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The following interesting work is abridged from "THE STUDENT'S GUIDE," by the Rev. JOHN TODD, D.D., of North America.

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SELF-IMPROVEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENDS AND ADVANTAGES OF STUDY.

The human mind is the brightest display of the power and skill of the Infinite Mind with which we are acquainted. It is created and placed in this world to be educated for a higher state of existence. Here its faculties begin to unfold. The object of training such a mind should be, to enable the soul to fulfil her duties well here, and to stand on high vantage-ground, when she leaves this cradle of her being, for an eternal existence beyond the grave.

There is now and then a youth, who, like Ferguson, can tend sheep in the field, and there accurately mark the position of the stars with a thread and beads, and with his knife construct a watch from wood; but such instances are rare. Most need encouragement to sustain, instruction to aid, and directions to guide them. Few, probably, ever accomplish anything like as much as they expected or ought; and one reason is, that students spend a vast amount of time in acquiring that experience which they need. As I look back upon the days when I was a "student," I can see that here I went wrong, and there I mistook; here I missed a golden opportunity, and

there I acquired a wrong habit, or received a wrong bias; and I sometimes sigh, that I cannot go back and begin life again, carrying with me my present experience.

Doubtless, multitudes are now in the process of education, who never will reach any tolerable standard of excellence. Probably some never could: but in many cases they might. The exceptions are few; and probably most who read these pages do feel a desire, more or less strong, of fitting themselves for respectability and usefulness. They are, however, ignorant of the way; they are surrounded by temptations and dangers; they soon forget the encouragements, and thus oscillate between hope and fear, resolution and discouragement.

You may converse with any man, however distinguished for attainments or habits of application, or power of using what he knows, and he will sigh over the remembrances of the past, and tell you, that there have been many fragments of time which he has wasted, and many opportunities which he has lost for ever. If he had only seized upon the floating advantages, and gathered up the fragments of time, he might have pushed his researches out into new fields, and, like the immortal Bacon, have amassed vast stores of knowledge. The mighty minds which have gone before us, have left treasures for our inheritance; and the choicest gold is to be had for the digging. How great the dissimilarity between a naked Indian, dancing with joy over a new feather for his head dress, and such a mind as that of Newton or of Boyle! And what makes the difference? There is mind enough in the savage: but his soul is like the marble pillar. There is a beautiful statue in it,

but the hand of the sculptor has never laid the chisel upon it. That mind of the savage has never been disciplined by study; and it therefore, in the comparison, appears like the rough bison of the forest, distinguished only for strength and ferocity.

Without discussing the question whether the souls of men are naturally equal, it may, I think, be safely affirmed, that every one has naturally the powers of excelling in some one thing. You may not excel in mathematics, or as a writer, or a speaker; but I honestly believe that every one of my readers is capable of excelling in some department, and will surely do so, if faithful to himself.

There was once a boy* put under the care of the Jesuits, who was noted for nothing but his stupidity. These teachers tried him abundantly, and could make nothing of him. How little did they think that the honour of being his instructors was to raise their order in view of the world! At length, one of the fathers tried him in geometry, which so suited his genius, that he became one of the first mathematicians of his age.

I once saw a little boy, on a public occasion, while thousands were gazing at him with unaffected astonishment, climb the lightning-rod on a lofty public building. The wind blew high, and the rod shook and trembled; but up he went, till he had reached the vane, 195 feet high. All, every moment, expected to see him fall. But what was our amazement to see him mount the vane, and place his little feet upon it, throwing his arms aloft in the air, and turning round, as the wind turned his shaking foothold! He stood

* Clavius, who died in 1612, aged 75. His works were in five volumes folio, and greatly admired.

there till weary, and came down at his leisure. Here was a mind capable, I doubt not, of high enterprise. And yet he has never been heard of since. And why not? Either his mind has not been cultivated, or else his genius has been turned out of its proper channel. I will just add, that the poor boy was fined for setting so dangerous an example before the boys who saw him; but I could not help wishing that, while they sought to restrain him from such daring, they had been as careful to direct his fearless genius into a proper channel.

I have used a dangerous word, though of great antiquity: the word is *genius*. Many train themselves into habits of eccentricity and oddity, and suppose these inseparable from genius. There are some men who think nothing so characteristic of genius, as to do common things in an uncommon way. Never set up any pretensions for a genius, nor lay claim to the character. But few such are born into the world; and of those few, though envied greatly, and imitated as greatly, but very few indeed leave the world wiser or better than they found it. The object of hard study is not to draw out geniuses, but to take minds such as are formed in a common mould, and fit them for active and decided usefulness. Nothing is so much coveted by many a young man as the reputation of being a genius; and not a few seem to feel that the want of patience for laborious application and deep research, is a mark of genius, while a real genius, like sir Isaac Newton, with great modesty says, that the great and only difference between his mind and the minds of others, consisted solely in his having more patience. You may have a good mind, a sound judgment, or a vivid imagination, or a

wide reach of thought and of views; but, believe me, you probably are not a genius, and can never become distinguished without severe application. Hence all that you ever have, must be the result of labour—hard, untiring labour. You have friends to cheer you on; you have books and teachers to aid you, and multitudes of helps; but, after all, disciplining and educating your mind must be your own work. No one can do this but yourself. And nothing in this world is of any worth, which has not labour and toil as its price.

There is no real excellence without patient study. Those who have now and then risen upon the world, without education, and without study, have shed but a doubtful light, and that but for a moment.

Set it down as a fact, to which there are no exceptions, that we must labour for all that we have, and that nothing is worth possessing or offering to others, which costs us nothing.

Those islands which so beautifully adorn the Pacific, and which, but for sin, would seem so many Edens, are said to have been reared up from the bed of the ocean by the little coral insect, which deposits one grain of sand at a time, till the whole of those piles are reared up. Just so with human exertions. The greatest results of the mind are produced by small, but continued efforts. I have frequently thought of the emblem of a distinguished scholar, as peculiarly appropriate. As nearly as I remember, it is the picture of a mountain, with a man at its base, with his hat and coat lying beside him, and a pickaxe in his hand; and as he digs, stroke by stroke, his patient look corresponds with his words, *Peu et peu*, "Little by little."

The first and great object of education is, to

discipline the mind. It is naturally like the colt, wild and ungoverned. Let any man, who has not subdued his mind, more or less, by close thought, sit down and take up a subject, and try to "think it out." The result will be, that he cannot hold his thoughts upon the point. They fly off, they wander away. He brings them back, and determines now to hold his attention there; when, at once, ere he knows how, he again finds himself away. The process is repeated, till he gives it up in discouragement, or else goes to sleep.

In the period of youthful study, it is not so important to lay up a vast amount of information, as to fit the mind for future acquisitions and future usefulness. The magazine will be filled; and we need not be too anxious to fill it while we are getting it ready for use. The great object now is to set the mind out on a course which can be successfully pursued through life. You must calculate to improve through life; and, therefore, now try to form habits of study, and learn how to study to advantage. "Newton was, in his eighty-fifth year, improving his Chronology; and Waller, at eighty-two, was thought to have lost none of his poetical fire."

Make it the first object to be able to fix and hold your attention upon your studies. He who can do this, has mastered many and great difficulties; and he who cannot do it, will in vain look for success in any department of study. "To effect any purpose in study, the mind must be concentrated. If any other object plays on the fancy than that which ought to be exclusively before it, the mind is divided, and both are neutralized, so as to lose their effect. What is commonly called abstraction in study, is nothing more than having the attention so completely

occupied with the subject in hand, that the mind takes notice of nothing without itself." Need I say here, that you can never command the attention, if you are in the habit of yielding to your appetites and passions? "No man," says one who knew, "whose appetites are his masters, can perform the duties of his nature with strictness and regularity. He that would be superior to external influence, must first become superior to his own passions." Why does the boy, who has a large sum upon his slate, scowl, and rub out, and begin again, and grow discouraged? Because he has not yet learned to command his attention. He was going on well, when some new thought flashed into his mind, or some new object caught his eye, and he lost the train of calculation. Why has that Latin or Greek word so puzzled you to remember, that you have had to look it out in your dictionary some ten or dozen times? And why do you now look at it as at a stranger, whose name you ought to know, but which you cannot recall? Because you have not yet acquired fully the power of fixing your attention. That word would have been remembered long since, if it had not passed as a shadow before your mind when you looked at it.

The difficulty of confining the attention is probably the secret of the plan of Demosthenes, who shut himself up in his celebrated dark cave for study; and this will account for the fact, that a person who is unexpectedly deprived of the use of his eyes, will not unfrequently make advances in thought, and show a strength of mind unknown before. I have frequently seen boys take their books on a summer's day, and flee from their room to the garden or the grove, and then back again, full of uneasiness, and in vain hoping that

changing the place would give them some new power over the roving attention, and that indescribable restlessness, so inseparable from the early efforts to subdue the mind. It is all in vain. You cannot flee from yourself; and the best way is to sit directly down in your room, and there command your attention to fix itself upon the hard, dry lesson, and master it; and, when you have thus brought this rover to obey you once, he will be more ready to obey the next time.

Patience is a virtue kindred to attention; and without it the mind cannot be said to be disciplined. Patient labour and investigation are not only essential to success in study, but are an unfailing guarantee to success. The young man is in danger of feeling that he will strike out something new. His spirits are buoyant and his hopes sanguine. He knows not the mortified feeling of being repeatedly defeated by himself. He will burst upon the world at once, and strike the blows of a giant, while his arm is that of a child. He is not to toil up the hill, and wait for years of self-discipline, close, patient study, and hard labour—not he! but before you know it, he will be on the heights of the highest Alps, with a lofty feeling, looking down upon the creepers below. Hence, multitudes waste life, and absolutely fritter away their existence, in doing nothing, except waiting for a golden opportunity to do something great and magnificent. When they come out, it must be in some great effort. The tree is not to grow slowly and gradually; no, at once the sapling must be loaded with the fruit of the tree of threescore years! Alas! trees planted and watered by such expectations will never be more than dwarfs. Every young man ought to remember, that he who would carry the

ox, must every day shoulder the calf. That great man, sir Isaac Newton, who returned to his study, and finding that his little dog had turned over the table, and that the papers on which he had been engaged for years were burned up, yet calmly said, "Diamond, you do not know the mischief you have done," showed a soul truly great; and its greatness, in this instance, consisted in his patience. Without a murmur, he sat down to do over the same great labour. He lived to complete it, and it was the admiration of the learned world. Yet how few have the patience thus to sit down and labour, day by day, for years! It is neither a small nor an easy part of education to cultivate this trait of character.

The student should learn to think and act for himself. True originality consists in doing things well, and doing them in your own way. A mind half-educated is generally imitating others. "No man was ever great by imitation." One great reason is, that it is so much easier to copy the defects and the objectionable parts of a great man's character, than to imitate his excellences, that we gain only the former. Not a few waste their lives, and lose all discipline and improvement, by an insensible and unconscious habit of imitating others. Of the multitudes who imitated Johnson, was there one who had anything more than his pompous, inflated language? Of the many who tried to follow in the wake of Byron, is there one who will live in song? Not one. They could copy nothing but his measure and his wickedness; borrowing his vileness without his genius. The lion himself is fast turning to corruption, but no honey will be found in the carcase; and as for his followers, the world has been relieved from their curse by

their decaying before they could taint the moral atmosphere. It is vastly more easy to imitate and borrow, both matter and manner, than to have them of your own. But set it down, that no imitator ever reached anything like eminence. You must have a character of your own, and rules by which that character is regulated. Let it be remembered that we cannot copy greatness or goodness by any effort. We must acquire it by our own patience and diligence.

Another object of study is, to form the judgment, so that the mind can not only investigate, but weigh and balance opinions and theories. Without this, you will never be able to decide what to read or what to throw aside; what author to distrust, or what opinions to receive. Some of the most laborious men, and diligent readers, pass through life without accomplishing anything desirable, for the want of what may be called a well-balanced judgment. The last theory which they hear is the true one, however deficient as to proof from facts; the last book they read is the most wonderful, though it may be worthless; the last acquaintance is the most valuable, because least is known about him. Hence multitudes of objects are pursued, which have no use in practical life; and there is a laborious trifling which unfits the mind for any thing valuable. It leads to a wide field, which is barren and waste "I once saw a shepherd," says an Italian author, "who used to divert himself, in his solitudes, with tossing up eggs, and catching them again without breaking them; in which he had arrived to so great a degree of perfection, that he would keep up four at a time for several minutes together, playing in the air, and falling into his hands by turns. I think I

never saw greater severity than in this man's face; for, by his wonderful perseverance and application, he had contracted the seriousness and gravity of a privy-councillor; and I could not but reflect with myself, that the same assiduity and attention, had they been rightly applied, might have made him a greater mathematician than Archimedes." I have known a boy, and similar cases in principle are not rare, spend time enough in learning to read with the book bottom upwards, which he did with great fluency, to have made him acquainted with all the minutiæ of the Latin grammar. This is not merely time wasted, but it is cultivating a taste for out-of-the-way things and useless acquirements. It is no small part of education and of study, to know what you do, and what you do not, wish to know.

If, by anything I have said, an impression has been made that I do not deem it necessary for a man to be familiar with a wide circle of knowledge, in order to become known, influential, and useful, I trust such an impression will be corrected subsequently. What I wish to say here is, that the great object of the student is, to prepare his mind to use materials which may hereafter be gathered, but not now to gather them.

The great instrument of affecting the world is the mind; and no instrument is so decidedly and continually improved by exercise and use, as the mind. Many seem to feel as if it were not safe to put forth all their powers at one effort. You must reserve your strength for great occasions, just as you would use your horse, moderately and carefully on common occasions, but give him the spur on occasions of great emer-

gency. This might be well, were the mind, in any respect, like the bones and muscles of the horse. Some, when they are contriving to see how little mental effort will answer, and how far and wide a few feeble thoughts may be spread, seem more like students than at any other time, as if it were dangerous to task the mind too often, lest her stores be exhausted, or her faculties become weakened. The bow is to be only half bent, lest it be overstrained, and lose its power. But you need have no such fears. You may call upon your mind, to-day, for its highest efforts, and stretch it to the utmost in your power, and you have done yourself a kindness. The mind will be all the better for it. To-morrow you may do it again; and each time it will answer more readily to your calls. Remember that real discipline of mind does not consist so much in now and then making a great effort, as in having the mind so trained that it will make constant efforts. If you would have the discipline anything like perfect, it must be unremitted during the hours of study. The perfection of a disciplined mind is, not to be able, on some great contingency, to rouse up its faculties, and draw out a giant strength, but to have it always ready to produce a given and an equal quantity of results in a given and equal time. This was the glory of the mind of sir Isaac Newton. He who trains his mind to go by impulses, and must wait for them, will accomplish but very little during his life.

The study of human nature is a very important part of education. I know it is thought by some, nay, by many, that no one can understand men but those who are moving, and acting, and crowding among them. I grant that such a one

is the only man who knows the forms and modes of doing business. But if the student has not, at the close of his academical course, a deep and thorough insight into the nature of man, it is his own fault, or the fault of his instructors. Men in active life will judge very accurately as to the manner in which you may expect men to act in such and such circumstances; but though, in these respects, their conclusions are accurate, yet they see not the motives of action, and look not so deeply into the soul, as the accurate student. Let a man in active life undertake to probe the conscience of an audience; he may have this and that fact, but can he do it as effectually as he who has read human nature, and pondered over it, in all its recesses and windings, in his study? Few men ever lived who moved among men so little as Jonathan Edwards. But did he not understand human nature? Can any one read his writings, and doubt, for a moment, that he knew most accurately what the nature of man is? When such a mind pours out its strength upon the world, it does not make mistakes as to the principles of action. He might mistake in purchasing a horse, or a coat, for he never attended to such small matters; but a surgeon never dissected the body with more accuracy and skill than he does the soul of man. It is a tradition, that Edwards knew not his own cows; but, in the world of active, driving, bargain-making men, you will never find one who understands human nature so well as he did. And not he alone; but this is characteristic of all who are real students. They work upon the deep principles of human nature, those principles which are altered neither by time, nor fashion, nor outward circumstances. This is one reason why an

educated mind will often send the arrow through the heart, while the uneducated man only twangs his bow. He makes more noise, but produces no execution. I doubt not that many will smile at the idea, that the hard student understands mankind; but you might as well smile at the philosopher, who, while he was managing the electricity in the thunder-cloud, could not tell what outward shapes the cloud might, in the mean time, assume, or whether it moved fast or slow.

Self-knowledge is another important end of study. There are some men who have raised themselves to high stations, and maintained them, without a long course of mental discipline. But most are pedants, and self-conceited, unless they have accurately and repeatedly measured themselves by others. It is of great importance that you know what you cannot do, as well as what you can do. By contact with other minds, not merely do you sharpen the intellect, and add a keenness to the mind, but you strengthen it, and you also learn to be modest in regard to your own powers. You will see many with intellects of a high order, and with attainments far beyond anything which you have dared call your own. There must be some radical defect in that man's nature, who can be associated in study, for years, with those who are severe students, and, at the end of the period, feel that he is a very wise or a very great man. He has then but just stepped upon the threshold of learning, and but just looked out upon that field of knowledge and improvement, which is as boundless as the creation of God. But what is the reason why a man must know himself exactly? What if he does over-estimate himself? I answer —if he presents a draft greater than his deposits, it will certainly be protested. There is so much

vanity in the heart of every man, that he will not allow any one to claim more than his merits absolutely compel him to allow; so that, if you place yourself on the list of those who over-estimate their own attainments or worth, you injure your usefulness, and destroy your happiness. The modest man may, and will, draw vastly more upon the sympathy and good-will of mankind, than the forward man, with the same attainments, will be allowed to do. Modesty, to rest upon any fixed, stable foundation, must rest upon an accurate knowledge of yourself. This will be the result of study. A philosopher, whose fame was filling all Europe, was so modest and retiring, that his good landlady, one day, mourned over him, and lamented that "the poor soul would never make anything more than a philosopher after all!"

We are in too great danger of neglecting the memory. It is too valuable to be neglected, for by it wonders are sometimes accomplished. He who has a memory that can seize with an iron grasp, and retain what he reads, the ideas, simply, without the language, and judgment to compare and balance, will scarcely fail of being distinguished. Many are afraid of strengthening the memory, lest it should destroy their inducement and power to originate ideas—lest the light should be altogether borrowed light. The danger does not seem to me to be very great; especially since it may be observed, that those who are so fearful of employing this faculty are by no means to be envied for their originality. Why has that mass of thought, observation, and experience, which is embodied in books, by the multitudes of minds which have gone before us, been gathered, if not, that we may use it, and stand on high ground, and push our way still further into the boundaries and regions of knowledge? Besides, in a world

so dark as ours, it is delightful to see a planet rising before us, even though she sheds no light but borrowed. And, after all, the exact amount of original thought which passes through any one mind, is probably much less than is frequently imagined. Who does not know what a delightful freshness there is in the reading of a youth! The world is new to him. He treads on ground new and enchanting. I have frequently heard men, in maturer years, wish that they could now sit down and find the same freshness in a book, which they did when young. Why do they not? Because a new book, now, is not new. They have seen the same ideas, or the shades of them, many times before; and every book takes away from the originality of that which is to follow it. If, then, there is not so much of originality in men and in books as you at first suppose, it follows, that memory is the grand instrument of conveying knowledge from one man to another. Its cultivation is of the highest importance I mention it here, not now to direct how to cultivate it, but to state its immense value.

You will see, from what I have said, that the object of study is to discipline the mind in all its parts; to show it where to find tools, and how to use them. The exact amount of knowledge at any one time in the mind of the student, is not, and need not be, great. Like a good pump, you could soon exhaust it were it not that it reaches an inexhaustible well beneath, and has all the apparatus for filling itself as fast as emptied. If the knowledge which is now possessed shall evaporate, it will, like the vapours which rise from the ocean, again return to the diligent student, by some other channels.

CHAPTER II.

HABITS.

The whole character may be said to be comprehended in the term *habits;* so that it is not so far from being true, that "man is a bundle of habits." Suppose you were compelled to wear an iron collar about your neck, through life, or a chain upon your ankle; would it not be a burden every day and hour of your existence? You rise in the morning a prisoner to your chain; you lie down at night, weary with the burden; and you groan the more deeply, as you reflect that there is no shaking it off. But even this would not be more intolerable to bear than many of the habits of men; nor would it be more difficult to be shaken off.

Habits are easily formed, especially such as are bad; and what to-day seems to be a small affair, will soon become fixed, and hold you with the strength of a cable. The cable, you will recollect, is formed by spinning and twisting one thread at a time; but when once completed, the proudest ship turns her head towards it, and acknowledges her subjection to its power.

