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# AN ADDRESS

PRONOUNCED BEFORE

THE HOUSE OF CONVOCATION

OF

Trinity College,

BY THE REV. JOHN WILLIAMS, M. A.

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
dd 1845

*7 Springfield*



The Christian Scholar:

HIS POSITION, HIS DANGERS, AND HIS DUTIES.

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AN ADDRESS

PRONOUNCED BEFORE

THE HOUSE OF CONVOCATION

OF

Trinity College,

HARTFORD,

AUGUST Vth, MDCCCXLVI.

BY THE REV. J. WILLIAMS, M. A.

RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, SCHENECTADY, AND A JUNIOR FELLOW  
OF TRINITY COLLEGE.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF CONVOCATION.

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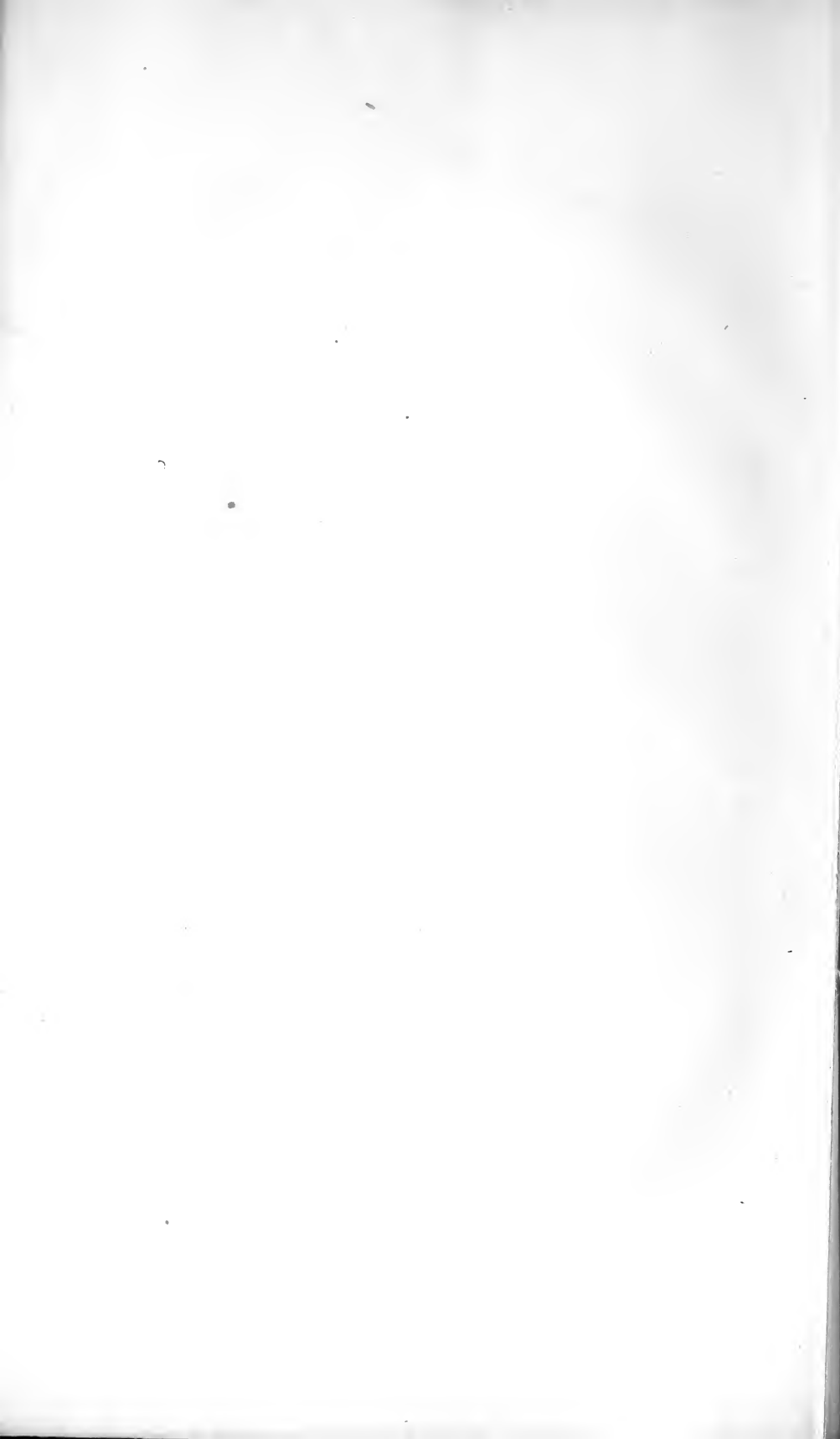
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\* \* It may be proper to state, that this was the first Address delivered before the Convocation of Trinity College. The Graduates were incorporated under that appellation by Statute of the Corporation, passed August the 6th, 1845.

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TO  
HIS SURVIVING CLASSMATES,  
AND  
TO THE MEMORY OF ONE DEPARTED,  
THE AUTHOR  
DEDICATES THIS ADDRESS.

AUGUST, 1846.



# ADDRESS.

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MR. DEAN, AND GENTLEMEN OF CONVOCATION:

IT seems proper that the first words of him who on this occasion is honoured in addressing you, should be those of congratulation. There has been, as we trust, revived among us, something of the old and true principle of the University. Not indeed in its ancient form, nor in precisely the ancient mode of its expression. For it may and often does chance, that a principle shall express itself in diverse outward forms in different ages, while yet in itself it remains unchanged. Indeed no external organisations or forms within which principles are enshrined,—save only those which being of divine appointment are adapted to every age, and not to be changed by man,—can be expected to remain precisely the same, generation after generation, and age after age. For they exist in a world whose social and intellectual relations are continually changing: and by those very changes, demanding corresponding changes in those external modes by which unchanging principles are brought to bear and do their work, whether on individuals or on masses of our race.

