Government Aid to Science

WILL you allow me, with the utmost respect, to remind your able correspondent, that every individual in the state pays taxes for ignorance and inefficiency; while so interwoven are the interests of man with man—so often does inquiry after the most abstract principles lead to valuable practical results, that it is impossible to predict in which department of Science discoveries may be made that shall materially lighten these unsatisfactory imposts. Hence the field of research should be open to all and
every facility afforded. If this be not the duty of the State it is
difficult to explain its raison d'être.

The question from the economical point of view is—Shall we
pay heavy rates for prisons and workhouses, or shall we try to
lighten them by the spread of education? It is well to remember
that the law of supply and demand will not avail here, for they
who most want it are the least likely to ask for instruction.
Perhaps, Mr. Wallace's chief objection is to the unsatisfactory
way the money raised by rating, is expended. And here is room
for large reforms, if not retrenchment. His proposal regarding
the British Museum seems admirable. It is painful to see what
excellent opportunities for teaching those who really require it,
are lost in that magnificent collection, for want of a little, a very
little, more expense and trouble.

These remarks are made from the very lowest stand-point, the
principle of self-interest—a principle, I believe, your correspon-
dant would heartily despise; for the man of science is essentially
liberal, essentially averse to huckstering calculations of profit
and loss, essentially unqualified for scrambling after loaves and
fishes.

E. G. A.