Habits of some kind will be formed by every youth. He will have a particular course in which his time, his employments, his thoughts and

feelings, will run. Good or bad, these habits soon become a part of himself, and a kind of second nature. Who does not know that the old man who has occupied a particular corner of the old fire-place in the old house for sixty years, may be rendered wretched by a change? You have perhaps read of the release of the aged prisoner of the Bastile, who entreated that he might again return to his gloomy dungeon, because his habits there formed were so strong, that his nature threatened to sink under the attempt to break them up. You will probably find no man of forty, who has not habits which he laments, which mar his usefulness, but which are so interwoven with his very being, that he cannot break through them. At least he has not the courage to try. I therefore expect that you will form habits. Indeed, I wish you to do so. He must be a poor character, indeed, who lives so extempore as not to have habits of his own. But what I wish is, that you form those habits which are *correct*, and such as will every day and hour add to your happiness and usefulness. If a workman were to be told that he must use the axe which he now selects, through life, would he not be careful in selecting one of the right proportions and temper? If a man were told that he must wear the same clothing through life, would he not be anxious as to the quality and kind? But these, in the cases supposed, would be of infinitely less importance than in the selection of habits in which the soul shall act. You might as well place the body in a strait-jacket, and expect it to perform with ease, and comfort, and promptness, the various duties of the body, as to throw the soul into the habits of some men, and then expect that it will accomplish anything great or good.

Do not fear to undertake to form *any* habit which is desirable; for it *can* be formed, and that with more ease than you may at first suppose. Let the same thing, or the same duty, return at the same time every day, and it will soon become pleasant. No matter if it be irksome at first; but how irksome soever it may be, only let it return periodically, every day, and that without any interruption for a time, and it will become a positive pleasure. In this way all our habits are formed. The student who can with ease now sit down to his studies nine or ten hours a day, would find the labourer, or the man accustomed to active habits, sinking under it, should he attempt to do the same thing. I have seen a man sit down at a table spread with luxuries, and eat his sailor's biscuit with relish, and without a desire for any other food. His health had compelled him thus to live, till it had become a pleasant habit of diet. Previous to this, however, he had been rather noted for being an epicure.

I shall specify habits which, in my view, are very desirable for you, and, at the same time, endeavour to give specific directions how to form them.

1. *Have a plan laid beforehand for every day.*

These plans ought to be maturely formed the evening previous, and, on rising in the morning, again looked at, and immediately entered upon. It is astonishing how much more we accomplish in a single day, (and of what else is life made up?) by having the plan previously marked out. It is so in everything. This morning a man was digging a path through a deep snow-bank. It was almost insupportably cold, and he seemed to make but little head-way, though he worked as if for a wager At length, getting out of breath, he

paused, and marked out the width of the path with his shovel; then marked out the width of each shovel-ful, and consequently the amount of snow at each throw of the shovel. In fifteen minutes, he had done more, and it was done neater and easier, than in thirty minutes previous, when working without a plan. I have found, in my own experience, as much difference in the labours of two days, when working with or without a plan, as, at least, one half, without having the satisfaction, in the latter case, of knowing what I have done. Experience will tell any man, that he is most successful in his own pursuits, when he is most careful as to method.

Such a system will not make a noisy blustering character. The river, that rolls a heavy burden of water to the ocean, is the stream which keeps the channel, and is noiseless in its course. If you are now going through your course of education, there is a prescribed routine of duties, marked out by your teachers. These, of course, will come in your every-day plans; but, in addition to these, you ought to do something by way of acquiring or retaining information, or something to add to the happiness of your friends or of your companions.

At first you will feel discouraged in not being able to do as much work as you mark out. But you will do more and more, from day to day, as you proceed; and you will soon be astonished at seeing how much can be accomplished.

2. *Acquire the habit of untiring industry.*

Should you be so unfortunate as to suppose you are a genius, and that "things will come to you," it would be well to undeceive yourself as soon as possible. Make up your mind that industry must be the price of all you obtain, and at

once begin to pay down. Diligence in employments of less consequence is the most successful introduction to greater enterprises. It is a matter of unaffected amazement to see what industry alone will accomplish. We are astonished at the volumes which the men of former ages used to write. But the term *industry* is the key to the whole secret. "He that shall walk with vigour three hours a day, will pass in seven years a space equal to the circumference of the globe." There is no state so bad for the student as idleness, and no habit so pernicious. And yet none is so easily acquired, or so difficult to be thrown off. The idle man soon grows torpid, and becomes the Indian in his feelings, insensibly adopting their maxim—"It is better to walk than to run, and better to stand still than to walk, and better to sit than to stand, and better to lie than to sit." Probably the man who deserves the most pity, is he who is most idle; for as there are said to be pleasures in madness known only to madmen, there are certainly miseries in idleness which only the idle can conceive. I am aware that many are exceedingly *busy*, who are not industrious. For it very frequently happens, that he who is most hurried and bustling, is very far from being industrious. A shrewd man can easily discover the difference. He that neglects his known duty and real employment, naturally endeavours to crowd his mind with something that may bar out the remembrance of his own folly, and does anything but what he ought to do, with eager diligence, that he may keep himself in his own favour.

It is perfectly clear, that he who is industrious has really the most of leisure; for his time is marked out into distinct portions, to each of which

something is assigned, and when the thing is done, the man is at leisure: but a dead calm settles over him who lives an idle life. Better that the waters be straitened and burst over their banks, than that they be too sluggish to move at all. Who would not prefer to put to sea, even in a storm, and hurry over the waters in a gale, rather than lie for weeks becalmed? Seneca assures his friend in a letter, that there "was not a day in which he did not either write something, or read and epitomise some good author." So universal has the opinion of men been on the point, that in order to excel you must be industrious, that idlers have received the appellation of "fools at large." You would be surprised to know how many hours slip away from the man who is not systematically industrious. It is related of the excellent Rutherford, "Such was his unwearied assiduity and diligence, that he seemed to pray constantly, to preach constantly, to catechise constantly, and to visit the sick, exhorting from house to house, to teach as much in the schools, and spend as much time with the students and young men, in fitting them for the ministry, as if he had been sequestrated from all the world besides, and yet, withal, to write as much as if he had been constantly shut up in his study."

It is easy for the student to form good plans of study, and of daily habits, and to draw them out on paper, all perfected. But the difficulty is, they are found nowhere but on paper; and because you cannot at once reach them, you sit down and give up an untiring industry. It was a matter of astonishment to Europe, that Luther, amidst all his travels and active labours, could present a very perfect translation of the whole Bible. But a single word explains it all. He had a rigid

system of doing something every day. "*Nulla dies*," says he, in answer to the question how he did it—"*nulla dies sine versu;*" and this, in a few years, brought him to the close of the whole Bible.

"Pray, of what did your brother die?" said the marquis Spinola to sir Horace Vere. "He died, sir," replied he, "of having nothing to do." "Alas! sir," said Spinola, "that is enough to kill any general of us all."

Demosthenes, as is well known, copied Thucydides' History eight times with his own hand, merely to make himself familiar with the style of that great man.

There are two great proverbs, one among the Turks, and the other among the Spaniards, both of which contain much that is true. "A busy man is troubled with but one devil; but the idle man with a thousand." "Men are usually tempted by the devil; but the idle man positively tempts the devil." How much corrupting company, how many temptations to do wrong, how many seasons of danger to your character, and danger to the peace of your friends, will you escape, by forming the habit of being decidedly industrious every day!

3. *Cultivate perseverance.*

By perseverance, I mean a stedfastness in pursuing the same study, and carrying out the same plans from week to week. Some will read or hear of a plan which somebody has pursued with great success, and at once conclude, that they will do so. The plan will be adopted without consideration, then talked about as a fine thing, and in a few days thrown aside for something else. Such a great man did this, or did that, and I will do so, is the feeling; but as soon

as it becomes irksome, as any new habit will in a short time, it is laid aside. I once knew a man, a student, who somewhere read of a great man who wrote over his door, "*Dum loquimur tempus fugit;*" and immediately he had it in staring capitals over his door. Again, he read that a very learned man used to admire Blackstone: at once he drops other things, and purchases Blackstone's Commentaries. These he began to read with great eagerness; but, happening to hear that a man of note was in the habit of getting most of his information from conversation, (a fact which I much doubt,) he was for dropping Blackstone, and going from room to room, to gather information by conversation! It is hardly necessary to say, that a college full of such students, all condensed into one, would not make a single real student. "The man who is perpetually hesitating which of two things he will do first, will do neither. The man who resolves, but suffers his resolution to be changed by the first counter-suggestion of a friend—who fluctuates from opinion to opinion, from plan to plan, and veers like a weather-cock to every point of the compass, with every breath of caprice that blows—can never accomplish anything great or useful. Instead of being progressive in anything, he will be at best stationary, and more probably retrograde in all. It is only the man who first consults wisely, then resolves firmly, and then executes his purpose with inflexible perseverance, undismayed by those petty difficulties which daunt a weaker spirit, that can advance to eminence in any line. Let us take, by way of illustration, the case of a student. He commences the study of the dead languages: presently comes a friend, who tells him he is wasting his time, and that,

instead of obsolete words, he had much better employ himself in acquiring new ideas. He changes his plan, and sets to work at the mathematics. Then comes another friend, who asks him, with a grave and sapient face, whether he intends to become a professor in a college; because if he does not, he is misemploying his time; and that, for the business of life, common mathematics is quite enough of the mathematics. He throws up his Euclid, and addresses himself to some other study, which, in its turn, is again relinquished on some equally wise suggestion; and thus life is spent in changing his plans. You cannot but perceive the folly of this course; and the worst effect of it is, the fixing on your mind a habit of indecision, sufficient of itself to blast the fairest prospects. No: take your course wisely, but firmly; and, having taken it, hold on in it with heroic resolution.

We are in danger of ruining our promising plans, in themselves very good, by the habit of putting off till to-morrow what may be done to-day. "That letter may be answered to-morrow; that request of my friend may be attended to to-morrow, and he will be no loser." True; but you are the loser; for the yielding to one such temptation, is the signal to the yielding up the whole citadel to the enemy. "That note, and that valuable fact, may be recorded in my common-place book to-morrow." True; but every such indulgence is a heavy loss to you. Every hour should be perseveringly filled up, and filled up according to some plan. One day filled up according to a previous plan, is worth more than a week filled up without any plan.

4. *Cultivate the habit of punctuality.*

There is no man living who might not be a

punctual man; and yet there are few that are so, to anything like the degree to which they ought to attain. It is vastly easier to be a little late in doing every thing. It is *not* so easy to be a prompt, punctual character; but it is a trait of inestimable value to yourself and to the world. The punctual man can do twice as much, at least, as another man, with twice the ease and satisfaction to himself, and with equal satisfaction to others. We are all so indolent, by nature and by habit, that we feel it a luxury to find a man of undeviating punctuality. We love to lean upon such a man, and we are willing to purchase such a staff at almost any price.

Some seem to be afraid of cherishing this habit, lest it border upon a virtue that is vulgar, and is below the ambition of a great mind, or the attention of one who has greater virtues upon which he may presume. Was the mind of Blackstone of a low order? Did he cultivate punctuality because he had not great traits of character on which to rely? Yet, when he was delivering even his celebrated lectures, he was never known to make his audience wait even a minute; and he could never be made to think well of any one who was notoriously defective in this virtue. The reader will be pleased with the following notice of Mr. Brewer, afterwards a valuable minister of the gospel. While a student, he was always known to be very punctual. One morning, the clock struck seven, and all rose up for prayer, according to custom. The tutor looked round, and observing that Mr. Brewer was absent, paused awhile. Seeing him enter the room, he thus addressed him: "Sir, the clock has struck, and we were ready to begin: but as *you* were absent, we sup-

posed it was too fast, and therefore waited." The clock was actually too fast by some minutes.

It is no great virtue to be punctual in paying a considerable debt, though, even here, too many fail; but it is in every-day occurrences that we are most apt to fail. "I am too late now, but it is only *once*. I have not been prompt in fulfilling my plans to-day; but it is only *once*:" such is the language of procrastination. Be punctual in every thing. If you determine to rise at such an hour, be on the floor at the moment. If you determine to do so much before breakfast, be sure to do it; if to meet a society, or a circle of friends, be there at the moment. We are apt to be tardy in attending meetings of societies, etc., especially if we have anything to do. "There is great dignity in being waited for," said one who was in this habit, and who had not much of which to be vain, unless it was this want of promptness. An assembly will be glad to see you after having waited for you; but they would have been *more* glad to have seen you at your post. When there are two things for you to do, one of which *must* be done, and the other is of what you very much *desire* to do, be sure and begin the former first. The want of the observance of this rule very frequently prevents our being punctual in our duties.

5. *Be an early riser.*

Few ever lived to a great age, and fewer still ever became distinguished, who were not in the habit of early rising. You rise late, and of course get about your business at a late hour, and every thing goes wrong all day. Franklin says that "he who rises late may trot all day, and not have overtaken his business at night."

Dean Swift avers, that "he never knew any man come to greatness and eminence who lay in bed of a morning."

I believe that, with other degeneracies of our days, history will prove that late rising is a prominent one. In the fourteenth century, the shops in Paris were universally open at four in the morning; now, not till long after seven. Then, the king of France dined out at eight o'clock in the morning, and retired to his chamber at the same hour in the evening. In the time of Henry III., seven in the morning was the fashionable breakfast hour, ten the dinner hour. In the time of Elizabeth, the nobility, fashionables, and students, dined at eleven o'clock, and supped between five and six in the afternoon.

Buffon gives us the history of his writings in a few words. "In my youth, I was very fond of sleep; it robbed me of a great deal of my time; but my poor Joseph (his servant) was of great service in enabling me to overcome it. I promised to give Joseph a crown every time that he would make me get up at six. Next morning he did not fail to wake me and to torment me; but he only received abuse. The next day after, he did the same, with no better success; and I was obliged to confess at noon, that I had lost my time. I told him that he did not know how to manage his business; he ought to think of my promise, and not mind my threats. The day following, he employed force; I begged for indulgence, I bid him begone, I stormed, but Joseph persisted. I was therefore obliged to comply; and he was rewarded every day for the abuse which he suffered at the moment when I awoke, by thanks, accompanied with a crown, which he received about an hour after. Yes, I

am indebted to poor Joseph for ten or a dozen of the volumes of my works."

Frederick II., of Prussia, even after age and infirmities had increased upon him, gave strict orders never to be allowed to sleep later than four in the morning. Peter the Great, whether at work in the docks at London as a ship-carpenter, or at the anvil as a blacksmith, or on the throne of Russia, always rose before day-light. "I am," says he, "for making my life as long as I can, and therefore sleep as little as possible." Doddridge makes the following striking and sensible remarks on this subject:—"I will here record the observation, which I have found of great use to myself, and to which I may say, that the production of this work, (Commentary on the New Testament,) and most of my other writings, is owing; namely, that the difference between rising at five and at seven o'clock in the morning, for the space of forty years, supposing a man to go to bed at the same hour at night, is nearly equivalent to the addition of ten years to a man's life."

In order to rise early, I would earnestly recommend an early hour for retiring. There are many other reasons for this. Neither your eyes nor your health are so likely to be destroyed. Our Creator seems to have so fitted things, that we ought to rest in the early part of the night. Dr. Dwight used to tell his students, that "one hour of sleep before midnight is worth more than two hours after that time." Let it be a rule with you, and scrupulously adhered to, that your light shall be extinguished by *ten* o'clock in the evening. You may then rise at five, and have seven hours to rest, which is about what nature requires.

But how shall you form the habit of getting up so early? Suppose you go to bed, to-night, at ten; you have been accustomed to sit up later: for an hour you cannot sleep; and when the clock strikes five, you will be in a fine sleep. I reply, that if you ever hope to do anything in this world, the habit *must* be formed, and the sooner it is done the better. If any money could purchase the habit, no price would be too great. Some use a small alarm-clock to call them up, and to which they soon acquire a strong attachment. By this, or some such process, you may be regularly waked at an early hour. After you are once waked, be sure to use your first consciousness in getting upon the floor. If you allow yourself to parley a single moment, sleep, like an armed man, will probably seize upon you, and your resolution is gone, your hopes are dashed, and your habits destroyed. Need you be reminded here, that the young man who is in the habit of early rising, will, and must be in the habit of retiring early, and, of course, will put himself out of the way of many temptations and dangers which come under the veil of midnight? He who from his youth is in the habit of rising early, will be much more likely to live to old age, more likely to be a distinguished and useful man, and more likely to pass a life that is peaceful and pleasant. I dwell upon this point, because a love of bed is too frequently a besetting sin of students, and a sin which soon acquires the strength of a cable.

6. *Be in the habit of learning something from every man with whom you meet.*

The observance or neglect of this rule will make a wonderful difference in your character long before the time that you are forty years old.

All act upon it, more or less, but few do it as a matter of habit and calculation. Most act upon it as a matter of interest, or of curiosity at the moment. The great difficulty is, we begin too late in life to make every thing contribute to increase our stock of practical information. Sir Walter Scott gives us to understand, that he never met with any man, let his calling be what it might, even the most stupid fellow that ever rubbed down a horse, from whom he could not, by a few moments' conversation, learn something which he did not before know, and which was valuable to him. This will account for the fact that he seemed to have a knowledge of every thing. It is quite as important to go through the world with the ears open, as with the eyes open. "When I was young," says Cecil, "my mother had a servant, whose conduct I thought truly wise. A man was hired to brew, and this servant was to watch his method, in order to learn his art. In the course of the process, some thing was done which she did not understand. She asked him, and he abused her with very coarse epithets for her ignorance and stupidity. My mother asked her how she bore such abuse. 'I would be called,' said she, 'worse names, a thousand times, for the sake of the information I got out of him.'" It is a false notion, that we ought to know nothing out of our particular line of study or profession. You will be none the less distinguished in your calling, for having obtained an item of practical knowledge from every man with whom you meet. And every man, in his particular calling, knows things which you do not, and which are decidedly worth knowing.

I do not recommend you to try to learn every

thing. Far from it. But while you have one great object in view, you can attend to other things which have a bearing on your object. If you were now sent on an express object to a distant part of the country, while the great object before you would be, to do your errand well and expeditiously, ought you not, as you pass along, to use your eyes, and gaze upon the various scenes and objects which lie in your way? Ought you not to have your ears open, to pick up what information, anecdote, fact, every thing of the kind, you can, and thus return wiser? Would all this hinder you in the least? And would you not be fitting yourself, by every such acquisition, to be a more agreeable, intelligent, and useful man?

7. *Form fixed principles on which you can think and act.*

A good scholar tries so to fix every word in his memory, that, when he meets with it again, he need not turn to a dictionary. His companion may dispute its derivation, or its gender, and he may not be able to tell just how the word appeared when he looked it out; but he has made up his mind about it, and has a fixed opinion. He may not now be able to tell you by what process he came to that opinion. It should be so with every thing. Do not examine a subject in order to get some general notion of it, but, if now in haste, wait till you can do it thoroughly. No matter what it be, of great importance or small, if it be worth examining at all, do it thoroughly, and do it once for all; so that, whenever the subject shall again come up, your mind may be settled and at rest. It is the possession of established and unwavering principles that makes a man a firm character. These prin-

ciples relate to right and wrong, and, indeed, to every thing about which the judgment has to balance probabilities. Do not be hasty in coming to conclusions. Young men generally err more by being precipitate, than for want of judgment. If they will only give themselves time to weigh the matter, their conclusions will usually be correct.

I have never read of the martyrdom of the venerable Latimer, without being touched, almost to tears, to see him clinging to his long-established principles. They urged him to dispute and prove *his* religion true, and the *popish*, false. He knew that he was old, and had lost somewhat of the strength of his mind. He would not dispute. He left that for young and vigorous minds, while he died simply repeating his belief! He knew very well that he had once examined the subject with all the vigour of his intellect, and he was not to go and again prove his principles to be correct. Conduct which stands on such a basis, and character which strikes its roots thus deep, will be such as will bear scrutiny, and such as no storm can shake.

8. *Be simple and neat in your personal habits.*

Let your dress be neat and simple. Do not feel that the body, which is merely a case for the soul, is of too great importance. At the same time, he who is a "good and true man," will be likely to keep the outside of his house in good order. I would recommend that your clothes be of good quality; so good, that you constantly feel that they are worth preserving, and that you feel anxious to show your economy, by the length of time they last. For exercise, you should have a different dress. No one can enjoy himself who undertakes to study and exercise in the same dress. In your study, use an old coat or gown.

You will feel more easy and comfortable, and your best coat will last all the longer for it.

Your dress should be warm. If you wear flannels next the skin, mind they are often changed. Be sure, also, to keep your feet dry and warm. In order to this, you must use them every day in walking.

No slave is so abject as he who tries to keep near the foremost in the race of fashion. But cannot a student be particularly nice about his dress without having his heart all in it? I reply, "that whenever you see the tail of a fox out of the hole, you may be pretty sure that the fox is in the hole." Keep your clothes neat and clean; your coat, your hat, your boots or shoes; and be neat, as to your linen: but do not show or feel that this is by any means the great business of life.