To have attempted then, in our age and country,—even had we possessed the means of doing it,—to revive

those venerable academic forms and organisations, which in the ages when they spontaneously sprung up, were adequate expressions of real feelings, and adequate supplies of real wants, would have been utterly unmeaning. To have attempted,—supposing again the means of doing so within reach,—to have attempted to copy, with whatever degree of accuracy, the present polity of foreign Universities, those slow accretions of many ages, where one anomaly corrects another, and the *genius loci* transfuses and blends together an otherwise inharmonious whole, would have been even more absurd. For to what would it all have amounted? In the former case you would have had the merest piece of antiquarian trifling, with no more of reality about it, than children's play. In the latter, you would have had a body without a soul, a cumbrous machine without a motive power; for that there would have been wanting time honored associations, old rights and privileges, successions of ancient custom and wonted honors; and more than all, succession of actual life from age to age, filling and pervading, giving meaning and reality, power and operation, visible working and glorious result.

Yet while this is so, there are still high principles involved in the true being of a University or a College, which may express themselves very differently, in different ages and countries, while they themselves, as has been said, remain unchanged. One of these principles,—and that one of the noblest,—we have recognised, and given to it expression and outward form in the organisation of our present House of Convocation. Another has been also recognised, and has found expression in



the giving to our College as her name henceforward through all time, the thrice sacred name of the most blessed Trinity. The last of these two principles may be stated in a few words. It is that learning is the handmaid of the Faith. A principle which in such a place and such an assemblage as this, can need no vindication nor elucidation. The first principle however to which allusion has just now been made, may seem to demand a few more words.

There are in the world, three Associations ordained of God himself, all harmonious, though distinct expressions of His one law and rule, the Family, the State, the Church. To each are allotted their distinct offices, and on men as members of each are devolved distinct responsibilities. Nay, we may say,—not thereby intending to assert succession of existence, or to deny that the Church in some form or another is older than the Family, being even from the beginning,—that the world was trained first by means of union in Families, and next by means of union in States, to enter in the fulness of time into the vast and awful union of the Church of the last Dispensation. A union which comprises within itself, though it does not absorb into itself, those other unions which preceded it. A union toward which indefinite longings, and vague though real wants had been impelling men for many ages before it came: and which they had endeavoured to find and realise in those four great empires of the ancient world, before the visioned image of whose mysterious majesty, the heart of the Babylonian monarch had shrunk away in terror. Now to these associations ordained of God, men have

from time to time, added others of their own. In doing so, they have followed the line of the divine working: and they have erred and failed, not when they have held such associations as subordinate to the Family, the State, the Church, and intended only to aid in certain points and for certain purposes the work of each: not then, I say, have they erred and failed. But when, as we behold in our time under various names and in various shapes,<sup>1</sup> they have attempted to substitute theirs in place of those of God. When they have undertaken not to assist, but to supplant: not reverently to aid, but ruthlessly to subvert, and on the ground thus cleared to erect a fabric of their own, whose top shall reach the heavens. Then, even as those four old empires which were human substitutes to provide for longings which only the ALMIGHTY could provide for, crumbled and decayed, till gold and silver, brass and iron, and clay lay mingled in undistinguishable ruin, even thus will after substitutes, bear they whose name they may, vanish before the stone cut without hands and destined to fill the earth.

First among these human associations, subordinate and in a certain sense auxiliary to the divine ones, and the child indeed of the last and most glorious, stands the University. First among sonships and brotherhoods, other than those of the Family and the State, and the more awful ones of the Church to which these others point and by which they are sanctified, are the sonship which binds the scholar to his College as to a loving mother; the brotherhood which unites him to all those whom the same mother has trained for the solemn work

<sup>1</sup>Reference is made to the schemes of Owen, Fourier, and others.

of life ; making herself herein the worthy handmaid of Family, and State and Church. And this I have ventured to call one of the noblest principles involved in the true being of a University or a College. May I not even call it the essential one ? That which lies at the very foundation, and alone gives life and meaning to either the one or the other. Nor is this twofold tie, a transient and temporary thing. It is, it must be, permanent. The training of a College is for life. And as day by day the scholar finds that training brought into use and action, carried on and developed in a thousand unexpected ways, and influencing all his relations in all their various forms, how shall it be, that he will not recur with a son's reverence and love to her who gave it to him ? And bound up inseparably with this feeling, forming indeed a part of it, comes also the feeling of continuous union with that honoured mother, of a continued sharing in her joys and sorrows, her weal and woe, and a continued brotherhood inviting to earnestness and effort, with all her other sons. And this permanent, this abiding tie, is recognised and expressed in the organisation of our present House of Convocation. It is the very offspring, unless I am much in error, of these feelings and convictions.

In this organisation then, I seem to find the recognition of the permanent and holy tie, which through life and wherever his lot may be, binds the scholar to his College. In that sacred name which now adorns our College, I seem to hear proclaimed in an unfaithful age, that learning is the handmaid of the Faith. In these two things then, let me find the subject to which your

thoughts will now be called: The Scholar; the Christian Scholar: his Position, his Dangers and his Duties.

To attain to a true conception of the position of the Christian Scholar, whether in our own age or in any other, I must ask you to go with me in a cursory view of that wonderful progress, by which the wisdom of the world was brought into subjection to, and the mind of the world was moulded on, the philosophy of the Cross.

Could we suppose the vision of an Apostle or a Disciple to have been strengthened and extended, as during those ten days of "awful pause in earth and heaven," he stood with the hundred and twenty in the Holy City; could we suppose the vision of such an one to have been strengthened and extended till it could embrace the civilised world, what a spectacle, viewing that world under one aspect only, would it have beheld! Around it in Jerusalem was to be seen the sacred learning with whatever additions and distortions, of a wondrous people, and a far reaching age. Throned in the temple's courts, and deriving a more solemn and imposing dignity from such a dwelling place, the very house of God, Judea's learning gathered her band of venerable doctors, and grounded herself upon the living oracles of God's own word. Southward and to the east, from the solemn remains of Egyptian greatness, to the caverned temples of India, and thence to the Sarmatian Gates, there spreads itself under various forms and in various developments what may be termed the Oriental Philosophy.<sup>1</sup> While westward, there rise up the Academy and

<sup>1</sup>It is not intended to intimate that there was any actual definite system, such as Mosheim so ingeniously fancies; but the general spirit of contemplation rather than reasoning, is certainly common to the Eastern Sages.

the Lyceum, the Porch and the Garden, those four mouths, through which the fourfold Greek philosophy, spoke to the human race in words that are not yet forgotten.<sup>1</sup> Every where are collected crowds of sages grown grey in solitary thought or learned converse, every where are there stores of written wisdom, the slow accumulations of successive years, and all of pomp and pride and mystery, with which learning can be surrounded. It is indeed a glorious sight, this mass of mind thus living and at work. For let us not take too circumscribed a view of it. It expressed and as it were wrote itself out, not merely in the poem or the history, the stirring oration or the profound speculation in philosophy: but it had issued also for untold years, in the massive and magnificent porticoes of Egypt, in the stupendous excavations of the Indian mountains, in the solid and enduring arches and aqueducts of Rome, and in those highest developments of merely human thoughts, the graceful orders of the threefold architecture of inventive Greece. It showed itself also to men's eyes in all the sensuous beauties framed on earthly types, of Grecian art; and spoke in their ears in the stern tones of Roman law, which like the art of Greece was waiting for a heavenly spark, to raise it to the fulness of its life.

