witness, to inflict, even to endure the severest pangs that nerves can feel or hearts ache to imagine.

I dare not prolong my claim on your space by any attempt to draw out the parallel I have suggested. Nor can I believe it needed. The dread and dislike of religion are common enough to afford to all a ready material for testing on analogous ground the feeling which has been adduced as an instance of the dread and dislike of science.—I am, Sir, &c., JULIA WEDGWOOD.

THE PROPOSED NORTHERN UNIVERSITY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Dr. Carpenter's interesting and authentic, but as I shall presently show, incomplete sketch of the history of the University of London becomes, when supplemented, virtually a restatement of a main part of our case. We have always acknowledged the great public services which, in its present no less than in its former character, the University of London renders, and which it is practically certain it will never cease to render by any return to the semi-collegiate constitution of its earlier years, but we hold that, for ourselves and other like colleges of adequate efficiency and strength, a University constitution of the older or academical type is greatly to be preferred, and to secure this has been the sole aim of our application.

Dr. Carpenter, however, seems to be very imperfectly acquainted with the sketch of a constitution which we have had the honour to lay before the Lord President of the Council. Otherwise he could hardly fail to see that we have approached far more