Pay particular attention to your teeth. By this I mean, simply cleanse them with a soft brush and with water, in which a little common salt is dissolved, the last thing before you retire at night. This simple direction faithfully followed, will ordinarily keep the teeth good till old age. I would urge this, because, if neglected, the following are the results:—Your breath will inevitably become offensive from defective teeth; your comfort will be destroyed by frequent tooth-ache; your health will suffer for the want of good teeth to masticate the food; and last, though not least, you will early lose your teeth. These may seem small affairs now, but the habit of neglect will assuredly bring much suffering when it is too late to remedy the neglect.

Do not affect singularity in any of your habits. We never feel at home with a man of odd habits; and any such will assuredly increase upon him.

Any person makes a heavy draft upon the kindness of mankind who every day demands that they bear with his eccentricities.

Be particularly attentive to your behaviour at table; for, from his situation, the student is peculiarly tempted to err there. A man is never more mistaken than when he supposes that any strength of mind or attainments will render his company agreeable, while his manners are rude. If you are accustomed to society, behave as you know how to do; if not accustomed to it, behave modestly, and you will behave well. In all your intercourse with your fellow-students, always maintain the appearance and character of a gentleman, never that of a buffoon, or of a sloven. As your character now is, in these respects, so it is likely to be through life. Keep your room and person at all times just as you would have it if you expected your mother or sister to visit you. Neatness is the word by which to designate all that is meant in regard to your personal appearance.

9. *Acquire the habit of doing every thing well.*

It is well known that Johnson used to write and send copy to the press without even looking it over by way of revising. This was the effect of habit. He began by composing slowly, but with great accuracy. We are naturally impatient of restraint, and have so little patience at our command, that it is a rare thing to find a young man doing anything as well as he can. He wishes to do it quickly. And in the conversation of students, you seldom hear one tell *how well* he did this or that, but *how quickly*. This is a pernicious habit. Anything that is worth doing at all, is worth doing well; and a mind well disciplined in other respects, is defective, if it have not this habit.

Everything should be done *well*, and practice will soon enable you to do it quickly. How many are miserable readers, and miserable writers, as to manner and matter, because they do not possess this habit! Euripides used to compose but three lines while a contemporary poet composed three hundred; but one wrote for immortality, and the other for the day. Your reading had better be but little, your conversations but few, your compositions short, and well done. The man who is in a "great hurry," is commonly the one who hurries over the small stages of the journey, without making the great business of life to consist in accomplishing as much as possible.

"How is it that you do so much?" said one, in astonishment at the efforts and success of a great man. "Why, I do but one thing at a time, and try to *finish* it once for all." I would, therefore, have you keep this in mind:—Do not send a letter home blotted or hurried, and then make excuses because you are in a hurry. You have no right to be in such a hurry. It is doing injustice to yourself. Do not make a memorandum so carelessly, that in five years you can make nothing of it. Do not hurry anything so that you know not what you do, or do not know certainly about it, and have to trust to vague impressions. What we call a superficial character is formed in this way; and those who are not careful to form and cherish the habit of *doing everything well*, may expect to be nothing else than superficial.

10. *Make constant efforts to be master of your temper.*

The often-quoted remark of Solomon, in regard to authorship and study, is true as to life; and that study which is such a "weariness to the flesh,"

will almost certainly reach the nerves, and render you more or less liable to be irritated. Who would have thought that the elegant Goldsmith would, in his retirement, have been peevish and fretful? Such, we are told, was the fact. And perhaps he who could write "The Citizen of the World," and "The Deserted Village," and "The Vicar of Wakefield," exhausted his nerves in trying to be kind-hearted and pleasant in his writings; so that, when he fell back into real life, he had no materials left with which to be agreeable. Be this as it may, it is not unfrequently the case, that he who can appear kind and pleasant with his pen and when abroad, is nevertheless growing sour and crabbed in his study. Hence, it has sometimes been said of a student, "He is at times the most agreeable, and at times the most disagreeable of men." It will require no small exertion, on your part, to become master of yourself. He that is master of his own spirit, is a hero indeed.

Nothing grows faster by indulgence, than the habit of speaking to a companion hastily: it soon becomes a fixed habit that lasts through life. In order to avoid it, cultivate manliness of character. Be frank and open-hearted. Not merely appear to be so, but really *be* so. There is an openness, a nobleness of soul about some men, which is quickly discovered, and as highly valued. We know that there is originally a difference in men. Some seem to be born with close, misanthropic, and contracted minds. But there is no reason why they should yield to this constitutional trait, and become more and more so. You may have been neglected in your childhood in this respect; but this is no reason why you should neglect yourself.

Be contented in your situation. Nothing will sooner render any one disagreeable, or sooner destroy his own peace, than a discontented spirit. Who can expect to master himself, to master languages, to master mathematics, and to master a thousand difficulties, while obtaining a thorough and complete education, without meeting with discouragements? Who ever undertook to explore a great region without meeting with hot suns, and cold rains, with clouds of dust, and swarms of flies?

Another way to avoid discontent and peevishness, is carefully to avoid reveries. Castle-building cannot be laughed out of existence, else had it long since been no more. The mischiefs of it are immense. We are not satisfied with what we now are; we have no patience to dig, and wait, and grow to eminence; and so we go off on the wings of imagination, and range through all desirable conditions, and select one, and at once sit down on empire or greatness! Nature and fortune never combined to create such an elysium for fallen man, as you can at once create for yourself. Fancy soon obtains the victory over the soul; for it is vastly more easy for us to sit in our chair, and dream ourselves into statesmen and orators, rulers and movers of the world, than to put forth the exertions required to excel in actual life, in any profession. The sage, in Rasselas, who spent his time and thoughts, and wore himself down for ten years, in guiding and regulating the planets and seasons, was wise, in comparison with many who lived in reveries; for his feelings became mellowed and kind, whereas, in most cases, the whole influence of these day-dreams is bad. They decidedly sour the feelings. Notice your own feelings. As you descend into

the world, after a season of communion with fancy, it seems like a forsaken castle, cold and cheerless. In these reveries you will meet with enemies enough; but it is only that fancy may lift you above them, and show you how superior you are to every thing like difficulties or opposition. Let the imagination become your master, and hold the reins, and you will soon become a discontented spirit.

11. *Cultivate soundness of judgment.*

Some can decide, almost intuitively, upon the character of the last person they have met. So of a book. They can turn it over, read part of a page here, and a sentence or two in another place, and decide, unhesitatingly, upon its merits. When a prejudice has once entered your mind against a man or an author, it is hard to eradicate it. It warps the judgment, and makes you partial. If this habit be indulged, the mind soon becomes habituated to act from prejudice, rather than judgment. A perfectly just and sound mind is a rare and invaluable gift. But it is still much more unusual to see such a mind unbiased in all its actings. God has given this soundness of mind to but few; and a very small number of those few escape the bias of some predilection, perhaps habitually operating; and none, at all times, are perfectly free. I once saw this subject forcibly illustrated. A watchmaker told me that a gentleman had put an exquisite watch into his hands, that went irregularly. It was as perfect a piece of work as ever was made. He took it to pieces, and put it together again, twenty times. No manner of defect was to be discovered; and yet the watch went badly. At last it struck him, that possibly the balance-wheel might have been near a magnet; on applying a needle to it, he

found his suspicions true: here was all the mischief. The steel works in the other parts of the watch had a perpetual influence on its motions; and the watch went as well as possible with a new wheel. If the soundest mind be *magnetized* by any predilection, it must act irregularly.

As to judging of your own character, do not forget that every man is almost sure to over-rate his own importance. Our friends flatter us much, and our own hearts still more. Our faults are not seen, or, if seen, passed over, or softened down, by both of these parties. The judgment of our enemies, though more severe upon us, is more likely to be correct. They at least open our eyes to defects, which we were in danger of never seeing. Another thing is to be noticed. The world praises you for this or that thing which you do. If, on examination, you find the motives of that action wrong and sinful, are you, then, judging correctly, if you estimate your character by their judgment? Many of our virtues are of a doubtful nature, and we are in danger of placing all such on the credit side of the ledger.

A military officer, of high character, told me, that he once sat down to weigh the principle of entire abstinence from ardent spirit, and to decide whether it was his duty, in his circumstances, to adopt it. He took a large sheet of paper, and began, by setting down, in regular order, all the reasons why the principle of entire abstinence ought *not* to prevail. The list was somewhat long and imposing. He felt pretty sure that he might safely take that side of the question. But to make it perfectly sure, he began to set down, on another page, the arguments on the other side. They soon began to grow and grow, till he was

astonished at their number and weight. They quickly out-numbered the opposing ones; and it did not at first strike his attention, that he had several put down against entire abstinence which belonged to the other side. These were shifted and altered, till, at last, with one dash of the pen, he blotted out the few that remained; and, though he has now forgotten the steps of the process, yet from that hour to this, he has never had a doubt upon the question. This is what I mean by cultivating soundness of judgment. The process may be slower than to jump to conclusions, but it is much more satisfactory, and will give you the habit of weighing and judging correctly.

12. *Treatment of parents, friends, and companions.*

I hope it will appear that I am not out of place in trying to lead you to make the proper treatment of friends a habit. Whether you intend it or not, it will become so. To those who are placed in a seminary or college, I would say remember that, when you are away from home, you are more likely to forget and neglect your parents, than they are to forget you. You are in new scenes, forming new acquaintances. They stay at home; they see your room, your clothes; walk over the rooms where your voice has been so often and so long heard. They follow you away; they miss you at the table, and speak of you; they let no day pass without speaking of you, and at night they send their thoughts away after you, and have a thousand anxieties about you, which nothing but your attentions can remove or alleviate.

You cannot act the part of a dutiful child, without daily sending your thoughts home. Write to friends often, and *at stated times.* Any cor-

respondence between friends is, in all respects, more valuable, interesting, useful, and pleasant to all parties, for being regular and at stated times. You then know when to write, and when to expect a letter, and there is no wondering why a letter does not come, and no chiding for negligence. Enter into no correspondence, unless it be on occasional business, which will not be so valuable that you wish to continue it; and then have periodical times of writing. To your parents, it should be at least once every month. In these letters, talk out your feelings in that easy, cheerful manner, that you would do were you at home, and entertaining the family circle in the vacation. Every son can show such attentions, and at the same time can keep his own heart warm with the remembrances of home and kindred. It will add to your ease in letter-writing, and it will cultivate some of the noblest and sweetest virtues of which the heart is susceptible.

I would say a few words on the choice and treatment of friends; and, as this subject is treated of by almost every writer, I shall be brief. You must have some, and will have some, with whom you are more intimate than with the rest of your companions. There are two special difficulties attending friendships: first, it is hard to acquire a real friend; and, secondly, it is still harder to keep him. The acquaintance, which is afterwards ripened into friendship, is, of course, in the first place, casual. And those who are first to extend the hand to embrace you, are seldom those whose friendship continues long. Be cautious in selecting your friends, and look long and well before you allow any one to say, that he is your bosom-companion, and that you share each other's thoughts and secrets. In selecting your

friends, you will remember that you will borrow habits, traits of character, modes of thought and expression, from each other; and, therefore, be careful to select those who have not excellences merely, but whose faults are as few as may be. Some rely too much upon friends, and think they will never pass away, and never change. Others, who have known, by experience, that friends may do both, will tell you that friendship is "but a name," and means nothing. Extremes are never in the right. There is much, both of wisdom and beauty, in the following remarks:—

"Sweet language will multiply friends, and a kindly-speaking tongue will multiply kind greetings. Be in peace with many: nevertheless, have but one counsellor in a thousand. If thou wouldst get a friend, prove him first, and be not hasty to credit him; for some man is a friend for his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of thy trouble. Separate thyself from thine enemies, and take heed to thy friends. A faithful friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found such a one, hath found a treasure. A faithful friend is the medicine of life. Forsake not an old friend, for the new is not comparable to him: a new friend is as new wine: when it is old, thou shalt drink it with pleasure. Whoso casteth a stone at the birds, frayeth them away, and he that upbraideth his friend breaketh friendships; for upbraiding, or pride, or disclosing of secrets, or a treacherous wound, every friend will depart."

No one can long be your friend for whom you have not a decided esteem—an esteem that will not permit you to trifle with his feelings, and which, of course, will prevent his trifling with yours. Great familiarity is inconsistent with any abiding friendship.

"The man who hails you Tom, or Jack,
And proves, by thumping on your back,
His sense of your great merit,
Is such a friend, that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed,
To pardon or to bear it."

You will soon be ashamed to love one for whom you have not a high esteem. Love will only follow esteem. In order to have or keep a friend, you must not have a particle of envy towards him, however exalted his character or merits. A beautiful writer says, "He who can once doubt whether he should rejoice in his friend's being happier than himself, may depend upon it, that he is an utter stranger to this virtue."

You will always observe that those friendships which are the purest, and the most abiding, are chosen for the good qualities of the heart, rather than for those of the head. I should be sorry to give the impression, that the finest qualities of the heart may not accompany the highest intellectual character; and I am satisfied that there is no good reason why they do not. But it has been shrewdly remarked, "I do not remember that Achates, who is represented as the first favourite, either gives his advice, or strikes a blow, through the whole Æneid."

Prudence is a prime quality in a friend; and zeal and noise are not always indicative of the greatest ability or desire to do you good. But in order to have a true friend, you must determine to be to him just what you wish him to be to you. While I would recommend every young man to commit to memory the whole of Cowper's beautiful description of "Friendship," I would particularly request him to keep the following sentiment uppermost:

"Who seeks a friend, should come disposed
To exhibit, in full bloom disclosed,
The graces and the beauties
That form the character he seeks;
For 'tis a union that bespeaks
Reciprocated duties."

A similarity of inclinations is by no means essential to a perfect and abiding friendship. We admire those traits of character which we do not ourselves possess. They are new to us, and we feel that from them we can supply our own defects.

Although it is considered one great duty of friendship to discover faults, and give reproofs, yet it is a dangerous duty. It must be done very delicately and kindly, and be sure not too frequently. I do not, on the whole, believe it is the appropriate business of a friend to discover faults and reprove you; but it is, to support you in high and noble pursuits, raising your spirits, and adding to your courage till you outdo yourself. Are those families the happiest, where every member is to be tried by a constant or frequent fault-finding? Far from it. If you wish your friend to do well, encourage him, sustain him when in trials or troubles. Cultivate your old friends: but you must seek new ones also; for our changes by removal and death are so frequent, that he who now makes no new friends will soon find himself without any. Need it be said, that a strict and unwavering regard for truth is absolutely essential to having friends? We do not wish to be associated with those whose veracity can, in the least, be suspected. "When speech is employed as the vehicle of falsehood, every man must disunite himself from others, inhabit his own cave, and seek prey only for himself," and in vain ask or seek for a friend.

I have dwelt somewhat on this point, but it is my wish that all my readers may have friends, select, disinterested friends; and I know that they cannot have them, unless they make it a part of their daily habits and business to cultivate their own hearts, and render themselves worthy of being beloved. The tree cannot live and thrive without great care; but if it receive that care, it will bear fruit abundantly for many years. How often has the heart of my reader thrilled at the warm greetings of one who said, "Your father and I were friends!" Friendship can lessen no joy by having a sharer. It brightens every one. At the same time, it diminishes sorrow in every shape, by dividing the burden.

"Hast thou a friend?—thou hast indeed
A rich and large supply—
Treasure to serve your every need,
Well managed, till you die."

CHAPTER III.

ON STUDY.

It seems to be an easy affair to study. There is the room, and there the books, and there the lesson: what more do you want? You want to know how to go to work—*how to study*. The interruptions to study, even when the student has nothing else to do, not a care, not a burden of any kind to trouble him, are numerous and vexatious. Deductions must be made for ill health, and seasons when the spirits droop, and when there is a total disrelish for study, and a want of courage, by which the mind can be brought up to action; for a total ignorance of the best methods of studying; for the time wasted in reading useless books; and, above all, for that natural, inherent indolence, which recoils from the task of rebuking the wandering of the thoughts, and bringing them back to their prescribed tasks. You must make up your mind that no one can go on in a course of study without interruptions from within and from without. Calculate upon this. And it is well that it is so; for, in real life, if you can get two full hours in a week without interruption, you may think it extraordinary. The mind must form the habit of being checked and interrupted, and of bringing

itself back to the point from which it was taken off, and at once pursuing the train of mental operations in which it was engaged. Till this power is obtained, you are not prepared for active life; and in proportion as it is acquired, in that proportion small hinderances appear to you of little consequence. I propose to make some suggestions in the form of hints in relation to study, not so much regarding the order of their introduction, as endeavouring not to omit any that are of real importance.

1. *The number of hours of daily study.*

No fixed time can be marked out for all. This must vary with the constitution of each individual. A mind that moves slowly requires, and will bear, more time for study. In my view, it is vastly better to chain the attention down closely, and to study hard, a few hours, than to try to keep it moderately fixed and engaged for a greater length of time. He who would study six hours a day, with all the attention of which the mind is capable, may expect that he will stand high in his calling. But mark me—it must be study as intense as the mind will bear. The attention must all be absorbed; the thoughts must all be brought in, and turned upon the object of study, as you would turn the collected rays of the sun into the focus of the glass, when you wish to get fire from those rays. Do not call miscellaneous reading, or anything which you do by way of relief or amusement, study; it is not study. Be sure to get as much of your study in the morning as possible. The mind is then in good order.

2. *Have regard to the positions of the body while engaged in study.*

Some men from early life habituate themselves to study, sitting at a low, flat table. This ought

to be avoided; for, as you advance in life, that part of the body which is between the shoulders and hips, becomes more and more feeble, and consequently the stooping habit is acquired. Few literary men walk or sit perfectly erect. Standing is undoubtedly the best method of study, if you will only begin in this way. In writing, in the study of languages, and most kinds of mathematics, you must be confined to one spot. If you can change positions, and stand a part, and sit a part of the time, it will be well; but the former should preponderate. As you advance in life, you will naturally sit more and more, till the habit becomes fixed. Few men are seen standing at their books after forty years of age. If you are composing, or reading, or committing to memory, this position is a desirable one. Be sure you have your table high enough, and keep clear of the easy-chair, with a writing leaf on the arm of it. Sitting in such a position gives the body a twisting position, which leads to bad health, and not unfrequently to the grave. If possible, so place your table, the top of which should slope a little, that the light may fall upon you from behind. This will be a kindness to the eyes. In the evening, it is well to have the lamp shaded, or to have a shade drawn over the eyes. I would hope, however, that you keep any prescribed lessons you may have, so much in advance, that the necessity of putting your eyes to a severe trial will be avoided. If your eyes are weak, be careful that a glare of light does not fall upon them; and be sure to wash them in cold water the last thing at night, and the first in the morning. In the choice of positions, the great desideratum is, to keep the body as upright as possible. A bending at the chest is by all

means to be avoided. Your dress, even to the slipper, should sit as loosely as possible; and your body, which is now to stand still, and in which the mind is to labour, should be as easy as it can be, without assuming a position which, by long habit, will court the embrace of sleep.

3. *Be thorough in your study.*

Passing over a field of study has been graphically compared to conquering a country. If you thoroughly conquer everything you meet, you will pass on from victory to victory; but if you leave here and there a fort and a garrison not subdued, you will have an army hanging on your rear, and your ground will soon need reconquering.

There is such a constant mortification and loss of self-respect attending the habit of going upon the surface, that, were it only for personal comfort, you should be thorough. At the first setting out, your progress will be slow—perhaps very slow; but, in the long race before you, you will be the gainer. How often have I seen a man, with a mind originally bright, chagrined and humbled at his want of accuracy! He makes an assertion, and calls it a quotation from some distinguished author. "Does not Burke say so, and advocate that sentiment?" "I never understood him so," says an accurate listener. He now begins to hesitate, apologises, says it is a great while since he read Burke, but such is his impression. Has he not fallen in the estimation of every one present, and in his own also? And yet, such is the habit fixed upon him, that he will go and again tread over the same ground with hesitating steps.

How much better is knowledge—something that you know—than any amount of conjecture,

formed somewhere in the region of knowledge! One lesson, or one book, perfectly and thoroughly understood, would do you more good than ten lessons, or ten books, not half studied.

When you have a mind to improve a single thought, or to be clear in any particular point, do not leave it till you are master of it. View it in every light. Try how many ways you can express it, and which is shortest and best. Would you enlarge upon it, hunt it down from author to author; some of whom will suggest hints concerning it, which, perhaps, never occurred to you before; and give every circumstance its weight. Thus, by being master of every subject as you proceed, though you make but a small progress in the number of books which you study, you will make a speedy one in useful knowledge. To leave matters undetermined, and the mind unsatisfied in what we study, is but to multiply half-notions and introduce confusion, and is the way to make a pedant, but not a scholar.