Such was the world's mind in all its majesty and glory, shrined and throned in earth's most lofty places; and thus stood the philosophy of the Cross in its relations to it; confided to the trust of twelve men, whose library and school and porch and garden, was a little upper

<sup>1</sup>See Gibbon's masterly sketch; *Decline and Fall*, Vol. III. p. 52, Amer. Edit.

chamber somewhere in Jerusalem. Yet after all, we shall not attain a correct view of these relations, without remembering how in God's providence things had been working so as to advance the progress of the Church to the dominion of human intellect. About three hundred years before the Christian era, Palestine and the regions round about by becoming Greek, became also European; and then in order of time there followed a series of events, which mysterious as they must have been to those who lived during their occurrence, are to us full of meaning, and point directly to the triumphs of the Cross. Under Ptolemy Philadelphus the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek; and treasures of learning were gathered in Alexandria which drew together learned men from every quarter of the world, forming for a century the great centre of study and scholarship. At the end of this period, just when in consequence of the long wars of the successors of Alexander, learning had declined throughout the greater portion of the Macedonian Empire, the cruelties of one of Ptolemy's successors,<sup>1</sup> drove the Alexandrian scholars from his city and scattered them among the nations. Under Antiochus, the then true religion, was almost merged in Greek Polytheism, but with the aid of the Asmonean princes it rose into new strength and developed itself afresh: "so that while the Greek mind was spread throughout the East, the Jewish mind was spread throughout it too; and from their interpenetration arose a diffused preparation for the Faith." While very soon, the rising empire

<sup>1</sup>Ptolemy Physcon. See Prideaux's *Connexions*, Vol. II. p. 276, Tegg's Edit.

of Rome,—sublime shadow of a heavenly reality,—received within itself the East, and pushed itself even to the shores of the Atlantic ; thus connecting by its mighty bonds the ancient plains of Babylon with “ Britain divided from the world.”<sup>1</sup> Through such immediate preparation had the world passed, and so as I have briefly described it, stood its learning, philosophy, and art, in relation to the Church and the philosophy of the Cross, at the moment when we have fancied an Apostle looking out on all these things.

And now for a brief period there was a pause and silence. Such a silence on either side as there must have been,—for the comparison can hardly fail to suggest itself,—when the Lord Himself in all the apparent weakness of His early youth, stood in the presence of the hoary doctors in the temple : they wondering at His temerity, He resting in His Divinity. So stood the infant Church amid the systems and the learning of the world. But the pause was a brief one ; deep and solemn while it lasted, but brief. For time was precious, and the battle fierce : and so in all apparent weakness, and arrayed in weeds unmeet as men would say for the attire of divine philosophy, she went forth to claim to herself the wisdom, to grasp and mould for herself the minds of men. The struggle was an arduous one, but the triumph was complete. We may not say that it was the noblest of the triumphs of the Faith ; for these are tears of penitence, and lives of holiness. Still it was a noble triumph, and it is written on an immortal page, even the souls of men.

To trace it step by step, would be impossible here and

<sup>1</sup>See the *Christian Remembrancer* for April, 1845, p. 331.

now, nor is it needful. It was a triumphant progress in which the Church went forth, when she conquered and brought under her own sway the fields of learning, philosophy and art. Yet unlike the progress of conquering men, it was not devastation but new life that marked her way. She came to the Academy and the Lyceum, the Porch and Garden, and gave a living kernel to the husks and shells she found there, and woke to life many a form of truth which had been standing moveless and isolated, like a marble statue; while in place of these four homes of learning, there sprung up Schools and Universities almost without number. Amid the ruins of Memphis and of Heliopolis, she made the spirit of contemplation long-wasted and preying in itself, to issue in the lofty tones, ever lofty if not always truly regulated, of the Fathers of the Desert. She gave the Historian the clue, by which he could trace out the tangled web of the world's story, and read understandingly that wondrous course of ages, never before comprehended. She brought a nobler strain to the poet's lyre, and touched his eyes to see and his tongue to speak, deeper things in nature and in man, than men had dreamed before. She came to the Grecian Temple, and the Roman Basilic, and there arose in their places edifices more vast and of a rarer beauty, towering towards the heavens, and preaching not men's thoughts of truth and beauty, but those eternal archetypes of both, on which Creation has been framed. She took the painter's and the sculptor's hand, and instead of sensuous earthly forms on which the eye could scarcely look without defilement to the soul, there burst upon men's sight severe unearthly beauties,



holy and super-human grace, sources of the purest emotions and most sacred thoughts. She touched the unformed indigested mass of Roman Law,<sup>1</sup> and there issued from it, the Code, the Pandects and the Institutes, immortal works which tell at this very hour on all the civilised nations of the earth. But not to enter into more detail, where full detail is impossible, let it suffice to say, that this triumph of the Church and her divine philosophy, absorbing "all the keenness, the originality, the energy and the eloquence" of man, is witnessed to, and recorded in the Architecture, the Sculpture, the Painting, and above all in the Libraries of Christendom. As one has well and eloquently said: "to see the triumph of the Faith over the world's wisdom, we must enter those solemn cemeteries, in which are stored the relics and the monuments of Faith,—the great libraries of the world. Look along their shelves, and almost every name you read there, is in one sense or another, a trophy set up in record of the victories of Faith. How many long lives, what high aims, what single minded devotion, what intense contemplation, what fervent prayer, what untiring diligence, what toilsome conflicts has it taken to establish this supremacy." And all this glorious mass of living thought, speaking in written words or forms of art, widening in endless circles, sweeping outward for eighteen hundred years, and sweeping outward still, has for its centre and its source, the Holy Word of God.