4. *Expect to become familiar with hard study.*

Study, which is hard for one man, is easy for another. Not only so, but the study which is easy to you to-day, may be intolerably irksome at another time. This is owing to the difficulty of confining the attention closely. The health being the same, study would at all times be equally agreeable, had we the same command over the attention. But who, that has tried it, does not know how much easier it is to study on a cold, stormy day in winter, when everything without is repulsive, than on the warm, bright day of spring, when all nature seems to invite you out, and when the soul seems to disdain and rebel against the restraints of study? You must make your calculations to study many hours, and at many

seasons, when it is disagreeable; when the mind feels feeble, and the body is languid, or is even in pain. "Other things may be seized on by might, or purchased with money; but knowledge is to be gained only by study."

So great is the advantage of being able to confine the attention, that some persons who have by a dispensation of Providence lost their sight, have felt willing to exchange all that is beautiful, lovely, and cheering, which the eye receives, for the increased power over the attention which this loss gave them. The truly great president Dwight used to consider the loss of his eyes a great blessing to him, inasmuch as it strengthened the power of attention, and compelled him to think. So important is the power of attention, that you may point to distinguished men, and say, that "this and that man was not celebrated for scholarship, or anything else in his younger days. He had no appointment in college; no rank as a scholar." Not unlikely. But be sure of one thing; and that is, he never became distinguished without, at some time or other, passing through a severe course of dry, hard study. He might have omitted this when young; but, if so, the task was harder when he did undertake to perform it. But undertake it he must, and he did.

Under this head, I would add, that he who expects to discipline his mind by hard study, and to build up the mind by the habit of severe thinking, will not be the individual to quarrel with what he studies. How often do we hear students complaining that they are put to studies which can be of no possible use to them in after life! One is to be a merchant: why should he be drilled in Latin and Greek for years? Another

is to study medicine; and why should he be poring over conic sections for months? Multitudes complain that their instructors understand their business so poorly, that the very things for which they will never have any use, are forced upon them as studies! Little do such complainers understand the object of education. Keep it in mind, that the great object of study is to fit the mind to be an instrument of usefulness in life. You are now upon a dry, hard, uninteresting study. It contains not a single thing which you can ever use hereafter. Be it so. But if you can compel your mind to take hold of and master that dry, hard, uninteresting study, you are fitting it to obey you through life, and at any time to do what you bid it do. It will be time enough to study such things as you propose to use, when you have your mind fitted to master them, and when they are needed.

You study geometry to-day. Perhaps your life may be so busy, and your time so occupied hereafter, that you may forget every proposition, and nothing but the name of the book may remain to you. But Plato, and every other man who has studied geometry, will tell you that it will strengthen your mind, and enable you to think with precision. Geography and chronology are not now needed, but will soon be, in order to trace philosophy through all her branches, in order to acquire a distinct and accurate idea of history, and to judge of the propriety of the allusions and comparisons every where meeting you in the works of genius. Philosophy seems to open the mind, and to give it eyes, like the wings of the cherubim in Ezekiel's vision, within and without. It subjects nature to our command, and carries our conceptions up to the

Creator. The mind is liberalized by every such study, and without these it can never become really great or tasteful.

Press onward in a steady course of daily application. A beautiful writer says, "The most usual way, among young men who have no resolution of their own, is, first to ask one friend's advice, and follow it for some time; then to ask advice of another, and turn to that; so of a third: still unsteady, always changing. However, be assured that every change of this nature is for the worse. People may tell you of your being unfit for some peculiar occupations in life; but heed them not. Whatever employment you follow with perseverance and assiduity, will be found fit for you. In learning the useful part of every profession, very moderate abilities will suffice; even if the mind be rather slow of comprehension, it may, in this case, be useful. Great abilities have always been less serviceable to the possessors than moderate ones. Life has been compared to a race; but the allusion still improves, by observing that the most swift are ever the least manageable."

We are in great danger of being willing to excuse ourselves from severe study, under the idea that our circumstances are not favourable. We are apt to fall in with the common notion that men are made by circumstances; that they are called forth, and their characters are thus formed; and that almost every man would be great, and decided, and effective, were he only sufficiently hedged in and pressed by circumstances. There can be no doubt that men are naturally and practically indolent, and that they need powerful stimulants and a heavy pressure to awaken their powers, and call forth exertions.

We know that most men accomplish but very little. But would they, under any circumstances? Might not the tables be turned, and might we not with as great propriety say, and perhaps with equal truth, that men make circumstances? Look at John Milton. What was there in his circumstances to press him into greatness? Shut out from the light of heaven by blindness, most, in his situation, would have thought that they did well, could they have sung a few tunes, and earned their bread by making baskets. But Milton has thrown a glory over his age, and nation, and language. But the cry is, "We have no favourable circumstances, no opportunities, no tools; we can do nothing." Can do nothing! Hear what a master-spirit says on this point:

"If a man really loves study, has an eager attachment to the acquisition of knowledge, nothing but peculiar sickness or misfortunes will prevent his being a student, and his possessing, in some good degree, the means of study. The fact is, that when men complain of want of time for study, and want of means, they only show that, after all, they are either attached to some other object of pursuit, or have nothing of the spirit of a student. They will applaud others, it may be, who do study, and look with a kind of wonder upon their acquisitions; but, for themselves, they cannot spare the time nor expense necessary to make such acquisitions; or, they put it to the account of their humility, and congratulate themselves that they are not ambitious. In most of all these cases, however, either the love of the world or genuine laziness lies at the bottom. Had they more energy and decision of character, and did they redeem the precious moments, which they now lose in laboriously

doing nothing, or nothing to the purpose of the church, they might open all the treasures of the east and the west, and have them at their disposal. I might safely promise a good knowledge of Hebrew and Greek to most men of this sort, if they would diligently improve the time that they now absolutely throw away in the course of three or four years. While one man is deliberating whether he had better study a language, another has obtained it. Such is the difference between decisive, energetic action, and a timid, hesitating, indolent manner of pursuing literary acquisitions. And what is worst of all, in this temporizing class of students, is, that if you reason with them, and convince them that they are pursuing a wrong course, that conviction operates no longer than until the next paroxysm of indolence, or of a worldly spirit, comes on. These syren charmers lull every energetic power of the mind to sleep. The mistaken man, who listens to their voice, finds himself, at the age of forty, just where he was at thirty. At fifty, his decline has already begun. At sixty, he is universally regarded with indifference, which he usually repays with misanthropy. And if he has the misfortune to live until he is seventy, there is danger of every body being uneasy because he is not transferred to a better world."*

5. *Remember that the great secret of being successful and accurate as a student, next to perseverance, is,* THE CONSTANT HABIT OF REVIEWING.†

I have already spoken of the memory. I would here say a word as to its use in your

* Professor Stuart.

† That is, the habit of recalling to mind what you have acquired, not of writing reviews! —Ed.

definite studies. Have you never tried to banish a thought, or a train of thought, from your memory, and could not? Have you never tried to recall some idea, or some train of thought, and the more you tried, the more you seemed to forget it? The reason is, that the memory loves freedom, and disdains to be forced. The correct path, then, in which to tread, is to cultivate the memory as much as possible, without weakening it by restraint. It loves to try its powers spontaneously. Little children will frequently learn a long list of Latin or Greek words, without designing it, merely by hearing others repeat them. Those who have been most successful in fixing language in the memory, have uniformly done it by repeated readings of the thing to be retained. In committing grammar, for example, to memory, you should not attempt to confine the mind to it too long at a time, but bend the whole attention to it while you do study, and repeat the process often: repeat the lesson aloud, that it may come to the mind through the ear, as well as through the eyes, and then use the pen, and, laying aside the book, write it all out. In this process, you use the eyes, the ears, and you also give the mind an opportunity to dwell upon every letter, and syllable, and sound. This will be slow at first, but it will do the thing effectually; it will make you thoroughly master of the subject, and thus will soon give you courage. No new encounters will, in the least, appal you

The great difficulty in committing grammar, consists in the similarity of the words and things that are brought together. Similarity confuses the mind. If you were to go into a jeweller's shop, and see a case containing twenty watches, though each had a different name, yet, the next

day you could not tell one from another. But, suppose you go for five days in succession, and examine four watches each day. The jeweller carefully points out the difference. This is a common watch; he shows you its mechanism, and all its parts. This is a patent lever; he shows you how it differs from the former. The third is a lepine; its parts are very different still. The next is a chronometer, and differs widely from any you have yet seen. He tells you the properties of each one, and compares them together. The second day you review and recall all that he told you, and you fix the name, the character, and the properties of each in the memory. You then proceed to the second four. You go through the same process, every day reviewing what you learned on the preceding day. At the end of five days, you can repeat from memory the names and powers of each watch, though, before the process, all you could remember was, that their number was twenty, and that they stood in five different rows. Now, study the grammar with the same precision, and in the same manner, and the memory will not complain that she is confused, and cannot retain what you ask her to keep.

The indefatigable Wyttenbach (and few could speak more decidedly from experience) says, that the practice of reviewing will have "an incredible effect in assisting your progress;" but he adds, "it must be a real and thorough review; that is, it must be again and again repeated. What I mean is this: that every day the task of the preceding day should be reviewed; at the end of every week, the task of the week; at the end of every month, the studies of the month; in addition to which, this whole course should be gone over again and again during the vacation." Again,

this great scholar tells his pupils, "You will not fail to devote one hour, or part of an hour, at least, every day, to these studies, on the same plan which you have followed under me; for there is no business, no avocation whatever, which will not permit a man, who has an *inclination*, to give a little time every day to the studies of his youth." I would add, that one quarter of an hour, every day, devoted to reviewing, will not only keep all that a man has ever gone over fresh in mind, but advance him in classical study. And no man can hope to become a thorough scholar, who does not first fix this habit upon himself. It will be irksome at first, but only at first. "In reading and studying this work, the 'Memorabilia of Xenophon,' I made it a rule never to begin a section without re-perusing the preceding one, nor a chapter, nor book, without going over the preceding chapter and book a second time; and finally, after having finished the work in that manner, I again read the whole in course. This was a labour of almost three months; but such constant repetition proved most beneficial to me. The effect of repetition seemed to be, that when I proceeded from a section or a chapter which I had read twice, to a new one, I acquired an impulse which bore me along through all opposing obstacles; like a vessel, to use Cicero's comparison in a similar case, which, having once received an impulse from the oar, continues her course even after the mariners have suspended their operations to propel her."

How very different this from the practice of too many! That part of the path over which they have passed, is covered with a thick fog, and they look back, and can see nothing but the fog. They look forward, and the atmosphere is, if possible,

still more dim. The road seems long, and they are constantly in doubt where they are. Any one may travel in a fog, but with no comfort or certainty at the time, and with no impression upon the memory to recall at some future time.

6. *Learn to rest the mind by variety in your studies, rather than by entire cessation from study.*

Few can confine the mind down to severe thought, or to one study, long at a time, and therefore most, when they relax, throw the thoughts loose, and do not try to save them. You are studying Homer, or algebra, for example. You apply yourself some two or three hours at a time. Your body becomes weary, and the mind is jaded. You stop, and throw aside your books, and rest, perhaps, quite as long as you have been studying. Now, all this time is lost, or nearly so. You forget that the mind is as much refreshed by *variety* as by *idleness*. When you lay aside your algebra, take up your Livy or Tacitus, and you will be surprised to find that it is a refreshment, as you review your last lesson. Or make minutes in your common-place book of what you last read; or turn your thoughts, and ponder over the subject of your next composition. You may save a vast amount of time in this way.

We wonder that sixteen hours a day could be devoted to study by our fathers and the Germans of the present day. No man could do so, were it not that, after pursuing one study till the mind becomes weary, they then turn to another, by which the mind is relieved, and at once becomes buoyant. This is the difference between him who loses no time, and him who loses very much. The men who accomplish so much in life are those who adopt this plan. This will account for the fact, that the same man will not unfre-

quently hold several offices which require talents and efforts seemingly incompatible with each other, and yet promptly execute the duties of all. He is thus continually busy and continually resting.

In this way the justly distinguished Dr. Good, long before he was forty years old, amidst the incessant and anxious duties of a laborious profession, had gained prizes by writing essays; had mastered at least eleven different languages; had aided in making a Universal Dictionary in twelve volumes; had written his celebrated "Study of Medicine;" and was constantly writing and translating poetry. His "Book of Nature" will give the reader some notion of the variety and the accuracy of his attainments. Instead of being thrown into confusion by such a variety and pressure of occupations, he carried them all forward simultaneously, and suffered none to be neglected, or but half executed. Dr. Clarke said, "The old adage of 'Too many irons in the fire,' is a great mistake. You cannot have too many; poker, tongs, and all; keep them all going." This habit of keeping the mind employed, will soon destroy the common habit of reverie. The mind will be too busy for reverie; and then, even if it gains nothing by change of occupations, by way of acquisition, it gains the satisfaction that she is not wandering off on forbidden ground.

CHAPTER IV.

ON READING.

All distinguished men have been given to the habit of careful reading; and it is utterly impossible to arrive at any tolerable degree of distinction without this habit. "Reading," says Bacon, "makes a full man; conversation, a ready man; writing, an exact man." That which he means by "full" can never be attained, except by an extensive and thorough acquaintance with books. No genius, no power of inventing and creating thoughts, can ever supply a deficiency in this respect. The mightiest mind that was ever created, could, perhaps, here and there, strike out a road; but who would wish it to spend itself in beating about to discover a path, or even to make it, when the united minds of the generations who have gone before us, have done this for him? In order to have a judgment sound and correct, you must travel through the history of other times, and be able to compare the present with the past. To have the mind vigorous, you must refresh it, and strengthen it, by a continued contact with the mighty dead who have gone away, but left their imperishable thoughts behind them. We want to have the mind continually expanding, and creating new

thoughts, or at least feeding itself upon manly thoughts. What the food is to the blood, which circulates through your veins, that reading is to the mind; and the man who does not devote himself to reading, may despair of ever doing much in the world of mind. You can no more be the "full man" whom Bacon describes, without reading, than you can be vigorous and healthy without fresh nourishment. It would be no more reasonable to expect it, than to suppose that the Mississippi might roll on its flood of water to the ocean, though all its tributary streams were cut off, and it were replenished only by the occasional drops from the clouds.

Some read works of the imagination, or what is called the light literature of the day, while that which embraces solid thought is irksome. Young people are apt—and to this students are continually tempted—to read only for amusement.

The object of reading may be divided into several branches. The student reads for relaxation from more severe studies; he is thus refreshed, and his spirits are revived. He reads facts in the history and experience of mankind, and sees how they lived and acted under different circumstances. From these facts he draws conclusions; his views are enlarged, his judgment corrected, and the experience of former ages, and of all times, becomes his own. He reads chiefly, probably, for information; to store up knowledge for future use; and he wishes to classify and arrange it, that it may be ready at his call. He reads also for the sake of style—to learn how a strong, nervous, beautiful writer expresses himself.

It is obvious, that, in attaining any of these ends, except, perhaps, that of amusement,

reading should be performed *slowly or deliberately.* You will usually find that those who read a great multitude of books, have but little knowledge that is of any value. A large library has justly been denominated a learned luxury. Rapid readers generally are very desultory; and a man may read much, and know but very little. The hasty reader and the true scholar are two very different characters. One who has a deep insight into the nature of man, said that he never felt afraid to meet a man in any discussion who had a large library. It is the man who has perhaps only few books, but who thinks much, whose mind is the best furnished for intellectual operations. It will not be pretended, however, that there are not many exceptions to this remark. But, with a student, in the morning of life, there are no exceptions. If he would improve by his reading, it must be very deliberate. Can a stomach receive any amount or kind of food, hastily thrown into it, and digest it, and from it extract nourishment for the body? Not for any length of time. Neither can the mind receive and profit by that which is rapidly brought before it.

It is by no means certain that the ancients had not a great compensation for the fewness of their books, in the thoroughness with which they were compelled to study them. A book was then copied with the pen, to be owned; and he who transcribed a book for the sake of owning it, would be likely to understand it. Before the art of printing, books were so scarce, that ambassadors were sent from France to Rome, to beg a copy of Cicero de Oratore, and Quintilian's Institutes, etc., because a complete copy of these works was not to be found in all France. Albert,

abbot of Gemblours, with incredible labour and expense, collected a library of one hundred and fifty volumes, including every thing; and this was considered a wonder indeed. In 1494, the library of the bishop of Winchester contained parts of seventeen books on various subjects; and, on his borrowing a Bible from the convent of St. Swithin, he had to give a heavy bond, drawn up with great solemnity, that he would return it uninjured.

When a book was purchased, it was an affair of such consequence, that persons of distinction were called together as witnesses. Previously to the year 1300, the library of Oxford consisted only of a few tracts, which were carefully locked up in a small chest, or else chained, lest they should escape; and at the commencement of the fourteenth century, the royal library of France contained only four classics, with a few devotional works.

It was probably no better in earlier times. Knowledge was scattered to the four winds, and truth was hidden in a well. Lycurgus and Pythagoras were obliged to travel into Egypt, Persia, and India, in order to understand the doctrine of the metempsychosis. Solon and Plato had to go to Egypt for what they knew. Herodotus and Strabo were obliged to travel to collect their history, and to construct their geography as they travelled. Few men pretended to own a library, and he was accounted truly favoured who owned half a dozen volumes. And yet, with all this scarcity of books, there were in those days scholars who greatly surpassed us. We cannot write poetry like Homer, nor history like Thucydides. We have not the pen which Aristotle and Plato held, nor the

eloquence with which Demosthenes thrilled the hearts of his countrymen. They surpassed us in painting and in sculpture. Their books were but few. But those were very often and carefully read. Their own resources were tasked to the utmost, and he who could not draw from his own fountain, in vain sought for neighbours from whose wells he could borrow. How very different with us! We read without measure, and almost without profit. It is a good maxim, in regard to your reading, "*Non multa, sed multum;*" "Not many, but much."

Beware of bad books. Some men have employed their powers in writing what will continue to pollute and destroy for generations after they are gone. The world is flooded with such books. They are permitted to lie in our pathway as a part of our moral discipline. Under the moral government of God, while in this state of probation, we are to be surrounded with temptations of every kind. And never does the spirit of darkness rejoice more, than when a gifted mind can prostitute itself, not merely to revel in sin itself, but to adorn and conceal a path which is full of holes, through which you may drop into the chambers of death. Books could be named, were it not that there is a possibility that even the information conveyed in naming them might be perverted and used to obtain them, which, seemingly, could not be excelled by all the talents in hell, if the object were to pollute and to ruin. These are to be found everywhere. I do entreat my young readers never to look at one, never to open one. They will leave a stain upon the soul which can never be removed.

What shall be said of such works as those of Byron? May not a young man read those? Can

he not learn things from him which cannot be learned elsewhere? I reply, Yes, just as you would learn, while treading on burning lava, what could not be learned elsewhere. But would the knowledge thus obtained be worth the agony of the fire, and the scars which would remain through life? It is breathing the air which comes up from a heated furnace; and though you may see a brightness and a glow in that furnace, as you gaze into it, yet you will feel the ill effects of what you breathe a long time. There are many bright spots in such writings; but while one ray of light is thrown upon the mind, it must find its way through volumes of Egyptian darkness. There are beautiful pearls in the slimy bottom of the ocean, but they are found only here and there; and would you feel it worth your while to dive after them, if there were many probabilities that you would stick and die in the mud in which they are imbedded; or, if not, that you would certainly shorten and embitter life, in the process of diving and obtaining them?

Would you thank a man for fitting up your study, and adorning it with much that is beautiful, if, at the same time, he filled it with images and objects of the most disgusting and awful description, which were to abide there all your life? Is he a benefactor to society, who, here and there, throws out a beautiful thought, or a poetic image, but, as you stoop to pick it up, chains upon you a putrid carcass which you can never throw off? I believe a single page may be selected from Byron, which has done more hurt to the mind and the heart of the young than all his writings have ever done good. But he will quickly pass from notice, and is doomed to be exiled from the libraries of all virtuous men. It

is a blessing to the world, that what is putrid must soon pass away. The carcass hung in chains will be gazed at for a short time in horror; but men will soon turn their eyes away, and remove even the gallows on which it swung.

"But," say you, "has the writer ever read Byron and Moore, Hume and Paine, Scott, Bulwer, and Cooper?" Yes, he has read them all, and with too much care. He knows every rock and every quicksand; and he solemnly declares to you, that the only good which he is conscious of ever having received from them is, a deep impression that men who possess talents of such compass and power, and so perverted in their application, must meet the day of judgment under a responsibility which would be cheaply removed by the price of a world. Those who wrote to undermine or to crush the belief of the Christian; those who wrote to show how they could revel in passion, and pour out their living scorn upon their species; and those who wasted life and gigantic powers merely to amuse men; have come infinitely short of answering the great end of existence on earth. Talents and influence were given for purposes widely different.

But is it not necessary to read works of this kind, especially those that are designed to amuse and awaken the interest of the reader? There is no more necessity than there is to be acquainted with all the variety of dishes with which the palate may be pleased, and the body stimulated, and the stomach weakened. Were these the only books in the world, the case would be different. But who does not know that those who are given to reading works of fiction, leave a mass of most valuable and solid reading untouched and unknown? When you have read and digested all

that is really valuable, and which is comprised in what describes the history of man in all lights in which he has actually been placed, then betake yourself to works of imagination.