Now this view, brief and meagre as it is, may serve to show us what is the true position of even the humblest

<sup>1</sup>See Gibbon's own admission.

Christian Scholar. In very deed he is a "citizen of no mean city." He is one in a brotherhood, second only to that which is the fulfilment of all, and toward which all others tend.

Grant that his place may be obscure, his sphere of action limited. Yet he has a place, he has a sphere, and in them he has a work to do, a holy mission to fulfill. No man can live on earth—unless, that is, he utterly withdraws himself from other men, and makes himself what GOD never meant he should be, an isolated being,—without in some way, generally in far more ways than he can know or fancy, coming in contact with the minds of other men. And that not casually now and then, but habitually and continually. However few in number then these minds may be, and however humble in position, yet minds they are, and they form an immortal page on which the Christian Scholar may inscribe truths that shall live and work throughout eternity. For in this respect the world of learning, is as the world of nature. And as in the latter we see not only mighty floods rolling on for immense distances and through widely spreading valleys, but find on more attentive observation, that many unknown streams and fountains, each in its own secluded nook, doing its office and adding its portion, have gone to swell those floods; even so is it in the former, when there we look more intently and with a deeper observation. For look at the body of the learning of Christendom, not as a sluggish, inert, lifeless mass, but as living, moving, acting: bearing in some sense the relation to the human mind, which the water does to the solid parts of our globe, embracing

and permeating it ; and then you shall see clearly and at once how this is so. For consider some great mind, as it floats down from age to age in ever increasing grandeur, bearing with it a body of collected thought and truth, which leaves a leaven and a life-giving nourishment, in all the intellectual region through which it goes. Look carefully at it and long, not suffering your eye to be carried onward with the sweep of the great flood, so that you cannot pause along its shores, and you will see how many other minds have added their part, and unknown, unnamed have helped to swell the stream, which bears the name of that master spirit who sent it forth, and seems evermore to ride upon its waves. Nay, there are many streams of truth that have gone forth from unknown fountains, from minds that have seemingly dwelt apart from all intercourse of men, and all communion with their age.

If I might venture on another illustration, I would find it in those old Cathedrals which bear the name of some one ruling mind which has finally given them unity and completeness ; while yet many minds have been exercised, and many hands have wrought, and one has added a shaft, and another a capital, and others various carvings, all needful to the completeness of the whole stupendous plan. So that did we or could we see the reality of things, not one name only would be inscribed upon the mighty pile, but countless names written on every part, would bear witness to the mass of intellect and thought which had developed itself in that vast, glorious whole. Consider in like manner some one great work of learning, let it be in what de-

partment you may choose, which bears, and bears rightly, his name who has given it form and, in one sense, being. Remember how many thoughts and truths have gone to its composition : not merely how many authorities have been directly consulted, but how much derived from intercourse with others, how many floating things embodied whose origin is not known ; and you will see, that though the work is truly his whose name it bears, still upon all its pages might be written other names, some known and some unknown, who have directly or indirectly, taught, or suggested, or contributed, in some way or another. And when you carry on your view, remembering all this, from one work, to the great body of Christian learning, into which in the way just now briefly sketched, the world's mind has issued, how countless shall seem the numbers who have brought their parts. As in long and shadowy procession they return before our fancy's eye, one bringing the solid squared foundation stone, another the strong pillar, another the graceful ornament, each his own portion diverse from the other, we see amongst them not merely those whose forms we recognise and whose names we speak, but many who come humbly and in silence, content to bring their offering, and asking no higher honor than to be unknown workmen ; and then we learn who and what they are who have reared the vast temple of the learning and the literature of Christendom. Then we learn his true position who is, even in the smallest, humblest, most obscure way, a sharer in perpetuating, carrying on, and working out, this triumph of the Faith. For that if he be only in the lowest form, if he have the fewest minds

to work upon, the fewest truths and thoughts to give to others, still he is adding something to the mass of living thought, which will outlive him, and tell upon the minds of men forever. As an unseen bell struck in the air sends infinite vibrations round ; as an unseen blow upon the water sends widening circles over all the surface, so his words, if he speaks, shall move the intellectual atmosphere ; so the impression he makes in any way shall send a sweeping widening motion through the world of mind. Wherefore from all these things we conclude, that the lowliest Christian Scholar has a lofty station ; that he should not under-estimate his position, even while he takes, as if he be truly wise he will take, the most modest estimation of himself ; and that that position is second only to the standing of the Hero-Saint.

But on a high position, two things ever wait : great dangers, and lofty duties. Let me now, then, turn in accordance with the plan proposed in the beginning, to speak of these two things.

The Scholar's dangers, like those of any other class of men, range themselves in two distinct groups. Those that are necessary and universal : and those which are peculiar to a generation or an age, and so pass away with such an age or generation, to be succeeded by others, more or less formidable as it may chance. For without dangers may the Scholar never be, else could he never be proved and tried.

Now perhaps of all dangers, the most imminent here as well as elsewhere, is the danger of *self-deception*. Indeed, it may be fairly questioned whether this be not the essential element in all ; whether as error of some

kind or another is the developed danger, so it may not be that self-deception lies at the very foundation of the whole matter. Be this however, as it may, and it certainly is a point which may well deserve the most attentive consideration on the part of individuals, still I repeat it, self-deception is an imminent danger attendant on the position of the Christian Scholar. Self-deception, not as to his own character, not as to his own spiritual progress, for that belongs to another and a higher phase of his being; but as to his proper duty, his intellectual attainments, and in a word all his relations as a Scholar.

Let us look at one or two of the points of which what has been said holds good. Points which may be suggestive of others,—for suggestion is all that one can hope to accomplish in a matter, to treat of which fully, might occupy volumes. Points, too, which may illustrate what has just been advanced, and show that to speak of the dangers of the Scholar, is not to exhibit a morbid timorousness, but to take a right and honest view of actual things.