How shall you know what to read? A very important question; for some books will positively injure, if they do not destroy you. Others will have no positive good effect; and from all, a tincture, like that left upon the mind by the company you keep, will be left. Do not expect to read all, or even a small part of what comes out, and is recommended, too, in this age of books. You take up a book, and read a chapter. How shall you know whether it is worth your reading, without reading it through? In the same way that you would know whether a cask of wine is good. If you draw one glass, or two, and find the wine stale and unpleasant, do you need to drink off the whole cask, to decide that you do not want it? "I have somewhat else to do, in the short day allotted me, than to read whatever any one may think it his duty to write. When I read, I wish to read to good purpose; and there are some books which contradict, on the very face of them, what appear to me to be first principles. You surely will not say, 'I am bound to read such books.' If a man tells me he has a very elaborate argument to prove that two and two make five, I have something else to do than to attend to his argument." But there is a shorter route, and one every way still more safe; and that is, to treat books as you do medicines; have nothing to do with them till others have tried them, and can testify to their worth. There are always what are denominated standard works at hand, and about which there can be neither doubt nor mistake. You cannot read everything;

and if you could, you would be none the wiser. The lumber would bury and destroy all the valuable materials which you were laying up. Never feel any obligation to read a trifling author, or one whose thoughts are spread out like gold-leaf over a wide surface, quite through, in hopes of finding something better as you proceed. You will be disappointed. An author may reserve some of his happiest thoughts for the close of his book; but he has great poverty of intellect if he makes you travel over a long, sandy road, without any spots that are refreshing. Leave such books; you will find better.

How shall you begin to read a book? Always look into your dish and taste it, before you begin to eat. As you sit down, examine the title-page; see who wrote the book; where he lives; do you know anything of the author? Where, and by whom published? Do you know anything of the general character of the books published by this publisher? Recollect what you have heard about this book. Then read the preface, to see what kind of a bow the author makes, and what he thinks of himself and his work; why he has the boldness to challenge the public to hear him. Then turn to the contents, see what are the great divisions of his subject, and thus get a glance of his general plan. Then take a single chapter or section, and see how he has divided and filled that up. If, now, you wish to taste of the dish before further examination of the contents, then turn to the place where some important subject is discussed, and see how it is treated. If, after some few such trials, you should find your author obscure, dull, pedantic, or shallow, you need not longer fish in these waters. It will be hard to catch fish here, and, when caught, they will be

too small for use. But if you find the author valuable, and worth your attention, then go back to the contents. Examine them chapter by chapter; then close the book, and see if you have the plan of the whole work distinctly and fully in your mind. Do not proceed till this is done. After you have this map all distinctly drawn in the mind, then get the first chapter vividly before you, so far as the contents will enable you to do it. Now proceed to read. At the close of each sentence, ask, "Do I understand that? Is it true, important, or to the point? Is there anything valuable there which I ought to retain?" At the close of each paragraph, ask the same questions. Leave no paragraph till you have the substance of it in your mind. Proceed in this manner through the chapter; and, at the close of the chapter, look back, and see what the author tried to accomplish by it, and what he really has accomplished. As you proceed, if the book be your own, or if the owner will allow you to do it, mark with your pencil, in the margin, what, according to your view, is the character of each paragraph, or of this or that sentence. To illustrate what I mean, I will mention a few marks which I have found very useful to myself: these, or anything similar, will answer the end.

‖ Signifies, that this paragraph contains the main, or one of the main propositions to be proved or illustrated in this chapter; the staple, or one of the staples, on which the chain hangs.

< This sentiment is true, and will bear expanding, and will open a field indefinite in extent.

⊱	This, if carried out, would not stand the test of experience, and is therefore incorrect.
?	Doubtful as to sentiment.
? !	Doubtful in point of fact.
S	Good, and facts will only strengthen the position.
∽	Bad; facts will not uphold it.
ϕ	Irrelevant to the subject; had better have been omitted.
θ	Repetition; the author is moving in a circle.
∩	Not inserted in the right place.
O	In good taste.
Θ	In bad taste.

Such marks may be increased at pleasure. I have found the above sufficient. These need not be adopted, as each one can invent some for himself; but care should be taken always to make the same mark mean the same thing. But will not this method of reading be slow? Yes, very slow, and very valuable. A single book read in this way, will be worth a score run over. It will compel you to think as well as read, to judge, to discriminate, to sift out the wheat from the chaff. It will make a thought your own, and will so fix it in the mind, that it will probably be at your command at any future time. The first thing to be done, in order to make what you read your own, is to think while you read; and think when you have closed the book.

It is also very important to talk over the subject upon which you are reading, with a friend. Be candid enough to tell him that you have just been reading, so that he may know that you do

not claim what you have as your own. If the circle embrace several who really wish to fix what they read in the mind by conversation, so much the better.

> "Thought, too, delivered, is the more possessed;
> Teaching, we learn, and giving, we receive."

If your friend is reading the same book, or if one is reading to the other, the advantages of conversation will be still greatly increased.

No small part of the time should be spent in *reviewing* what you have read. The most eminent scholars think that one-fourth of the time spent in reading should be thus spent. I believe the estimate is not too great. But is it not evident, that, if you read with the marginal marks made by the pencil in your hand, as described above, you can review the author, and your own judgment too, in a very short time? One glance of the eye will show you what is the character of each paragraph. You will see just where the fish is, and what it is, and at once you can put your hook in and take it out.

There is another very important thing to be attended to in reading. I mean *classification.* We need a power, which, in the present state of our existence, we do not possess, a power of keeping all that ever passes through our mind which is worth keeping.

We cannot write out, or copy, what we read. We can remember but a very small part of it. What shall we do? For one, I have been in the habit of making an *Index Rerum* of my reading. The book is so classified, that in a single moment I can refer to anything which I have ever read, and tell where it is found, the book and the page. It saves the labour of a common-place book, and yet preserves all that can be preserved. This plan

pursued for a few years, will give you an index of inestimable value. A single year will convince you that you cannot afford to lose its benefits.*

What shall be said of the newspapers and magazines with which we are flooded? Few things weaken the mind of the student more than light, miscellaneous reading. You find it the fashion to have read a world of reviews, magazines, and papers. They are not written with the expectation of being remembered. And after you have spent hours over them, it is very doubtful whether you have done anything more than crowd the mind with vague images and impressions, which decidedly weaken the memory. Every time you crowd into the memory what you do not expect it to retain, you weaken its powers, and you lose your authority to command its services. The fewer of such things the student reads the better.

There is another very important point to be kept in mind; and it is, that, in reading, you should always have your pen by you, not merely to make a minute in your index, but to save the thoughts which are started in your own mind. Did you ever notice, that while reading, your own mind is so put into operation, that it strikes out new and bold trains of thinking, trains that are

* It is a folio post, ruled and lettered, for the reception of the hints that occur to the reader. For example, suppose you were reading Lowth's Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, and that you believe that his remarks upon the character of the book of Job might be hereafter referred to with advantage, you turn to your Index, and under the letter J. you write:

JOB.—The book investigated—Lowth's Heb. Poet. Lect. 33 and 34.

Or, if in reading any article, you should feel that the notice of a good work is deserving remembrance, you write:

INDEX.—Notice of—Review, May 2, 1820. Mem. to purchase a copy.

By this habit, the drudgery of a common-place book is saved; one is spared the trouble of copying the whole of the article of which remembrance is desired.

worth preserving, and such as will be scattered to the winds, if not penned down at the moment of their creation? A wise man will be as careful to save that property which he himself makes, as that which he inherits. The student should be; for it will be of vastly more value to him.

I cannot close this subject without saying what seem to me to be the three great objects of reading.

1. *Reading forms your style.*

It is impossible to bring your mind, for any length of time, under the influence of another mind, without having your language and modes of thinking influenced by that mind. Suppose you wish to write in an elevated, measured, and dignified style, could you easily avoid doing it, were you first to sit down a month and read Johnson's works? If you wish to write in a style pure, simple, Saxon, read John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress through some half a dozen times, and you will write thus. Could you walk arm in arm with a man for days together without catching his step and gait? It is a law of nature that our minds insensibly imbibe a colouring from those with whom we associate, whether they are brought in contact by the living voice or on the written page. Hence the great importance of reading good authors; those who, in all respects, make a good impression upon you. Books probably do more than all other things to form the intellectual and moral habits of the student. A single bad book will frequently give a tone and a bias to the mind, both as to thought and language, which will last during life. Hear the testimony of the late distinguished President Porter. "If I may be allowed here to speak of my own experience as a theological student, I would say, that to Edwards on the Will, which I read at three

several times before I entered the ministry, besides frequent reviews of it since, I am more indebted than to all other human productions. The aid which it gave was to me invaluable."

A lady, who now and then writes in rhyme, informed me that she first discovered that she possessed any of the rhyming powers, after having made a business, for some time, of copying the poetry of others. Owing to this insensible, undesigned, and certain imitation, such writers as Addison are always recommended to the young. Be as careful, then, not to read what would vitiate your style, as you would be not to keep company with those who would corrupt your manners.

2. *Reading stocks the mind with knowledge.*

This is the grand object of reading. We come into the world ignorant of everything. The history, the experience of other men and other generations, can become ours only by reading. Human nature, in all ages, is the same. The laws of mind and of matter do not alter; and thus we can, in a short life, know as much, and judge as accurately, by the use of books, as we could by living for centuries, having no light to guide us, except that of our own individual experience. He who would be compelled to go across the Atlantic to obtain a narration of facts which can be read in two hours, would need the years of the antediluvians, and then die a very ignorant man. "Without books," says the quaint, but enthusiastic Bartholin, "God is silent, justice dormant, physic (natural science) at a stand, philosophy lame, letters dumb, and all things involved in Cimmerian darkness."

You must not only read, and make books the fountain from which you draw your knowledge, but you must expect to draw from this fountain

through life. What you read to-day will soon be gone, expended, or forgotten; and the mind must be continually filled up with new streams of knowledge. Even the ocean would be dried up, were the streams to be cut off, which are constantly flowing into it. How few read enough to stock their minds! It is the "hand of the diligent which maketh rich."

3. *Reading stimulates and puts your own mental energies into operation.*

You cannot read a good book properly without being stimulated. He who knows how to read to advantage, will ever have something as applicable to his mental powers, as electricity is to move the animal system. The man who has traced the workings of a powerful mind, as exhibited on the written page, without being excited, moved, and made to feel that he can do something, and will do something, has yet to learn one of the highest pleasures of the student's life, and is yet ignorant of what rivers of delight are flowing around him through all the journey of life.

I close by repeating, do not read too many books; read thoroughly what you undertake. Buy but few books; and never buy till you can pay for what you buy. You cannot more than half enjoy anything for which you are in debt. Make all that you do read your own; and you will soon be rich in intellectual wealth, and ever be making valuable additions to your stores.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

THERE is scarcely any point, upon which I wish to touch, so difficult as this; and yet not one upon which so much good might be done, if the right things could be said, and said in the right way. It is easy enough to write prettily about the shortness and the fleetness of time, but not so easy to give specific rules how to improve it as it flies; but it is far easier to do this, than to confer the disposition, and create the determination, to use it to the best possible advantage. A miser will frequently become wealthy, not because he has a great income, but because he saves with the utmost care, and spends with the greatest caution. This is a precept taught us with respect to our time in the very morning of life, but generally not learned till late in the evening. "It is a prodigious thing to consider that, although amongst all the talents which are committed to our stewardship, time, upon several accounts, is the most precious, yet there is not any one of which the generality of men are more profuse and regardless. Nay, it is obvious to observe, that even those persons who are frugal and thrifty in every thing else, are yet extremely prodigal of their best revenue, time; 'of which,' as Seneca

nobly says, 'it is a virtue to be covetous.' It is amazing to think how much time may be gained by proper economy."

No one will try to improve his time, unless he first be impressed with the necessity. Remember that, at the very best calculation, we can have but a short time in which to learn all, and do all, that we accomplish in life. At the beginning of each day, see what, and how much, you want to accomplish before you sleep, and then at once begin to execute your plans, suffering no time to run waste between planning and acting. At the close of the day, be impartial and thorough in reviewing the day, and noting wherein you have failed. There is much to be learned from the somewhat humorous account of the Indian Gymnosophists, in their plans for educating their disciples. The account is from Apuleius, a Platonic philosopher of the second century. "When their dinner is ready, before it is served up, the masters inquire of every particular scholar how he has employed his *time* since sun-rising: some of them answer, that, having been chosen as arbiters between two persons, they have composed their differences, and made them friends; some, that they have been executing the orders of their parents; and others, that they have either found out something new, by their own application, or learned from the instructions of their fellows. But if there happens to be any one among them who cannot make it appear that he has employed the morning to advantage, he is immediately excluded from the company, and obliged to work, while the rest are at dinner."

1. *Sleep.*

Nothing is easier than to cultivate the habit of sleep, so that the system shall demand eight or

ten hours out of the twenty-four, and will be inconvenienced if they be denied. Physicians usually say that six hours are sufficient for all the purposes of health: and, were the eyes to close the moment you reach the pillow, perhaps six hours would be sufficient for the bed. But suppose you allow seven, and rigidly adhere to that number as a rule. Would you not have much more time than you now have? Were you faithfully to apply that time to your studies, which is now occupied by your bed, over and above the seven hours, could you not make great advances in study? But the waste of time is not all. The whole system is deteriorated by indulging the luxury of sleep; and you are as really disqualified for severe study, after nine or ten hours of sleep, as if you had overloaded your stomach with food. The body and mind are both weakened by it. Take, then, two hours from sleep, and add to it the value of two hours more, saved by increased vigour of mind, by the diminution of sleep, and you have a decided gain. What shall be said of the practice of sleeping after dinner? A few words will suffice. If you wish for a dull, feverish feeling, low spirits, prostration of strength, a full, aching head, and a stomach that refuses to work for such a master, then be sure to eat hearty dinners, and sleep immediately after them. The call will be as regular as the dinner. But your fate, as a student, is sealed, if the practice be continued.

2. *Indolence.*

Indolence differs from sloth and idleness in the same way that the parent differs from the child. It consists in the indulgence of a heavy, inactive disposition, leading you to delay till some future time what ought to be done now. This will

beset you by day and by night, unless you act from principle, and a high sense of moral responsibility. It can be resisted and overcome only by making your studies a duty, rather than a pleasure. They may, at times, be a pleasure, but should always be a duty. Dr. Fothergill, an eminent quaker physician, says, "I endeavour to follow my business, because it is my *duty*, rather than my interest the latter is inseparable from a just discharge of duty; but I have ever looked at the profits in the last place."

3. *Sloth.*

This has frequently and justly been denominated the rust of the soul. The habit is easily acquired; or rather, it is a component part of our nature to be indolent. It grows fast by indulgence, and soon seizes upon the soul with the violence and strength of an armed man.

The great mistake with us seems to be, that we feel that we cannot do any great thing, unless we have all our time to devote to that particular thing. "If I only had the time to go and sit down, day after day, for a number of days or weeks, to examine that subject, and to write on that point, I could then do something." But, as it is, what can you do with such fragments as you gather, here and there, by sitting up late, or robbing your pillow at the dawn of day? Can you do anything with them? No; you must wait for leisure, and for some great change in your outward circumstances, before you can hope to accomplish much! This is a great mistake. Madame de Genlis tells us, that, when a companion of the queen of France, it was her duty to be at the table and waiting for her mistress just fifteen minutes before dinner. These fifteen minutes were saved at every dinner, and a volume

or two was the result. No change, great or marked, in your general course, is necessary to make new and rich acquisitions; only save every moment of time which you now throw away, and you will be easily able to do much. There are little vacancies, in the most crowded period of every man's duties, which are thrown away in resting from the great object of pursuit. But there is no way of resting the mind more effectual, than to have something on hand to occupy it. The mind is not like a hand-organ, which wears as fast after you have shifted the key, and taken a new tune, as before. The learned Erasmus spent the greater part of his life in wandering from country to country, chasing promises of patronage, which were held out only to deceive. Yet, by an undeviating and vigilant improvement of those hours which will always remain amid the greatest activity, this poor scholar, compelled by poverty to solicit from the great, continued to write more valuable books than most men, in like circumstances, would have considered themselves able to read.

4. *Improper method of study.*

May I not hope that what I have said under the chapter of Study, will enable you to understand what is meant by study, and also to form habits which will soon make it pleasant? Many will begin studies which have no present use, and no immediate relation to their prescribed course. They are useless and puerile. You may conquer them; but *cui bono?*

Music, painting, drawing, and the like, are appropriate, and very desirable, in their places; but how many have wasted their time in their pursuit, and thus not merely thrown away their opportunities for making solid attainments, but

acquired wrong habits, which clung to them through life!

5. *We lose time by pursuing a study when the mind is wearied.*

There is danger in mentioning this, lest you mistake that restlessness, and that uneasiness of mind, so uniformly attending early discipline, for real weariness. But the mind, as well as the body, may be jaded; and even a horse, in that condition, ought not to be spurred. Relief and refreshment will be quickly found by turning to some other study.

6. *Having our studies press us in consequence of procrastination.*

It is impossible to have the mind free and unembarrassed, if you suffer your studies to be driving you. If you defer your lesson to the very last moment in which you can possibly get it, you are not your own master. A man may do a full day's work in the afternoon: but if he puts it off till that time, he will be unhappy all the morning, over-labouring in the afternoon, and ill in the evening. He who does anything in haste, no matter what his powers of mind may be, cannot do it well. If I have fifty miles to ride to-day, I *can* do it all after dinner; but to undertake it would be unwise, and cruel to myself and my horse. There should be no loitering in the morning, because you can retrieve the loss in the evening. Punctuality in getting your lessons is of the very first importance. "It is like packing things in a box: a good packer will get in half as much more as a bad one. The calmness of mind which it produces is another advantage of punctuality. A disorderly man is always in a hurry: he has no time to speak with you, because he is going elsewhere; and when he gets there, he is

too late for his business, or he must hurry away elsewhere before he can finish it. Punctuality gives weight to character. 'Such a man has made an appointment; then I know he will keep it.' And this generates punctuality in you; for, like other virtues, it propagates itself. Appointments, indeed, become debts: I owe you punctuality, if I have made an appointment with you, and have no right to throw away your time, if I do my own."

7. *We lose time by beginning plans and studies which we never complete.*

If the habit of entering upon what is not carried out and completed, be allowed in early life, the evil increases as long as we live. A friend put into my hands a bundle of papers which belonged to one who was reputed a genius. "Were they worth publishing?" was the question. Honesty required the answer to be, "No." There was hardly a single thing completed. Here was a poem begun; there a sonnet nearly completed; there a calculation of an eclipse, about two-thirds finished, with great accuracy and beauty; there a composition commenced, or a letter about half-finished; evidence sufficient that he possessed mind, and even genius; but had he lived, with such habits he could never have arrived at eminence. It is a good general rule, never to begin anything without carrying it through, unless in so doing you must sacrifice some moral feeling or principle. He who desists, not only loses all his labour, but allows himself in a vicious habit. It is not essential that you devote all your time to the point on which you wish to receive or bestow light; but do something every day, and in time the thing will be completed,

however formidable it appears at the commencement.

Order is essential to a proper division and improvement of our time. Any one who has never made the trial, is an utter stranger to the calmness and pleasure with which the mind meets its daily duties, however various, or however arduous, if they return periodically at the same hour. There will be a sufficiency of variety to afford relief, and also stimulus. But the order should be as complete as possible. A wheel that turns constantly may move a vast power, if every cog of the wheel be right; but if there be one broken here, and another there, the whole machinery will suffer and eventually break in pieces. So, if you try to have order in all your arrangements of study, you will suffer whenever it is broken in upon. The result will be, that you will either abandon it, and let the ship go as she pleases, or you will seize the helm with an arm more resolute and nerved, and keep her true to her course.

If you would make time valuable, beware of low and trifling pursuits. Do nothing of which you will ever be ashamed, either here or hereafter.

By many, much time is wasted in dressing the person. There are some who will spend from one hour to two every morning in shaving and dressing. What do they accomplish in life? They have smooth chins and look neat. As for accomplishing anything good or great, they will never do either. Dress and neatness are highly commendable; but we cannot have our wagons of mahogany, and highly varnished, if we expect to carry heavy loads over the mountains with them.

I shall speak of the necessity of exercise in

another place; but, instead of that exercise which is to refresh and invigorate, how many spend much of their time in sports, and call them re creations! We may have sauces to our dinner; but he who should try to live solely upon them, would find himself shortly becoming lean. Taylor calls such diversions "garments made all of fringes," neither comfortable nor becoming. You are in danger from any recreation which you love much; for men always give their time freely to what they love.