Let us take, then, the ever present, ever pressing danger—which runs itself out into so many forms, and in such various ways—that the Scholar will utterly mistake his situation, his duties, his proper work. That he will look upon himself as an isolated person, with few or no relations to, and connexions with other men; that he will consider his duties all to lie within the round of his own study, whence no voice need issue, no written words be sent declaring the truth, which he may indeed have found, but which he selfishly appropriates; that he will regard his work as all comprised in acquiring for

himself, in storing his own mind, and playing certainly in a rather more dignified way, the part of the grasping miser. Now there are infinite varieties of this character, each with its own nice shades and distinctive marks, from the really hard-working man who toils and moils on through life, touching no other mind because he withdraws from all, and makes himself, utterly isolated and alone; down to the literary loungeur, whose selfishness and self-deception, run out in another and yet a very similar channel. Yet infinitely various as these characters are, none of them are, none of them can be, respectable. The best we can but pity, the worst we must despise. And still a man may begin his way as a true Scholar, a Christian Scholar, and by yielding to this self-deception, degenerate from one of these states of character to another, until he who in the outset stood on such glorious vantage ground, and moved amid such companionships, may end his days, the literary trifler, the wretched, despicable dilettante: no longer sitting in honor and worth at the counsels of his Sovereign, but become a miserable eunuch of the Palace.

Or even if things shall not reach this pass, still self-deception as to what his real work should be, may render his labors next to useless, and make him feel, at last, that his life has been as good as thrown away. For the Scholar must work for the age in which he lives, if he will work to any purpose. I do not say that he must work *with* his age; that depends upon whether his age is working rightly or no, but that he must work *for* it. That is, that the bent of his pursuits, the course of his labors, the turn of his studies, must be determined by

the intellectual and moral wants of the time and the people in and amongst which his lot is cast. That his own mere tastes, or fancies, are not alone to be consulted; that indeed to many fair and delightful walks of learning it may become his bounden duty resolutely to close his eyes, and from them to turn his steps; not certainly as undervaluing any: not as if he did not allow to each its proper place and dignity, as forming a part of what is all divine; but as knowing that here as well as elsewhere, there are opportunities for self-denial and self-sacrifice. As knowing that in learning as well as life, the finger of GOD directs, the voice of conscience orders, and that both must be obeyed. To recur to an illustration which has been used before; as it is with the progress of some vast architectural erection, so is it in this matter. It is vain, it is worse than vain, when it is time to lay the foundation deep and strong, to be endeavouring to pile the graceful pinnacle or rear the slender shaft, or swing the vaulted roof. It is vain, it is worse than vain, when it is time to strengthen with the firm buttress weak and trembling walls, to attempt to carry round those walls, unstrengthened and unsustained, the light and carved parapet, or to rear upon them the lofty spire. There is a time for all these various works; but to attempt to do them out of time is loss of labor, and a hinderance to the progress of the plan. So in all learning. Each age has its work, clearly laid upon it, distinctly pointed out: and the danger is not small, nay, rather it is great, that the Scholar will choose his own work rather than that which is laid before him, and therefore fail and fall: saying at last, when self-deception ends, not I have lost a day, but I have lost my life.



These two forms of self-deception on which we have now been dwelling, have not been selected as being by any means the most obvious ; though certainly they may well be considered as among the most dangerous. Rather it seemed desirable that when suggestion was all which could possibly be accomplished, more recondite and subtle forms should be selected : as thereby we might perhaps be brought to feel how wide reaching, and of what far extent the danger was. That it runs itself out, not only in what one so often sees, and cannot but see to mourn, in the substitution of temporary and selfish ends, personal triumphs, or the achievement of a brilliant reputation, instead of the advancement of eternal and unchanging truth ; in the propagation of error ; in irreverent assumption or unscholarlike arrogance ; that not in these high obvious forms of ill alone it finds its issue ; but in others, also, deeper and more hidden, and therefore it may be, all the more dangerous. Let these suggestions and these instances, serve then, to illustrate that one, great, overwhelming danger, to which at all times and in every age the Scholar is exposed ; and against which every man who would not fail of running lawfully, and therefore lose his crown, is bound most earnestly, most heedfully to guard himself. And let us now pass to a few thoughts upon other dangers, which as I have said are not universal, but belong to peculiar eras, being themselves peculiar and diverse.

\*A popular writer has said, that while in any situation whatever, high or low, marked or obscure, it is a comparatively easy thing to be a man *of* one's age, to be a man *for* one's age, is quite another, and a much more difficult

matter. It is always easy to swim with the current ; to go whither what is called the spirit of the age will carry one. And surely if that spirit is a right and true one, and flowing onward toward such a point as one should wish to reach, it is wise and well to go with it. But how often is this not the case ; nay, how often is the precise contrary the fact. And therefore while it is a morbid and unhealthy feeling which concludes that the animating spirit of any age is always of necessity wrong and evil ; it is quite as morbid and quite as unhealthy a one, only in another way, which,—misinterpreting the sentence, divine when truly understood, that speaks of the people's voice, meaning the real utterances of humanity, as being instinct with divinity,—concludes that the course of the age is always right. That the Scholar may not sometimes be called by every duty, and every responsibility to set himself in opposition to it, to denounce it, to make it anathema, to struggle manfully against its current, even to his own overwhelming and destruction.

It follows then, that the tendencies of any age may be evil ; it is fair and wise to believe that there will always be evil ones among them : for surely he must be a most unshaken optimist who can think otherwise ; these evil tendencies bring dangers as to other men, so especially to the Scholar ; and these dangers are those which I have called the dangers of an era, in contradistinction from those which attach to every possible epoch of the history of man.

As a further illustration of these positions, let us consider a twofold danger,—for dangers are mostly twofold in their character,—which attaches to our age ; and

which presents a problem that the Scholar must solve, thoughtfully and carefully unless he be willing to go on at random, in which case he does not deserve his appellation. The danger is, that he will on the one hand give nothing, or on the other everything to the past: and the problem to be decided is, of course, precisely how much should be given to it. The danger on the one hand is certainly very clear and obvious. Self distrust, distrust of the present, reverent turning to catch the voices of other days as they float solemnly down the course of ages, these are obviously not so characteristic of our age and country as to warrant any great anxiety that the claims of the present on our regard will be lightly cast aside. A superficial and encyclopedic, and reviewing age, is always self confident. And a self confident age, is of course in its relations to the past always in danger of going to the extreme of forgetfulness: which forgetfulness it finds it easy to account for, by various theories of progress, or development, or whatever men may choose to call them. Indeed it has generally seemed enough,—so pressing has this danger been considered, so imminent in truth has it really been,—it has generally been considered quite sufficient to condemn it in general terms. Nor has it seemed a matter of importance how general those terms were, provided only that they were sufficiently strong and startling.