Some men, while young, rush into open, high-handed sin, and plunge headlong into guilt, which quickly leads them to ruin or death, and deep remorse. But this is not the history of the great majority of our educated men. But the sin which, of all others, most constantly lies at their door, is the waste of time while young, and, indeed, all the journey of life. An evening is spent in chatting and smoking; it seems a short space of time; but when life closes, and we leave time to go into eternity, how many of these will witness against us! How deep will be our repentance when too late to remedy the defect, if not too late to seek forgiveness! There is no one thing of which students are so prodigal, as of their time. There are some exceptions; but multitudes would be amazed at their conduct, had they been as prodigal of anything else. You neglect duties, public and private, and satisfy conscience, that you have not time to fulfil them all. But the wasted hours cry out against you.

Above all, I may add, that your time will pass neither smoothly nor profitably, unless you seek and receive the blessing of your Maker upon you daily. There is no one, and no ten things that will so much aid you to improve your time as the

daily practice of prayer. "*Bene precasse est bene studuisse*," according to a great master in study In the morning ask the blessing of God upon your studies, that he who created the mind, and has his finger upon it every moment, would keep it sound and clear, and instruct it; that he would give you a disposition to spend all your time in his fear, and to improve it for him. In the evening, recall the day, and the hours, and see wherein you have come short of duty, and what you have this day done, or omitted doing, which the conscience, quickened by prayer, tells you should have been done. Alas! how many have squandered this precious gift, and then, when they came to lie on the bed of death, have reproached themselves with a keenness of rebuke, which language was too poor to convey! A mighty queen, on her dying bed, is said to have cried out, "Millions of money for one inch of time!" How many such inches had she thrown away? The piercing cry came too late. "Oh," said one, as he lay dying, "call back time again: if you can call back time again, then there may be hope for me; but time is gone!"

CHAPTER VI.

ON CONVERSATION.

"WHAT a delightful evening we have spent!" said a student to his companion, as they were returning home from a visit during vacation.

"Yes, I do not know that I ever spent one more agreeably; and yet I cannot tell exactly what it was that rendered it so agreeable. The circle all seemed to be happy, and parted so; but, for myself, I was so taken up with the conversation of that stranger, that I took little notice of what the rest were doing."

"That was precisely my own case. Without seeming to know it, he possesses uncommon powers of conversation."

And this was the whole secret of the pleasures of the evening, that there was one in the circle, who, by his qualities of mind and heart, was fitted to instruct and please by his conversation.

There are few things more neglected than the cultivation of what we denominate conversational powers; and yet few which can be more subservient to affording pleasure and advantage. The man who knows precisely how to converse, has an instrument in his possession with which he can do great good, and which will make him welcome in all circles.

Take notice, as you are introduced to a

stranger. In a short time, you find he is interesting. You are in a coach; you hear him, and forget the time, and are surprised at the rapidity with which you approach the place at which you must part. What makes him so interesting? It is his powers of conversation.

The advantages of this mode of communicating ideas need not be dwelt upon here. It is the method devised by the infinite Creator for the happiness of man, in all circumstances. It is the most perfect way of giving and receiving instruction. It is simple, as are all his works. Speech, between man and man, is the universal medium of transmitting thought, and it is, by far, the best that can be devised. We now wish to know how we may best cultivate and use this faculty. Every one feels the importance of this knowledge. If you have a friend whom you wish to warn, or upon whose mind you wish to make a deep impression, you know the most perfect way of doing it, is with your tongue. You first think over his situation, his prospects and dangers; you think over all his temptations, what apologies can reasonably be offered, and what he will probably offer for himself; you then think of the motives with which to impress him. You then go to him; you try, by tones and voice, to convince him that you are his friend; you tell him your fears in language chosen and tender, and then you pour out your heart upon him, just as you had planned beforehand. You are perfectly aware that you have used the best and most appropriate means in your power, when you have exhausted your powers of persuasion in conversation. If you cannot reach his heart and conscience in this way, you despair of doing it.

If you wish for information on a particular subject, and there is a book which has it all drawn out on paper, and there is also a friend who perfectly understands it, why do you go to that friend and hear him converse, rather than to the book? Because you know that the latter method is not the most interesting and easy way of obtaining information. You can ask for light on particular points; you can state your objections; you can compare what he says with what you already know; you can soon know all that your informer knows.

Make it a matter of study, then, to understand this subject, and not merely try to free yourself from faults, but to make it an accomplishment, a part of your education. There is scarcely any way by which you can gain a stronger hold upon the circles in which you may move, or in which you may do more good. In conversation, all are entitled to carry away and appropriate to themselves as much as they can; and there is a vast quantity of thought and information afloat upon the great mass of intelligent mind, which never has been, and never will be committed to paper.

This constant, direct contact of mind with mind, tends to soften and refine the feelings; so that, when you hear it said of a man, that he keeps the best company, you presume that he is a man of refinement and politeness. The language which he has been accustomed to use has, at least, the appearance of conveying refined thought and feeling, and we insensibly conform our feelings to the dress in which we clothe them. There are two dangers to which people in cities, and others who are similarly situated, may be exposed: the one is, that of using the language of kindness and refinement till it be-

comes a habit, when they do not feel it; and thus make dupes of others, and soon make dupes of themselves. Hypocrisy may be practised till it no longer seems a borrowed character. At any rate, there is danger that, when the forms are greatly studied, the heart, under those forms, is seldom exercised. The other danger is, that the information gathered from conversation alone, may be incorrect, and yet be esteemed of good authority. No information thus acquired can be relied upon. Books are the only correct reporters of facts; and even they will sometimes invent facts, and imagine history. A man who relies solely upon conversation and society for stocking his mind, will be a very ready man, but a very inaccurate man. He can amuse you, he can interest you, he can give you new views of things; but you cannot rely upon the soundness of his judgment.

The student has an immense advantage over all other classes of the community; for he can unite the two most perfect and desirable methods of gaining information—the accuracy and pro found thoughts which can be found only in books, and the general information concerning men and things, which conversation and society will bestow. Consequently, under certain restrictions, it becomes as really his duty to improve by conversation as by books. But as conversation is a kind of commerce, towards which every person ought to pay his share, you act against all honourable rules of commerce, if you are not prepared to furnish your quota. If you would draw out facts and information, and elicit mental effort from others, which may be useful to you, it is certainly your duty to cultivate your talents and powers, so that they may, in turn,

derive the same benefit from your society. You act an ungenerous part, if this be not the case.

Allow me to continue to be specific in my hints, as it is always true, that, when good advice is given, the more specific it is, the more valuable.

1. *Do not waste your time, and that of the company, in talking upon trifles.*

The amount of attention bestowed upon trifles and follies, frequently renders conversation so nauseous to an intelligent mind, that it is disgusted. The consequence is, that such a man withdraws from company, and loses all the advantages of society. He cannot bear to spend hours of precious time in hearing discussions upon the merest trifles. He has no taste for entering into them, and he sits silent till he takes a final leave. Now, while I would not applaud a taste that is delicate and fastidious to a fault, and which could endure nothing short of the exquisite, I would, at the same time, earnestly request every trifler in society, to inquire if he is aware that, by his flat and trivial conversation, he is driving every sensible man from the circle in which he moves. But the man ought not to withdraw. He must have courage to turn the tide. You need not sit silent because the rest are talking about trifles. In most circles you will find, at least, one who is able and willing to communicate instruction. Seek him out, ply him with interrogations, and be in earnest to obtain information which you need. In this way every one will be able to learn, if he chooses. If there are not two, at least, in the circle, who are engaged in profitable conversation, it is your fault, and you ought not to complain that the company was dull or trifling. It is to be la-

mented, that even gifted minds and exalted talents are frequently of no other use, in company, than to give countenance to trifling, when they might and ought to be used in giving a right direction to the conversation, and to influence the excited, interested minds present. There should be a systematic bearing towards usefulness The want of this is a great deficiency.

A man given to severe study and thought, is in peculiar danger here; for, when he goes into society, he drops all study, forgets the train of thought in which he has been engaged, and at once has his spirits, not elastic merely, but even, at times, highly excited. Then the temptation is, to forget that he ought to use his knowledge and his talents to instruct and enlighten that circle of friends; and that, if he does not improve the opportunity, he throws all the weight of his character into the wrong scale. I do not mean that you are to strive to monopolize the conversation, to shine and show yourself, and your attainments. Far otherwise; but I mean that you should not waste your time, and the time of those who are kind enough to hear what you have to say, in saying things which might be said and repeated to the end of time, and no human being would be either the wiser or the better. Do nothing which has the appearance of assuming superiority; but he who relies on his "small talk" to render him long useful or agreeable in society, has much mistaken human nature. It may be pleasant and pretty; but who would thank you for inviting him to dine frequently upon custards and ice-creams? If you leave a company without being able to reflect that you are wiser, or have made somebody else

wiser, than when you entered it, there is something wrong in the case.

2. *Beware of severe speaking in company.*

No matter whether the company be great or small, you may be sure that all you say against an absent person will reach him. You have done wrong, and an avenger will be found. I admire the warning which St. Austin is said to have had inscribed in the centre of his table at which he entertained his friends,

> "Quisquis amat dictis absentem rodere amicum,
> Hanc mensam indignam noverit esse sibi."

There is an almost universal propensity in mankind to slander each other, or, at least, to throw out hints which detract from the good opinion which they suppose may be entertained by their fellows. The detractor cheats himself most egregiously, but never others. He imagines that he is pushing this one, and thrusting that one, with the charitable purpose of keeping the unworthy out of the seat of honour. I remember to have read in Diodorus Siculus an account of a very active little animal, which, I think, he calls the ichneumon, that makes it the whole business of his life to break the eggs of the crocodile, which he is always in search after. This instinct is the more remarkable because the ichneumon never feeds upon the eggs he has broken, nor any other way finds his account in them. Were it not for the incessant labours of this industrious animal, Egypt, says the historian, would be overrun with crocodiles; for the Egyptians are so far from destroying these pernicious creatures, that they worship them as gods. Do not those who may be denominated detractors of mankind, congratulate themselves

that they are disinterested, like this little animal, and are acting the part of benefactors of mankind? They probably deceive themselves thus frequently; but the deception is only to themselves. How do others view them? The rest of the world know that, if you detract, it is for the same reason that the Tartars are eager to kill every man of extraordinary endowments and accomplishments, believing that his talents, how great or high soever, and what station soever they qualify him to occupy, will, upon his death, become, as a matter of course, the property of the destroyer. Were this theory correct, it would be some apology for those who indulge in severe remarks upon the absent; for, in most cases, it would be their only hope of possessing great excellences of character. What you say in detraction will not merely reach the ear of the individual against whom it is said, but it will prejudice the circle against him. We love to hear remarks against people; and while you may say ten clever things of a man which are forgotten, the two or three which you say against him will be remembered. Nor is this all. Such remarks leave a sting in your own conscience. You cannot thus speak disparagingly of the absent, without giving conscience the right to call you to account, and tell you, in language which cannot be misconstrued, that you have done wrong, and not as you would be done by. "He that indulges himself in ridiculing the little imperfections and weaknesses of his friend, will, in time, find mankind united against him. The man who sees another ridiculed before him, though he may, for the present, concur in the general laugh, yet, in a cool hour, will consider that the same trick might be played against

himself; but, when there is no sense of this danger, the natural pride of human nature rises against him, who, by general censure, lays claim to general superiority." Unless you have had your attention particularly called to this subject, you are probably not aware how many of these light arrows are shot at those who are absent.

An honest fellow was introduced into the most fashionable circle of a country village; and though he was neither learned nor brilliant, yet he passed off very well. But he had one incorrigible fault: he always stayed so as to be the last person who left the room. At length, he was asked plainly, why he always stayed so long. He replied, with great good nature and simplicity, that "as soon as a man was gone, they all began to talk against him; and, consequently, he thought it always judicious to stay till none were left to slander him."

3. *Beware of indulging in flattery.*

The habit of flattering your friends and acquaintances is pernicious to your own character. It will injure yourself more than others. It is well understood among men, that he who is in the habit of flattering, expects to be repaid in the same coin, and that, too, with compound interest. This is a very different thing from bestowing that encouragement upon your friend in private which he needs for the purpose of calling forth praiseworthy efforts. Flattery is usually bestowed in public, probably for the purpose of having witnesses, before whom your friend now stands committed, to return what you are now advancing to him. But judicious encouragement will always be given in private. If you flatter others, they will feel bound to do so to you; and they certainly will do it. They well know that there is no other way by which they can cancel the obligations

which you have imposed upon them; because no compensation but this will be satisfactory. Thus you hire others to aid you to become your own dupe, and over-estimate your excellences, whatever they may be. For a very obvious reason, then, you will deny yourself the luxury of being flattered. And especially do not fish for such pearls. You cannot do it, without having the motive seen through. You may have been astonished at seeing young men greedily swallow praise, when they could not but know that he who was daubing it on was insincere. It used to be a matter of surprise to me, how it is that we love praise, even when we know that we do not deserve it. Johnson has thus explained the philosophy of the fact. "To be flattered," says he, "is grateful even when we know that our praises are not believed by those who pronounce them; for they prove at least our power, and show that our favour is valued, since it is purchased by the meanness of falsehood." The desire of the approbation of others, for their good opinion alone, is said to be the mark of a generous mind. I have no doubt it is so. Against this desire I am breathing no reproach.

4. *Never indulge levity as to anything sacred.*

It is impossible to treat any sacred subject with levity, in a mixed company, without greatly wounding the sensibilities of some one. It is no mark of strength of intellect, or of the freedom from prejudice, or of any good quality, to do it. It shows nothing but a heart that sins without excitement and without temptation. He who can speak lightly of God, his Maker, and his best Friend, or of anything that pertains to him, will always be known to carry a heart that will easily yield to a temptation to treat an earthly friend in

the same way. You may set it down as a rule to which there are no exceptions, that he who treats religion, or any of the ordinances of his God, with lightness and irreverence, carries a selfish heart, and is not fit to be your bosom friend. Levity of manner or matter, in sacred things, will ruin your character, or that of any other man.

I need hardly allude to the practice of profane language; for I have no expectation that any one who has so far forgotten what self-respect demands, (to say nothing about higher claims,) as to use such language, will read a work like this. Such are seldom seen in company so reputable as that of the readers who are interested in a book designed to do them good. But still, some persons may be exposed to the temptation, who never yet yielded to it. When you hear any one use profane language, you will not wrong him if you conclude, that this is only one of a nest of vipers which he carries in his heart; and although this is the only one which now hisses, yet each, in his turn, is master of the poor wretch who is giving his life-blood to feed them.

Every approach to anything like profaneness ought, at once and for ever, to be banished. If you wish to fit yourself for the world of darkness, it will be time enough to learn its language after you have prepared for it by more decent sins. I am happy to say, that an oath is seldom heard among people who lay any claim to respectability. Politeness needs not embellishments which belong to spirits accursed; and truth and sincerity always despise and disdain such auxiliaries.

5. *Be careful in introducing topics of conversation.*

There are some people, who move in a sphere so contracted, and the range of their thoughts is

so narrow, that you can anticipate what are to be the topics of conversation, what stories you must hear repeated, and where the circle will return into itself. If you allow yourself to have favourite topics, you will insensibly and surely run into this habit. Nothing can be more tiresome and unwelcome than such a talker. The same round is to be passed over, the same compliments repeated, the same jests broached.

Some will go out of their way to harp upon topics which they suppose particularly agreeable to you, and thus flatter you by talking upon what they suppose you are particularly pleased with; just as if they were to invite you to dine, and then load your plate with some odd food, of which they supposed you were particularly fond, though they and the rest of the company loathed it. It is worse than insulting you, because you have all the mortification of the insult, without the power of resenting it. If, for example, a man knows me to be a Calvinist in my religious opinions, and spends his breath, every time he meets me, in lauding John Calvin, or in praising the Puritans, when I know that in his heart he despises both, I do not thank him for taking all this pains to tickle me. If he sincerely desires information on these, or any other subjects with which he supposes me to be acquainted, he does me a kindness by giving me the opportunity to communicate what I know; but if the subject be dragged in, and that frequently, few things can be more nauseous. The reproof which was given to one who indulged in this practice was severe but just. A man supposed his acquaintance particularly fond of conversing about the characters drawn in Scripture, and took every opportunity to bring these upon the tapis. "I affirm," said he on one

of these occasions, "that this Samson was the strongest man that ever lived, or ever will live." "It is not so," said the other, "it is not so: you yourself are a stronger man than Samson." "How can that be?" "Why, you have just lugged him in, by head and shoulders!"

Conversation is an intellectual feast; and you do not wish to have a little table spread in the corner for yourself alone, but to enjoy the feast in common. Remember, then, that the treatment which would be disagreeable to you, will be equally unpleasant to others; and be careful to avoid a practice very common, but which always gives pain.

As a topic of conversation, introduce *yourself* as little as possible. We are all in danger of this; but, probably, the danger increases with our age. "It is a hard and nice subject for a man to speak of himself," says Cowley; "it grates upon his own heart to say anything of disparagement, and upon the reader's ears, to hear anything of praise from him." It is especially dangerous to speak of yourself, if your circumstances are such that you are, in any way, tempted to ask for aid. A beggar will be relieved, if his wants are real, and known; but if he takes pains to expose his sores, those who would otherwise befriend him, turn away in disgust. Say as little about *yourself*, *your* friends, *your* deeds, as possible; for if you say anything, it is supposed to be done for the purpose of challenging admiration or pity. A good writer recommends his readers not to talk about themselves, unless they are of some considerable consequence in the world. But this rule is unsafe. For who is there that is not, in his own opinion, of consequence enough to the subject of conversation?

6. *Beware of trying to be witty.*

If not exceedingly careful, you will be in danger of repeating old jests as if new, and, perhaps, of appropriating to yourself, as your own, what was said generations before you were born. You have heard, or have read the *bon mot:* the circumstance of reading or hearing it has escaped your mind, while the jest remains. It is better to pass for a man of plain, common sense, in ordinary conversation, than to attempt to be brilliant or facetious at an expense which you cannot well bear for any length of time. Few can deal in this commodity without feeling their need of borrowing; and he who is in the habit of borrowing, will soon cease to remember that what he freely uses is not his own.

While upon this subject, I may say that, if you are tempted to indulge in humour and wit, you are beset in a weak and dangerous spot. Wit, and the faculty of producing smart sayings, may be cultivated. They are so; and I have known a company thrown into shouts of laughter by sallies and strokes which were taken to be impromptu, but which would have been welcomed with coolness, had it been known that they were studied and arranged in private. This must always, more or less, be the case with smart sayings; and the great talent displayed, is in passing them off as if they were the creations of the moment. There are two special dangers in the indulgence of wit: the one is, that it is impossible to flourish a tool so sharp without wounding others. Strive against it as much as you please, your best jokes, and keenest arrows, will be spent upon men and upon living characters. This will cause enmities and heart-burnings. He who tries to be a wit is almost sure to have enemies. And when you

hear of a man who "had rather lose a friend than a joke," you may be sure that he will soon cease to be troubled by the officiousness of friendship. Every man knows that he has peculiarities and weaknesses of his own; but they are a part of his nature; and he cannot, and will not, love a man who wounds him through these. These weaknesses are ours; and though we may feel ashamed of them, as some persons are of their "poor relations," yet we do not like to have them ridiculed. We repel the man who feels so conscious of superiority, that he may sport with the characters of others. He may excite the laugh, and he may be flattered for a while, but it must be among those whom he has tacitly promised to spare. The second danger of trying to be a wit, is, that you injure your own mind. No one can be a wit without assiduously cultivating peculiar and odd associations of ideas. The thoughts must run in channels unknown to general minds. Everything at which you look must be invested in a strange light; and the mind soon becomes habituated to eccentric associations. The result will be, that the mind ceases to be a well-balanced instrument of acquiring or communicating information. And the man who sets out to be a wit, will probably succeed so far as to be second-rate, and useless for everything besides. The character of a witling, as drawn by the pen of a popular writer, is true to the life. "He is moreover the most self-conceited man in Spain, though he spent the first sixty years of his life in the grossest ignorance; but, in order to become learned, he employed a preceptor, who has taught him to spell in Latin and Greek. Besides, he has got a great number of good stories by heart, which he has repeated and vouched so often, that,

at length, he actually believes them to be true. These he brings into conversation; and one may say, his wit shines at the expense of his memory." It is important, also, to remember, that he who says a great many brilliant things, says a vast many that are weak and foolish; for pearl-divers always find that the waters which yield the most sparkling pearls, yield also the most shells. The best that can be hoped for is, that the few witty things that are said may be retained and repeated, while the worthless may be forgotten.

"Silva," said one of the archest among them, "we will make something of thee, my friend. I perceive thou hast a fund of genius, but thou dost not know how to use it to advantage. The fear of speaking nonsense hinders thee from talking at a venture; and yet, by this alone, a thousand people now-a-days acquire the reputation of wits. If thou hast a mind to shine, give rein to thy vivacity, and indifferently risk everything that comes uppermost: thy blunders will pass for a noble boldness; and if, after having uttered a thousand impertinences, one witticism escapes thee, the silly things will be forgot, the lucky thought will be remembered, and the world will conceive a high opinion of thy merit. This is what every man must do who aspires to the reputation of a distinguished wit."

7. *Be careful, also, in conversation, not to make any display of knowledge or superior learning.*

No company like to confess that they are ignorant; and when one makes a parade of his learning, it is a silent invitation for them to acknowledge his superiority, and to confess that all the rest are ignorant. No invitation scarcely could be more unpleasant. I once knew a student do his utmost to be popular in the social

circle, but without success. It was difficult to discover the reason; but a single evening explained the whole. He quoted Latin and talked in Greek, and took great delight in tracing things up to their sources; thus, for example, he took great pains to show the company that the term *comedy* had somewhat lost its original meaning, for it was composed of κωμη, *street*, and ωδη, *song*, meaning a street-song, which they used to act in a cart in the streets of the city. This was all true, but the pedantry was insufferable, and is no evidence of learning, since half an hour spent over a good dictionary would produce learning enough to torment a circle the whole evening. He who is really a scholar, will make but little noise about it. The half-educated physician, who is constantly afraid that you will suspect him of ignorance, is the man who uses the hard technicalities of the profession, and turns even the precise terms of the pharmacopœia into bombast. It is probably for this reason, also, that pedantry is so odious. If you meet a man who spouts Latin, and bores you with Greek, you may generally suppose that his learning is about as deep as is the courage of the impudent house-dog, who barks loudly whenever you pass his master's house. If you are among students alone, the case is altered; but, in mixed companies, the most clever remark is seldom welcomed, if it comes in an unknown tongue.

8. *In all your conversation, be careful to maintain purity of thought.*

All approaches towards what is indelicate, will be at once discountenanced by all good society. Indeed, you can find none who are pleased with it. Double *entendres*, and the like, are very disgusting in company. The reason is obvious.

None love to have so much disrespect shown them as must be, when you take it for granted that they will be pleased with such conversation. It is a downright insult to a man of pure mind and pure morals. And never have I known any thing but disapprobation expressed and felt, on some occasions when things thus improper have been introduced. Your recitals of facts, anecdotes, and all that you say for the purpose of enlightening or amusing others, should be pure in language and pure in thought.

How are anecdotes and stories to be used? They are of great importance and value, when properly used, and worse than useless when employed improperly. You have known men, of all professions, who are always relating anecdotes and telling stories. Their fund seems inexhaustible when you first become acquainted with them; but, on further acquaintance, you will find the stock really limited, and that the same things are repeated and laughed at many times every year. One is noted as "an old story-teller;" another is remarkable for keeping the company in good humour, or in shouts of laughter, by the hour together. And yet these individuals are not, and cannot be, as a general thing, very highly respected. At the same time, stories and anecdotes are facts which illustrate important principles, and cannot well be dispensed with. How shall you avoid Scylla, and not fall upon Charybdis? I answer, You may and ought to use stories and anecdotes. They are very important; and you cannot interest, and instruct, and impress without them. You may make abundant use of them; I had almost said, you cannot make too much. But there are two important cautions to be given here.

1. That you use the fact just as it occurred. Do not add to or take from it in the least, for the sake of embellishing or making it more striking and to the point. You belie history, if you add or diminish aught. Some men cannot repeat a fact in the shape of an anecdote without so distorting and discolouring it, that you would hardly know it to be the same thing. The habit is bad; for you will soon be unable, if it be allowed, to state an interesting fact as it occurred.

2. The second caution is, Do not tell stories, or repeat anecdotes, merely to amuse by them. Their use is to illustrate what you are talking or writing about. When they are used otherwise than to illustrate, they are out of their place.

In these remarks I hope I shall not be understood to advise that you be in the habit of tedious minuteness in all your relations of facts and anecdotes. This is intolerable. It is like trying to eat some of our small fish, slow in process, and when you have done, you remember the bones while you forget the meat. A man in haste would not thus dine, if he could well avoid it.

Keep your conversation clear of envy; and to do it, the heart must be kept clear. Be cheerful in all your conversation. It can be made a habit, and will always render you agreeable. We have so many weaknesses, so many crosses, and so much that is down-hill in life, that we love to meet a friend that is cheerful. The veriest cripple, and the sourest of men, love to pause and forget themselves, while they listen to the prattle and the cheerful shouts of the group of children. The cultivation of cheerful tones, and a cheerful manner of conversation, will add to your own comfort, and also to that of all with whom you

associate. The hares of the sensitive Cowper were his evening companions; and he informs us that their cheerfulness and frolicsomeness beguiled his hours of sadness.

The following are the rules, much abridged, which the judicious Mason gives to the student, in regard to conversation.

(1.) Choose your company for profit, just as you do your books. The best company and the best books are those which are the most improving and entertaining. If you can receive neither improvement nor entertainment from your company, furnish one or both for them. If you can neither receive nor bestow benefit, leave that company at once.

(2.) Study the character of your company. If they are your superiors, ask them questions, and be an attentive hearer; if your inferiors, do them good.

(3.) When the conversation droops, revive it by introducing some topic so general that all can say something upon it. Perhaps it will not be amiss to stock your mind beforehand with suitable topics.

(4.) When anything is said new, valuable, or instructive, enter it in your memorandum-book. Keep all that you can lay your hand on that is worth keeping; but reject all trash.

(5.) Never be a cipher in company. Try to please, and you will find something to say that will be acceptable. It is ill manners to be silent. Even what is trite, if said in an obliging manner, will be better received than entire silence; and a common remark may often lead to something valuable. Break a dead silence, at any rate, and all will feel relieved and grateful to you.

(6.) Join in no hurry and clamour. If a point is handled briskly, wait till you have seen its different sides, and have become master of it. Then you may speak to advantage. Never repeat a good thing in the same company twice.

(7.) Remember that others see their foibles and mistakes in a light different from what you do; therefore be careful not to oppose or animadvert too freely upon them in company.

(8.) If the company slander or are profane, reprove it in words, if that will do; if not, by silence; and if that fails, withdraw.

(9.) Do not affect to shine in conversation, as if that were your peculiar excellency, and you were conscious of superior ability.

(10.) Bear with much that seems impertinent. It may not appear so to all, and you may learn something from it.

(11.) Be free and easy, and try to make all the rest feel so. In this way, much valuable thought may be drawn out.

To these I would add, Never get out of temper in company. If you are ill treated, or affronted, that is not the place to notice it. If you are so unfortunate as to get into a dispute with a loud, heated antagonist, keep cool, perfectly so. "It is cold steel that cuts," and you will soon have the best end of the argument. The sympathy and respect of the circle will always move towards him who is cool under provocation. "If a man has a quarrelsome temper, let him alone. The world will soon find him employment. He will soon meet with some one stronger than himself, who will repay him better than you can. A man may fight duels all his life, if he is disposed to quarrel." What is usually understood by dis-

pute, namely, something in which the feelings are strongly enlisted, and in which there is strife for victory, ought never to be admitted into company. The game is too rough. And discussion, when it approaches that point, should be dropped at once.

I cannot close without reminding my reader, that the power of communicating our thoughts and feelings by conversation, is one of the greatest blessings bestowed on man. It is a perpetual source of comfort, and may be an instrument of great usefulness. The tongue is an instrument, also, of vast mischief. It is our chief engine for doing good or mischief. The gift brings a vast responsibility upon us. The emotions of the soul, when expressed in language, will always affect others, more or less. If they are rightly affected, good is done; if improperly, evil is the result. You will never pass a day without having a heavy responsibility rest upon you for the use of this gift. Every word is heard by Him who planted the ear; and for every word you are bound over to give an answer at the great day of account. A man of piety, with a cultivated mind, with a fund of ready knowledge, with manners and habits that make him welcome wherever he goes, with an influence which cultivation always gives, such a man can do much for the good of man, the honour of his God, and for his own future peace, by the manner in which he uses his powers of conversation. His words, his tones, will pour delight into the soul of friendship; they will form the character of the little prattler who listens to him; they will pave his way to high and glorious scenes of usefulness; or they will fall heavy on the ear of affection, and will roll a deep night of sorrow

back upon his own soul. Remember that every word you utter, wings its way to the throne of God, and is to affect the condition of your soul for ever. Once uttered, it can never be recalled; and the impression which it makes, extends to the years beyond the existence of earth.

CHAPTER VII.

ON EXERCISE.

It must be plain to every reader, in the very outset, that the hopes and prospects of a student must depend very much upon his health. If the powers of the body be palsied or prostrated, or in any way abused, his mind must so far sympathise as to be unfitted for making progress in study. You may let the system run down and lose its tone by neglect, and, for a time, the mind retains its activity, as the fires created by some kinds of fuel burn brighter and brighter till they sink away at once.

You may be poorer, you may have had but small advantages heretofore; but above these, by industry and application, you may rise. But if your health be gone, you are, at once, cut off from doing anything by way of study. The mind cannot, and will not accomplish anything, unless you have good health. Resolve, then, that, at any rate, so far as it depends upon yourself, you will have the *mens sana in sano corpore*, "a sound mind in a healthy body."

It is frequently the case that the student, as the fields of knowledge open before him in all their boundless extent, feeling strong in his buoyancy and elasticity of youth, sits down

closely to his books, resolved to stop for nothing, till his scholarship is fair and high. The first, the second, and the third admonitions, in regard to his health, are unheeded, till, at last, he can study no longer, and then, too late, he discovers that the seeds of death are planted in him.

The more promising the student, the higher his aims; and the stronger the aspirations of his genius, the greater is the danger. Multitudes of the most promising young men have found an early grave; not because they studied too intensely, but because they paid no attention to the body.

It may, no doubt, be true, that the man who sits down to study, and gives his whole soul to it, without much, if any, regard to health, may, for a time, improve greatly. He may pass over the ground fast, and appear a prodigy of genius. But it is almost certain that such a one will soon reach the limits of his attainments; and, if he does not speedily find his grave, he will soon be too feeble to do anything but drag on a discouraging existence.

It is impossible for any man to be a student without endangering his health. Man was made to be active. The hunter, who roams through the forest, or climbs the rocks of the Alps, is the man who is hardy, and in the most perfect health. The sailor, who has been rocked by a thousand storms, and who labours day and night, is a hardy man, unless dissipation has broken his constitution. Any man of active habits is likely to enjoy good health, if he does not too frequently over-exert himself. But the student's habits are all unnatural; and by them nature is continually cramped and restrained.

There can be no room for doubt, in the mind

of an attentive observer, that one cause why many promising young men sink into a premature grave, is, that they try to do so much in so short a time. By this I mean, that they feel that the great work of disciplining and storing the mind must be done before the age of twenty-five, and they therefore sit down to their books with an intensity of application that cannot but endanger life.

There are several difficulties in the way of your taking regular, vigorous exercise.

1. *You do not now feel the necessity of it.*

We take no medicine till necessity compels us; and exercise to the student is a constant medicine. You are now young; you feel buoyant, have a good appetite, have strength, fine health, and good spirits. Time flies on downy wings. Why should you teach yourself to be a slave to exercise, and bring yourself into habits which would compel you every day to take exercise? It seems like fitting yourself with a pair of heavy crutches, when you have as good legs to walk with as ever carried an emperor. Let those who are in danger of the gout, or of falling victims to disordered stomachs, begin the regimen; but for yourself you do not feel your need. No, nor will you feel it, till probably you are so far gone, that exercise cannot recover you. On this point, you must take the testimony of the multitudes who have gone over the ground on which you now stand, and who understand it all. They will tell you, that it is not at your option whether you will take exercise or not; you must take exercise, or give up all your prospects.

2. *You feel pressed for time, and therefore cannot take exercise.*

You have such a pressure of studies, or you

labour under some peculiar disadvantages, that you really cannot find time for exercise. Let me tell you that you miscalculate on one important point. If you will try the plan of taking regular, vigorous exercise every day, for a single month, you will find that you can perform the same duties, and the same amount of study, much easier than without the exercise. The difference will be astonishing to yourself. The time spent in thus invigorating the system will be made up, many times over, in the ease and comfort with which your mind pursues study.

3. *You do not feel interested in your exercise, and therefore do not take it.*

Many schemes have been devised, by which a student may take regular exercise, and, at the same time, be interested in it. The manual labour system has been greatly extolled. The gymnastic system was no less so. In the latter, I have never had any confidence; and, though I would not speak decidedly against the former, inasmuch as it may, in certain cases, do good, yet I must say that I do not believe it will prevail, in our systems of education, to any great extent. Judging from experience, I decidedly prefer walking to all other exercise for the student. Buchan urges it as the best possible exercise, as it calls more muscles into motion than any other which is not positively painful. The advantages of this mode of exercise are, that it is simple. The apparatus is all at hand complete. It is in the open air, so that the lungs can, at once, receive the pure air of heaven, and the eye gaze upon hill and dale, upon trees and flowers, upon objects animate and inanimate. The very objects of sight and sound cheer and enliven the mind, and raise the spirits. Another advantage

of walking is, that you can have a friend to walk with, and unbend the mind, and cheer the spirits, by pleasant conversation. This is a point of great consequence; and it can be attained only in walking. You hear the same sounds, you see the same objects, you relieve the way, and the fatigues of exercise, by conversation. For this reason, you should seek, in most cases, to have company in your walks. Once try the method of walking with a friend regularly for a few weeks, and you will be surprised at the results. At those periods in which study is not required, be sure and take long walks, and lay up health for days to come. I once knew two students who invigorated their constitutions astonishingly by this simple process. During one summer, they walked above two hundred miles in company, counting no walk which was under five miles. In a short time, you will feel so much at home in the exercise, that you will not inquire what weather it is, but, Has the hour for walking arrived?

4. *The habits of the student make any bodily exertions fatiguing; and therefore you neglect exercise.*

There is no need of going into the physician's department, and assigning the reasons why, by disuse, the body soon comes to a state in which we feel it a burden to make exertions. The fact is unquestionable. You may go to your books, and shut yourself up in your room for weeks almost constantly, till the idea of walking two or three miles will almost fatigue you of itself. The muscles, the joints, the whole frame, shrink at the thought of moving. The limbs will ache in a few moments, and the will has not the power to enforce obedience. Every day you put off the

habit of exercise, the difficulty becomes greater; so that he who has not regular times for taking exercise, will soon cease to take any. Nothing can make it pleasant, or even tolerable, but the constant practice of it. You cannot snatch it here and there, and find it an amusement, as you can take up a newspaper; for it will be a burden. Many have, now and then, taken what they call "a dish of exercise;" and when over, they felt worse than when they took none; indeed, it nearly made them unwell; and so they sagely conclude that exercise does not agree with them. Like the Indian, who put a single feather under his head on a rock, which made him wonder how any one could sleep on a whole bed of feathers, they wonder how they do who take exercise daily. Exercise is pleasant or otherwise, not in proportion to its being light or heavy, but to its regularity. The habits of the mind, and more especially those of the body, will for ever forbid your enjoying the luxury and the benefit of it, unless it be regular. Keep this in mind, and it will probably account for much of the unwillingness which you may now feel to taking exercise.

Exercise, then, to be a blessing to you, must be qualified by the following rules:—

(1.) It must be regular and daily. Nature has planted hunger within us, so that we shall daily need supplies, to meet the wastes of the body But, without exercise, the system has not the power to appropriate these supplies, and reduce them, so that they become nutriment. Be as regular in taking exercise, as you are in taking your food. There can be no good excuse, so long as you have feet, which, in a few moments, could give you the best of exercise.

(2.) It should be pleasant and agreeable. The

tread-mill would afford regular and powerful exercise; but it would be intolerably irksome. It might give you iron sinews, but the soul would be gloomy and cheerless. It is of the first importance, that you take pleasure in the exercise. Walking is good, but not if you must walk as a mill-horse. Riding is good, but not if you had to ride a wooden horse. Be sure, in your hour of exercising, to cultivate cheerfulness. "Writers, of every age, have endeavoured to show that pleasure is in us, and not in the objects offered for our amusement. If the soul be happily disposed, everything becomes a subject of entertainment."

(3.) It should relax the mind. Philosophy can teach us to be stubborn or sullen when misfortunes come; and religion can enable us to bear them with resignation; but to a man whose health and spirits are good, they never come with their full power. We should aim to keep both the mind and body in such a condition, that our present circumstances may be pleasant, and the future undreaded. But this cannot be done if the mind be always keyed up like the strings of the musical instrument. The mind that attains the habit of throwing off study and anxiety, and relaxing itself at once, has made a valuable acquisition.

I should be sorry to have my remarks construed as tending to discountenance any manual labour by which the student or the professional man may benefit himself. Many illustrious men have alternately followed the plough, harangued in the forum, commanded armies, and bent over their books. The patriarchs and the distinguished son of Jesse were shepherds, as were Moses and some of the prophets. Paul, though

no mean scholar, was a tent-maker. Cleanthes was a gardener's labourer, and used to draw water and spread it on his garden in the night, that he might have time to study during the day. Cæsar, as every student knows, studied in the camp, and swam rivers holding his writings out of the water in one hand. Of Gustavus Vasa it is said, "A better labourer never struck steel." It is by no means certain that these men would ever have been as distinguished for mental excellence, had they not endured all these fatigues of the body. If you can feel as cheerful and happy in the garden, the field, or the workshop, as you can while walking with a companion, it is to be preferred to walking. But that regular daily exercise which is most pleasant to you, is that which, of all others, will be the most beneficial.

Permit me to say, in a word, that no student is doing justice to himself, to his friends, or to the world, without the habit of a uniform system of exercise; and that for the following reasons:—

[1.] Your life will probably be prolonged by it.

The Creator has not so formed the body, that it can endure to be confined, without exercise, while the mind burns and wears out its energies and powers every moment.

[2.] You will enjoy more with than without exercise.

This remark is to be applied only to those who take exercise daily; and to such it does apply with great force. Every one who has formed this habit will bear ample and most decided testimony to this point.

[3.] You add to the enjoyment of others.

A cheerful companion is a treasure; and exercise will make you cheerful.

[4.] Your mind will be strengthened by exercise.

Were you wishing to cultivate a morbid, sickly taste, which will, now and then, breathe out some beautiful poetical image or thought, like the spirit of some most refined essence, too delicate to be handled or used in this matter-of-fact world, and too ethereal to be enjoyed, except by those of like taste, you should shut yourself up in your room for a few years, till your nerves only continue to act, and the world floats before you as a dream. But if you wish for a mind that can fearlessly dive into what is deep, soar to what is high, grasp and hold what is strong, and move and act among minds—firm, resolved, manly in its aims and purposes; be sure to be regular in taking daily exercise.

"We consist of two parts, of two very different parts; the one inert, passive, utterly incapable of directing itself, barely ministerial to the other, moved, animated by it. When our body has its full health and strength, the mind is so far assisted thereby, that it can bear a closer and longer application; our apprehension is readier; our imagination is livelier; we can better enlarge our compass of thought; we can examine our perceptions more strictly, and compare them more exactly. By which means we are enabled to form a truer judgment of things; to remove, more effectually, the mistakes into which we have been led by a wrong education, by passion, inattention, custom, example; to have a clearer view of what is best for us, of what is most for our interest, and thence determine ourselves more readily to its pursuit, and persist therein with greater resolution and steadiness."

CHAPTER VIII.

DISCIPLINE OF THE HEART.

One of the first steps to be taken, if you would have a character that will stand by you in prosperity and in adversity, in life and death, is *to fortify your mind with fixed principles.*

There is no period of life in which the heart is so much inclined to scepticism and infidelity as in youth. Not that young men are infidels, but the mind is tossed from doubt to doubt, like a light boat leaping from wave to wave. There is no positive settling down into deism or infidelity, but the heart is full of doubting, so that the mind has no position, in morals or religion, fortified. If the restraints of education are so far thrown off as to allow you to indulge in sin, which is in any way disgraceful if known, you will then easily become an infidel. "The nurse of infidelity is sensuality. The young are sensual. The Bible stands in their way. It prohibits the indulgence of 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.' But the young mind loves these things, and therefore it hates the Bible, which prohibits them. It is prepared to say, 'If any man will bring me arguments against the Bible, I will thank him; if not, I will invent them.' As to infidel arguments, there is no weight

in them. They are jejune and refuted. Infidels are not themselves convinced by them. What sort of men are infidels? They are loose, fierce, overbearing men. There is nothing in them like sober and serious inquiry. They are the wildest fanatics on earth. Nor have they agreed among themselves on any scheme of truth and felicity. Look at the needs and necessities of man. 'Every pang of grief tells a man he needs a helper; but infidelity provides none. And what can its schemes do for you in death?' Examine your conscience. Why is it that you listen to infidelity? Is not infidelity a low, carnal, wicked course? Is it not the very picture of the prodigal, 'Father, give me the portion of goods which falleth to me?' Why, why will a man be an infidel? Draw out the map of the road of infidelity. It will lead you to such stages, at length, as you could never suspect." This is the testimony of one who had himself travelled the road of infidelity.