But is there not a danger too on the other hand? I do not mean a danger that we shall reverence and esteem the past too much, for if the past be rightly estimated that can scarcely be; but that we shall fall into an unreal, untrue, dreamy way of looking at the past

itself, and therefore incur the evil when we least expect it. There certainly is such a thing as the mere blind worship of the formal past: there is such a thing as attempting to force over the body of some living, unchanging, eternal principle of truth, some antiquated guise which it does not need to wear, to throw around it old externals, which are not of the essence of its being. And this is playing at scholarship and learning; this is unreal, hollow and untrue, a mimic pageantry, a soulless masquerade. I trust that I may not be misunderstood. I do not speak of divine institutions but of human ones, or of human applications of those that are divine. I am not advocating the doctrines of that wretched pantheistic view of human history, which makes the highest and the holiest things that God has given men, but mere ideas, to be developed by the exercise of human intellect, into something or into nothing; which makes succeeding ages to create new principles which former ages had not; and declares that change in essence and not change in form, of truth, is the law which regulates the course of time. All this is one thing. But to say that principles are few and truth is one; and that the Scholar must beware lest in avoiding the extreme of not finding these principles and that truth, living and working in most instructive wise in all at least of the Christian past, he shall fall into another quite as evil, of mistaking their external garb, their outward expressions for the things themselves, what has this to do with that hardy spirit which changes at will the institutions of our God? With that pantheistic philosophy which confounds substance and accident, essence and

form, spirit and matter, God and man? What is this more than to say, that we must not mistake the body of the boy, or of the grown up man, or of the saint perfected, for that undying soul, which gives to each its all of life and glory?

And how great too is the danger lest the Scholar may fall into an even more unreal and dreamy way of looking at the past. For the temper of the Scholar which he must cultivate and cherish, is the Historical Temper, and this may be perverted to a most evil purpose. The present, rough, harsh, angular, with all that is disagreeable standing out from it most prominently, is all about us. It grates upon us, its corners wound and lacerate, it is homely and wears a stern and every day aspect, it forbids and it discourages. Not small then is the temptation to turn away from it, and endeavour, as it is said,—though what is meant by it is very difficult to see,—endeavour to live in the past. To indulge fond regrets for glories faded and for majesties gone by, and instead of looking resolutely at what lies about and before one, to cast back longing looks upon the distant landscape, sun-gilt or clothed in rosy flush of light, soft, slumberous, silent and obscure. To shut one's ears to the harsh tones of men around one, and to seek to live with those alone, with whom indeed the Scholar must live *much*, but may not live *entirely*, whose voices murmur gently from the sepulchre, or seem to swell in solemn strains of melody from the far distant skies. But this is wretched: this is unworthy of a man, and most unworthy of a Scholar. For sure we may be, “that the man over whom present wants, pres-

ent duties, and present facts have no vigorous influence, is the very worst qualified man for apprehending by-gone wants, by-gone duties, by-gone facts." He wants truthfulness, and that is the very foundation of the Scholar's character. And beside, what man in his senses, can ever be sighing in this way after past periods, be they never so glorious, never so fully inscribed with names that bare the brow and make the pulses swell? Let us know what it is we do if we do this. "If we ask that the age in which St. Paul preached may come again, we ask also that Nero may come back. If we ask that we may be transported back to the glorious period of Athanasius, we ask to live under the tyrant Constantius; to have the world almost wholly Pagan, the Church almost wholly Arian. If we long to sit at the feet of Chrysostom, we long for the infamous corruptions of Antioch and of Constantinople. If we reckon that it would have been a blessing to live and die under the teaching of Augustine, we must be content to see Rome sacked by one set of Barbarians, and the Church in Africa threatened by another: we must get our learning from a race of effete rhetoricians, and dwell amid all the seductions and abominations of Manicheism." And if it were thus vain and evil to have the ages themselves return in reality and life, how much more vain, because unreal and unmeaning, for a man to endeavour to throw himself into them in any other way than as a seeker after truth, and try to live there. Who can do it, or even wish to do it, who believes that life is what it is, an earnest, awful struggle with and for realities, and not a fleeting dream? No doubt the sculptor would have consulted his ease

and pleasure ; no doubt his visions of beauty would have been as high, had he dreamed over them inactively, and never applied his hand to fashion the rude, rough, shapeless mass of stone. But where then would have been the form which leads and teaches other minds, and imbues countless spirits in the course of ages with the love and the sense of the beautiful or the sublime. Oh no ! life is no dream, learning is no dream, the past is no dream but as we shall make them so. And woe to the man who tries to make them so. Woe to the Scholar who dreams when he should work : who vainly tries to re-create the past, when he should help to inform and mould the present, on and by all which that past has gathered in a long and glorious array, of truth and heroism, of grace and strength, of grandeur and of beauty.

But time forbids me to dwell longer on a field of thought which spreads and widens as we advance into it, and I leave it to speak briefly of the Scholar's duty.

And what is to be said here, has been of necessity somewhat anticipated in that which has already been advanced. Because to speak of dangers, is impliedly at least to speak of duties also. I may perhaps sum up the Scholar's duty in two words : that he must be a practical man. But in using these words, care must be taken lest they shall be misunderstood. In speaking of the Scholar as a practical man, I do not by any means annex such a signification to the words, as is annexed to them by the men of a narrow minded and money getting age, or generation, whose highest aspirations are to sum their temporal estates in a line of six figures, and whose best literature are day books and ledgers. All this is well in its

place; nay more, it is not to be treated with contempt; but when we are speaking of Scholarship and Scholars, it is not to be suffered to come into the account. There, the practical man is not the man who can drive the shrewdest bargain; or who is most skilled in getting through the world with the greatest possible advantage to himself, and the least possible to every body else; or who can shew himself most at home in the ordinary walks and intercourses of every day life. Not such a man as this is the practical Scholar. But he is the man, who when he comes in contact with another mind, has power to give that mind a bent, an impulse, a lofty tone, a high direction, an earnest ardor, and to impart to it something in the way of knowledge, as well as to wake it to a deeper, fuller, truer life. But who shall be, who shall make himself such a man? He who realises to the full that glorious position of the Christian Scholar, he who avoids the dangers attendant on that position, to which your attention has been called. He and none other shall gain every point. Will he slight learning, will he turn away from the treasures of the past, and suffer himself to fall into the wretched, unmeaning talk one often hears about book-worms and book-learning? Will he neglect his own mind, and take no care to fill it with all knowledge which he can, ever directing his pursuit of knowledge by the wants of the age and people in and amongst which he lives? Such a man is not a practical Scholar. Do men call an artificer practical if he does not know his trade; and would it not be *prima facie* evidence against him, were his shop found utterly unfurnished, and presenting to him who came to



see, a floor with nothing on it, girt about with four bare walls? So with the Scholar's mind. If it be not stored, and well stored, he will be a man trying to work without instruments and means: his natural capacities may be what you please, and the greater they are, the more conspicuous will be his failure. To store well, then, is the first part, the very foundation of that Scholar's duty who would be a really and truly practical man. And in storing let him not forget the rule so applicable to his work,

*Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci.* "For," says Bishop Hurd, "the unnatural separation of the *dulce* and the *utile*, has done almost as much hurt in letters, as that of the *honestum* and *utile*, which Tully somewhere complains of, in morals. For while the polite writer, as he is called, contents himself with the former of these qualities, and the man of erudition with the latter, it comes to pass as the same author expresses it, that the learned are deficient in popular eloquence, and the eloquent fail in finished scholarship."<sup>1</sup>

But again; for thus far we have but viewed the half of the Scholar's duty. The other half is to use what has been gained, by bringing it so to bear on other minds, as that some mark, how humble soever, shall still be left on them; some impulse given; something in a word imparted. To recur to our illustration, homely indeed but still significant, as without knowledge and instruments the artificer cannot work, so knowledge and instruments are all in vain to one who folds his hands and will not. This state is I suppose what they have in

<sup>1</sup>Hurd's Horace. Note on the *Ars Poetica*.

view, who talk of learned leisure and literary ease. That state of "judicial, magisterial, collegiate, parochial or private efflorescence," in which the vegetative process advances with a solemn dignity of progress, a graceful ease of growth; and the glorious termination of whose course, is, that its decay may possibly enrich the soil on which it has brooded like an incubus, giving neither shade nor ornament, flower nor fruit. But one would hope that the growth of a mushroom was not the type of the progress of a Scholar.

In truth, as we see, the Scholar's duty is two-fold; and let us say with reverence and awe, that it finds its perfect pattern, where the pattern of all life, and all its parts is found, in that most awful life which the world has ever seen, which itself real, presents also the true ideal,—the life of Him, who being very God, was also very man. Alone with the Father, and then mingling with men; such was that awful, most mysterious life, in which the pantheists of our day see so little, that they can put its spirit on a level with the art of Greece, and with the law of Rome;<sup>1</sup> but in which the true souls of other days, and the noblest of our own, see the true model of the truest life of every living man, be he who, or what, or where he may. Alone and then with men; such was the life of Christ; such must be the Christian's life; such too must be the life of the Christian Scholar. Alone in those still hours of thought and study, in which, even as Virgil guided Dante only under the direction of Beatrice, so human learning leads him on only under the

<sup>1</sup>So Michelet in his blasphemous book called "The People." The sentiment has been echoed on this side of the Atlantic.

guidance of his holy Faith : in which, with all low, paltry notions of aggrandisement or of gaining reputation cast away, with all veils of self-deception torn aside, his one only object has been to gain a deeper hold on deep, eternal truth ; in which the great ends of life have been in solemn vision clear before his eyes, and he has remembered that that man cannot study well, who does not devoutly pray and discipline himself, since the being most like Satan which the world can show, is the man of trained intellect and of untrained heart ; alone in hours, over-brooded by these things and thoughts, he has laboured to acquire knowledge, principles, truths, needful for himself, needful for other men. The world has seen in him the shrinking trembler, the dreamer of some dream, the unreal man, knowing little or nothing of his kind. But he knows that no man who has not silently studied himself, can know other men : that the best and truest knowledge of humanity they have gained who have best known themselves : and that the cloistered saint has a deeper insight into human nature, than the world's busy man. He knows his ends and purposes, and he bides his time, patiently, meekly, but firmly and with unshaken heart.

That time will come. It may be long in coming, but he can afford to wait ; for they are men of little plans and paltry ends, who hurry and bustle about the world. And when it does come, when the voice of God is heard to call, and conscience clearly points, then he goes forth, in a greater or a smaller sphere of action, yet great or small still glorious, and then he is with men, and from that time forth his twofold life alternates with itself.

Working *for* the age, he strives to correct its errors mainly by endeavoring to infuse positive truth ; to advance all in it that is good and true ; to fight manfully against that form, be it what it may, under which Satan attacks the truth of GOD, and in a word to stand in the position, to keep himself from the dangers, and to discharge the duties of a Christian Scholar.

Especially, as I have said, will he labor to discover, for he is quite sure that it exists, the mode which in his day, the attack of the adversary will assume, against that Faith whose defence is the highest form of his vocation. The mode varies. Now it is direct assault ; now it is insinuation ; and again it is imitation. This last is the mode of our day : it is evident in all the literature of whatsoever kind, which certain sections of the intellectual world are sending forth ; and to correct, or at least to expose and denounce which, is therefore the bounden duty of the Christian Scholar.<sup>1</sup>

And surely on such duties well discharged, high honor waits. Surely the place and work of him who faithfully performs them, who manfully goes through them, is but inferior to theirs who minister the word and sacraments of Christ ; nay it waits on and seconds their high service ; and in its self-humiliation is exalted beyond all other human things. Surely the work of binding men in intellectual brotherhood, in the participation of truth, is next to that which binds in the sweet unities of Christian Charity their higher souls. For so it is, that the

<sup>1</sup>It was obviously impossible to enter fully into this peculiar phase of the infidelity of our day, which, as a late writer has said, "derived from the Jew Spinoza, bids fair to divide the realms of thought with the Christian Faith." I would refer to an article on Pantheistic Tendencies, in the April No. of the Christian Remembrancer, 1846.

Cherub's holy knowledge, yields primacy and precedence to nothing, but the Seraph's ardent love.

GENTLEMEN :

I have thus spoken, how imperfectly no one can be half so sensible as I am, on that high and holy theme, so naturally suggested by the circumstances under which we have assembled. For indeed it is a theme that over-tasks one's powers, making him feel that where so much is of necessity left unsaid, he has said next to nothing : where an angel's voice might be honored in its utterance, he can have said but slenderly and meanly what he has. Yet happily, the very circumstances which suggest, do also themselves address us with a force and power which no words can reach ; an eloquence which, voiceless though it may be, yet thrills directly to the heart.

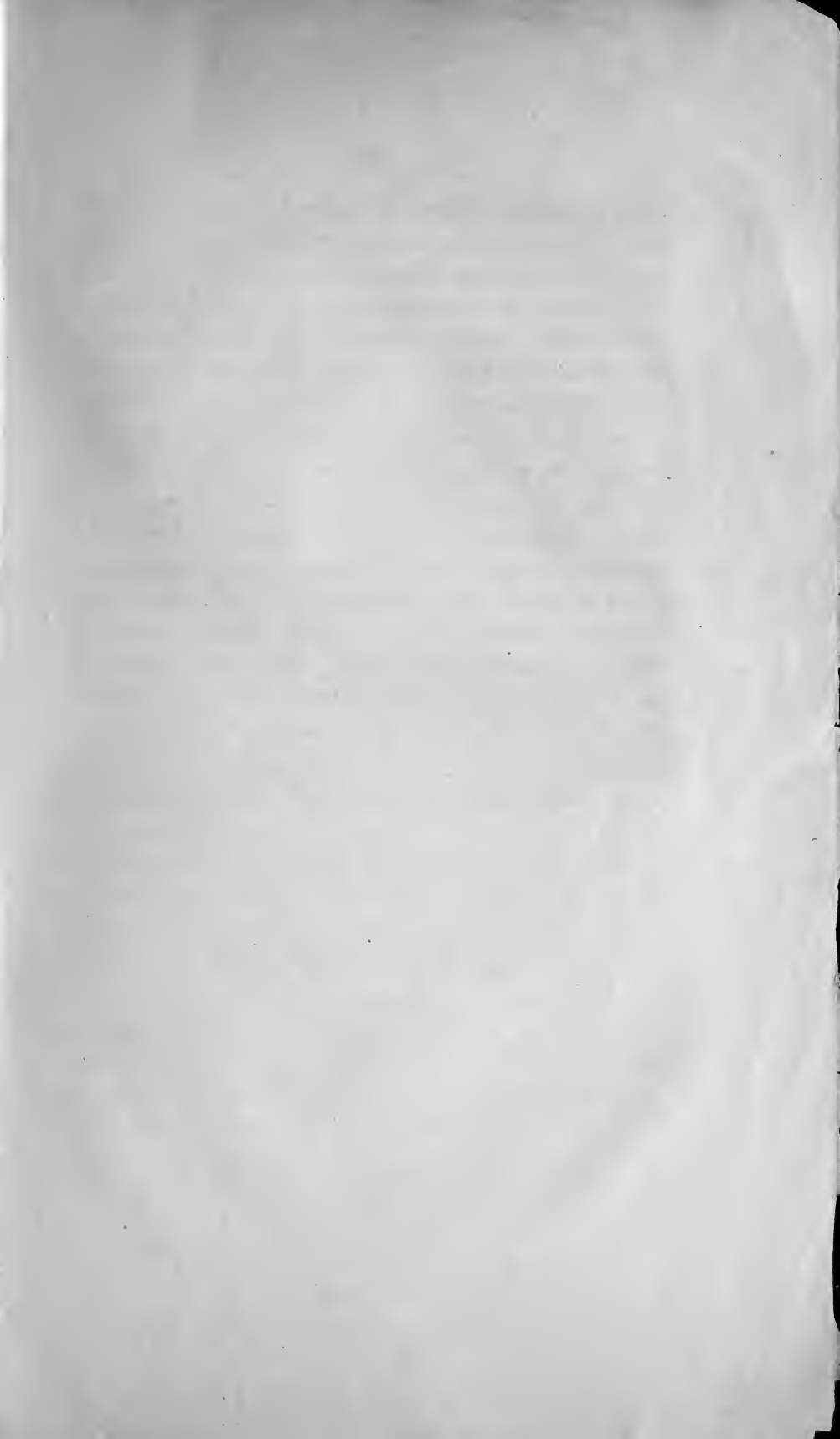
These old familiar scenes, recalling other days, whose depth of meaning, whose exceeding value, whose bearing on our future life, we could not know, and scarcely could imagine ; these stirrings of the heart as hands are grasped at this brief meeting of long severed friends, or words exchanged which tell of others gone ; the names of those departed worthies, which in yonder halls are now as household words to us ; that honored name<sup>1</sup> joined with theirs in a union which shall outlast the stones that there are piled, the name of him our Founder, around whose venerable presence cluster for so many of us the deepest, holiest memories of all our lives, the memories of vows uttered on earth and registered in heaven ;—

<sup>1</sup>The College buildings bear the names of the three Bishops of Connecticut: Seabury, Jarvis, and Brownell.

God grant that for many a long year as hither we come up, that presence may make glad our eyes and hearts ;— and more perhaps than all, that sacred Name which has for many a long century summed up the Christian faith, and now has given a new and glorious consecration to our mother's homes ; all these I say, address us here. All these, repeat the solemn exhortation which was given us when we were severally from this place sent forth to enter on the work of life. We cannot choose but listen to them. We cannot choose but feel them. But let us do more. Let us obey them. Let us resolve, that be we what else we may, we will each in our place and as God gives us power, we will be Christian Scholars. And that in all our way, whether of silent study and solitary thought, or in our minglings with men where study bears its fruit, and thought performs its work on other minds, our constant changeless rule, shall be the noble motto of our College,

FOR THE CHURCH AND FOR OUR COUNTRY.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Pro Ecclesiâ et Patriâ. The Legend on the College Seal.



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