I will here put it to my reader to say, whether he can recollect, in all he has known of men from history or observation, a great, discriminating, and efficient mind, a mind that has blessed the world in any degree, which was thoroughly imbued with infidel principles? Take the writings of such a mind, and you will, generally speaking, be astonished at the vulgarity, sophistry, puerility, and weakness, which are continually marking its progress. It is justly remarked by some writer, I know not whom, "that the mind which has been warped and biased upon one great subject, is not safely to be trusted upon another." And can we say of a man, "It is true that the evidences of the Christian religion, which carry along with them the soundest judgments, and the most profound minds, did not meet a reception in his—it is true

that his intellect did not lead him to such conclusions on this subject as we consider to be the necessary conclusions of a balanced mind, but yet in other subjects he was great, deep, searching, noble!" Learning, poetry, and literature, walk hand in hand under the light of the gospel. They are destined to do so; and nowhere else on earth can they now be found. It is absolutely impossible for any mind, amid all this light, to veil itself in infidelity, and expect to be revered, or influential among men. Supposing, even, there were no warpings of the mind, and no outrages committed upon it, when it was led to embrace infidelity, still it asks too much of its fellows, when it demands admittance to their communion, and asks permission to guide other minds, when it pretends to pour nothing but the cold light of a December evening upon them. There is so little of sympathy between the mind of an infidel and the enlightened Christian part of the community, that, if he hopes to have any influence upon men, it must be upon those who have already made shipwreck of their character and hopes.

Should you, my reader, be among those who have no fixed principles in morals and religion, for your own peace and usefulness, I beg you to settle this subject at once and for ever. Has God ever spoken to man? If so, when and how? These are the most important questions ever asked. And they should be answered and settled, so that the mind may have something to rest upon so firm that nothing shall move it. We are mere mites creeping on the earth, and oftentimes conceited mites too. We can easily unsettle things, but can erect nothing. We can pull down a church, but, without aid, cannot erect a hovel. The earlier in life you settle your principles, the

firmer, more mature, more influential, will your character be. Search the Bible, and try it as you would gold in the furnace. If you doubt its inspiration, sit down to its examination with candour, and with an honest desire to know what is truth: let the examination be as thorough as you please: but, when once made, let it be settled for ever. You will then have something to stand upon. You will have an unerring standard by which to regulate your conduct, your conscience, and your heart. The ship that outrides the storm with the greatest ease, is the one which has her anchors out, her cables stretched, and her sails furled, before the strength of the storm has reached her; and the navigator, who must stand at the helm through the long dark night, does not wait till that night comes ere he sees that his compass is boxed and properly hung. He who has his religious principles early fixed, has nothing to do but at once, and continually, to act upon them, to carry them out in practice. He has not the delays and the vexations of distrust and doubt now and then, when he stops to examine and settle a principle. Every reader will be convinced of this, who will read over the seventy resolutions of president Edwards, all of which were formed before he was twenty years old, and the most important of them before he was nineteen. No mind could form, and act upon, such principles from early life, without becoming great and efficient. I cannot refrain from selecting a few of these as a specimen.

"1. Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God, and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or ever so many myriads of ages hence.

Resolved, to do whatever I think to be my *duty*, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved, so to do, whatever *difficulties* I meet with, how many soever, and how great soever."

"4. Resolved, never to do any manner of thing, whether in soul or body, less or more, but what tends to the glory of God, nor *be*, nor *suffer* it, if I can possibly avoid it.

"5. Resolved, never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.

"6. Resolved, to live with all my might while I do live.

"7. Resolved, never to do anything which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life."

"20. Resolved, to maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.

"21. Resolved, never to do anything which, if I should see in another, I should count a just occasion to despise him for, or to think any way the more meanly of him."

"34. Resolved, in narrations never to speak anything but the pure and simple verity."

"46. Resolved, never to allow the least measure of any fretting or uneasiness at my father or mother. Resolved, to suffer no effects of it, so much as in the least alteration of speech, or motion of my eye, and to be especially careful of it with respect to any of our family."

The whole of these seventy resolutions are every way worthy the attention and the imitation of every young man.

It is frequently the case, that young men have an idea, that there is something in the cultivation

of the heart, and in the restraints of religion, which degrades or cramps the soul; that a mind which is naturally noble and lofty, will become grovelling and contracted by submitting to moral restraints. This is a mere prejudice. Go into any good library, and examine the shelves, and see who are those who have penned what will be immortal, and influence other minds as long as earth shall endure. In almost every instance, the work which will hold its place the longest, was dictated by a Christian mind. The loftiest minds, the most cultivated intellects, and the most solid judgments, have bowed at the altar of God, and have been quickened and ennobled by the waters which flow from his mount; and if we go up from man to those higher orders of beings who stand in "the presence" of the Eternal, we shall find them, after having shouted for joy over the creation of this world, when the morning stars sang together; after having watched the providences of God, and seen empires rise and fall; after having hung around the good in all their wanderings on earth, still studying the gospel, to have their views enlarged, their conceptions of the Infinite Wisdom expanded, and still desiring to look into these things. May not the sublime idea of the modesty of these "angelic students" rebuke the ignorance, the darkness, and consummate pride of those who feel that their greatness would be diminished by bowing to the gospel of Christ? The angels diligently look into the mystery of the gospel; and they are the companions and fellow-students of all who thus study it.

By disciplining the heart, I mean, bringing it into subjection to the will of God, so that you can best honour him, and do most for the well-being

of men. I shall suggest some means by which the heart may be disciplined, and the feelings cultivated.

1. *Let it be your immediate and constant aim to make every event subservient to cultivating the heart.*

We are in danger of acknowledging the importance of this subject, but at the same time of putting it off to a more convenient season. You suppose your present circumstances are not favourable. There are difficulties now, but you are looking forward to the time when things will be different. Your studies will not hurry you so much; they will become much easier; and you will have conveniences which you have not at the present time. But when you shall go to another place, or commence a new study, or enter upon a more pleasant season of the year, or have a new companion, then you can begin to take care of your heart, and have intercourse with God. But you greatly misjudge. Everything, every circumstance in our condition, is designed by Infinite Wisdom as a part of our moral discipline; and He who watches the sparrow when she alights, and directs her how and where to find the grain of food, directs all things relating to your situation; and he designs to have everything contribute to your moral improvement. There is not a temptation which meets you, nor a vexation which harasses you, nor a trouble which depresses you, but it was all designed for your good. Do not put off, and plead that the path in which your heavenly Father is leading you is different from what you would have chosen, and therefore you are excusable for not doing his will. No principle of action is of any worth, unless it leads you continually to take care of the heart. I have

spoken already of the difficulty in subduing the mind, so as to make study easy. You will not find the heart more readily subdued. Every indulgence of vice, every neglect of duty, strengthens the habits and propensities to do wrong and to go astray.

Should the hand of Providence strike down your best earthly friend, you would feel that you were called upon to make the event contribute to moral culture. But is it wise, is it right to wait for such providences? to tempt God thus to visit you with afflictions? Every event under his government is designed to do you good; and he who does not make it his daily business to cultivate his heart, will be in great danger of never doing it. You cannot do it at any time, and in a short period. A virtuous and holy character is not built up in a day: it is the work of a long life. Begin the work at once, and make it as really a part of your duties daily to cultivate the heart, as it is to take care of the body, or to cultivate the intellect

2. *Make it a part of your daily habits to cultivate an enlightened conscience*

A man never became intemperate or profane at once. He never became a proficient in sin by a single leap. The youth first hears the oath, blushes as he falters out his first profane expression, and goes on, step by step, till he rolls "sin as a sweet morsel under his tongue." It is so with any sin. In this way, the conscience is blunted, and the heart hardened. In the same progressive way, too, the conscience is recovered, and made susceptible to Divine impressions. Were you seeking only for a powerful motive to impel you onward in your studies, and were you regardless of your moral culture, still I would

urge you, on this ground alone, to cultivate conscience most assiduously. I will tell you why.

There are few men who can be brought to task their powers so as to achieve much by motives drawn from this world only. With the mass of educated men this is true. Wealth cannot bribe to steady, unwearied efforts; ambition may lay an iron hand on the soul, but it cannot, excepting here and there, do it with a grasp sufficient to keep it in action: the soft whispers of pleasure can do nothing towards shaking off the indolence and sluggishness of man; and fame, with a silver trumpet, calls in vain. These motives can reach only a few. But conscience is a motive which can be brought to bear upon all, and can be cultivated till she calls every energy, every susceptibility, every faculty of the soul into constant, vigorous, powerful action. Every other motive, when analyzed, is small, mean, contemptible, and such as you despise when you see it operating upon others. The soul of man is ashamed to confess itself a slave to any other power. But this is not all; any other motive soon loses its power. Trials, and misfortunes, and disappointments, damp and kill any other governing motive. But this is not so in the man who acts from an enlightened conscience. You can crush him only by destroying his life. Shut him up in prison, and his conscience arouses and carries him onward to exertions unthought of before. The cold walls of Bunyan's dungeon grow warm while he describes the pilgrim's progress up to eternal day, and scatters the food of angels over the earth; he actually does more for the good of man, under the pressure of conscience, in adversity, than during the days of liberty.

Only fix the impression on the mind, so that it

will be abiding, that we are accountable to God for all that we do, and the amount of effort and success will be almost unmeasured. Connect the immeasurable demands of eternity with every effort to conquer sin, to subdue your appetites and passions, and thus make the soul and body more disciplined instruments of doing good Connect them with every noble resolution, and every exertion, whether it be for life or for a moment, and you will not do small things; you will not walk through life unfelt, unknown, and you will not go down to the grave unwept. Every unholy desire that you conquer; every thought that you treasure up for future use; every moment that you seize as it flies, and stamp with something good, which it may carry to the judgment-seat; every influence which you exert upon the world, for the honour of God or the good of man; all, all is not only connected with the approbation of God and the rewards of eternal ages, but all aids you to make higher and nobler efforts still till you are enabled to achieve what will astonish even yourself. Think over the long list of those men who have lived and acted under the direct and continued influence of a conscience enlightened by the word of God. Go, stand at the grave of one of these men; and you will go away musing and heart-smitten, to think that he finished his work, and did it perhaps so soon, and went home to his rest in the morning of life, while you have done little or nothing.

Had I no other aim than merely to excite you to high and noble enterprise, to make great efforts while you live, that motive which I would select as incomparably superior to all others, to lead you to effort, is a cultivated, sanctified conscience. But I have an aim higher than

even this, in urging you to cultivate your conscience.

The path of life is beset with temptations. This is a part of our moral discipline. We must meet them every day: we cannot go round them, nor go past them, without being solicited by them, and nothing but a conscience unceasingly tender will enable us to meet and overcome them. For example; you will, every week, if not every day, find seasons when you are tempted to be idle, to waste your time. There is no motive at hand which will arouse you. These fragments of time are scattered all along your path. Nothing but an enlightened conscience will enable you to save them. But this will. It cannot, however, be created and brought to bear upon you when indolence has seized you. No, it must be done before.

You will often be tempted to smite with the tongue. The company indulge freely in their remarks upon absent characters. Opportunities occur in which you can throw in a word or two with keenness and effect. You can gain credit by the shrewdness with which you judge of character, and for your insight into human nature. No motive of kindness, of politeness, no sense of justice, will now avail to meet this temptation: nothing but a tender conscience will do it.

Your health may not be good; your nerves are easily excited; you are easily thrown off your guard, speak quickly, and evidently with a loss of self-respect, which aids in increasing your ill-humour and your tartness. You cannot reason yourself or shame yourself into a good temper; a cultivated conscience is the only thing which will sweeten the temper.

In the course of your life, you will be making

bargains, and be more or less in habits of dealing with men. You may intend to be an honourable and an honest man; but you will be strongly tempted, at times, to cheapen what you buy, and over-praise what you sell, or to do as you would not that others should do unto you, unless you are under the direction of a clear, discriminating conscience.

You know how much we esteem our character in the sight of men. Many will fight for it, and quarrel for it, and prefer death a thousand times to the loss of character, in the eyes of their fellow-men. But what is it to be judged of men, in comparison to being judged of God? Of what consequence is it what men say of us, or think of us, in comparison with what God thinks of us? Who, that believes in the justice of God, and in the immortality of the soul, would not prefer to have his approbation to that of the universe besides? But you can never gain his approbation; you can never have him for your friend, unless you have a heart that is continually under the discipline of a well-regulated, enlightened conscience.

3. *Avoid temptations.*

It is wisdom in beings so frail as we are, not only to use every possible means to overcome sins which beset us, but, as far as possible, to avoid meeting them. If you are on a journey, with a great object in view to be attained, and you may be exposed to enemies, you will feel anxious, not merely to be so well guarded that they cannot overcome you, but, as far as possible, to avoid meeting them. There is something in the simple piety of Richard Baxter which pleases us, when he gravely tells us, what a blessing he received in narrowly escaping getting a place at

court in the early part of his life. We all believe in a superintending Providence; and we know that many of the best men who have ever lived, have been not merely shut out from wealth, and station, and honours, but made objects of suffering, and even of derision, to the rest of mankind.

There are said to be certain peculiar sins which easily beset every man; and there are certain temptations which are peculiar to every one. Into some you fall oftener and more easily than into others. Some will meet you in one place, and some in another; some in one shape, and some in another. It is important, for any improvement in moral character, to know where you are peculiarly exposed; and at these points to set a strong and wakeful guard.

There are certain individuals with whom you cannot associate, with whom you cannot spend an hour, without hearing things said, and receiving impressions, which tend to lower your standard of honourable feeling, and of purity of heart. Their society may, in many respects, be enchanting, their conversation bewitching, while, at the same time, there may be a subtle poison which will gradually destroy your moral sense. You love to walk with some of these; you love to visit them; and you hope you may have some good influence upon them. Perhaps you will have; but the danger is all on your side. The impressions which the soul receives, and the modes of feeling into which the heart is gradually led, will not be likely to startle you at first, even though their end is moral death. How can you hope to strengthen your moral habits, and improve in character, if you frequently yield to the temptation of conversation which deadens the moral

sensibilities? Here is one plain temptation; and the way to grow in purity of heart is, not to frequent such company, and there try to throw some feeble influence in favour of virtue, and then go away, and lament and pray over the instances in which you yielded to temptation; but, keep clear of the danger, break off from all associates whose influence is against the great object of disciplining the heart.

Some sins meet you at particular seasons. For example, you notice that, after study, or after tea, or at some particular hour of the day, you have less patience than usual. You are inclined to be irritable, or you are low in spirits. You are in danger of cultivating a bad habit of feeling and speaking, and of trying the temper of others. Here you are beset at a particular time of the day; set a watch over yourself, and avoid the danger. You can easily see the rock, for it is above the waves.

Suppose you are attempting to improve in moral character and worth, and yet should, now and then, indulge yourself in reading a bad book. The book seems to have fallen into your hand by accident. You do not often read it, but sometimes look into it; or, if you do not own it, some one may who offers to lend it to you. Here is a temptation thrown before you. You may never know what that book contains, if you do not now learn it; and should you not know what such books contain, in order to warn others against their influence? I reply, Beware; and yield not to this temptation. One yielding, when thus tempted, may be your ruin; or, if it be not, it will take you a long time to recover from the mischiefs which you are bringing upon yourself. Temptations should be met at a distance: if you see the bird once

gaze upon the serpent, she begins to fly round and round, and at every revolution comes nearer, till she falls into the mouth of the devourer.

You have what are usually called "failings," or "little failings." By a proper attention and study for yourself, you can know what these are; but if you find any difficulty in discovering, you have only to ask your near neighbour, and he will name many which you never had claimed as yours. Now, what are these failings, except places at which you are constantly yielding to temptations? And how can you hope to cure yourself of them, except by avoiding them? Suppose you are naturally of a turn of mind which is bold, impetuous, and forward. It leads you to make remarks that are rash, and to do things which you ought not. Should you not avoid every temptation to it? If Peter be naturally impetuous, and in danger of striking at the first head which he meets, ought he not to leave his sword behind him? You may be of such a temperament, that all company excites your animal spirits, and you are so easily elated, that you lose your balance at the time, and have an equal degree of depression following it. In this case, are you wise to allow yourself to run into temptation? Should a passionate man, whose temper is easily excited, throw himself into situations in which he will certainly be tempted to anger? Whatever be your weakness, or the spot at which you fall, beware of it, and shun it. The best way to overcome sin, is to flee from its approach. He who tampers with a temptation is already under its power. The lion will frequently let his victim move, and will play with it before he crushes it.

4. *Watch over your temper.*

There is much said about the natural disposition

and temper of men; and the fact, that any one has a temper which is unhappy and unpleasant, is both accounted and apologised for, by saying that his temper is "naturally" unpleasant. It is a comfortable feeling to lay as much blame upon nature as we can; but the difficulty is, that the action, to use a law term, will not lie. No one has a temper naturally so good, that it does not need attention and cultivation; and no one has a temper so bad, but that, by proper culture, it may become pleasant. One of the best disciplined tempers ever seen, was that of a gentleman who was naturally quick, irritable, rash, and violent; but, by having the care of the sick, and especially of deranged people, he so completely mastered himself, that he was never known to be thrown off his guard. The difference in the happiness which is received or bestowed by the man who guards his temper, and that by the man who does not, is very great. No misery is so constant, so distressing, and so intolerable to others, as that of having a disposition which is your master, and which is continually fretting itself. There are corners enough, at every turn in life, against which we may run, and at which we may break out into impatience, if we choose.

No one can have an idea of the benefits to be derived from a constant supervision and cultivation of the temper, till he try them: not that you will certainly cultivate the moral feelings, if the temper be subdued; but you certainly will *not*, if it be not subdued.

Suppose, at the close of the day, as you look back upon what you have done and said, you see that, in one instance, you answered a companion short and tartly; in another, you broke out in severe invective upon one who was absent; in

another, you were irritated and vexed at some trifle, though you kept it to yourself, and felt the corrosions of an ill temper without betraying your feelings, otherwise than by your countenance. Can you now look back upon the day with any degree of comfort? Can you feel that you have made any advancement in subduing yourself, so that you can look at yourself with cheerfulness and respect, during this day? And if this be so, from day to day, and from week to week, can you expect that your heart will be more and more subdued? You may be sure, that no one, who so gives way to his temper, during every day, that, at night, he has to reproach himself for it, can be growing in moral excellence.

You need not be discouraged in your attempts to correct a quick, an irritable, and a bad temper, even though, at first, unsuccessful. Success, on this point, will certainly follow exertion. It is one mark of a great, as well as a good man, to have a command over the temper.

The great Dr. Boerhaave was always unmoved by any provocation, though the practice of medicine is by no means well calculated to soothe the nerves. Upon being asked how he obtained such a mastery over himself, he stated, that "he was naturally quick of resentment, but that he had, by daily prayer and meditation, at length attained to this mastery over himself."

You will have strong temptations to irritability of temper. But the indulgence of such a temper will not merely mar your present peace, injure you in the eyes of all who know you, hurt your usefulness, hasten on a premature old age, but it is fatal to that peace of mind which consists in "a pure conscience." The heart sickens in despondency, when, at the close of the day, you go to

the closet and have to reflect, that your temper is still unsubdued; and that, while you ought to be above being moved by the little troubles which meet you, they constantly oppress you. If you now have no more of character than to give way to your disposition, while in the retirement of study, what will you do when the multiplied vexations of active life come upon you?

5. *Be careful to improve your thoughts when alone.*

There will be seasons recurring frequently, when you must be alone. You will walk alone, or you will sit in the evening shade alone, or you will lie on a sleepless pillow alone. Every student ought not only to expect this, but to desire it; and never, if his heart be right with God, need he be less alone than when alone. The appetites and passions are so apt to ramble, that we esteem him to be skilled in self-government who subdues them; but the thoughts are but little behind in giving the conscientious man trouble. The two difficulties which will meet you most constantly, are, to keep the thoughts from wandering, and to keep them from straying into forbidden paths. What is vain and visionary will easily steal in upon you when alone, and you will soon become a most wretched companion to yourself, and your own tempter. You can easily get into the habit of looking back, and recalling what you have read or studied, and examining what way-marks you have put up, or of reviving the remembrance of information and knowledge which you have received by conversation; but if you do not cultivate this habit, there will be one at your elbow ever ready to enter the heart and become the strong man of the house. The memory and the judgment may both be cultivated by employing

your thoughts upon whatever you have been studying or reading within the last twenty-four hours. Your process will be, first, to recall anything valuable which you have met with, and then classify it, and weigh it, and judge as to the occasions in which you may wish to use it.

There are many great advantages in taking frequent opportunities of employing your thoughts alone.

The mind and feelings are soothed by the process; and this is an object every way desirable. There will be little disappointments frequently, little trials, and mistakes, which harass and vex you beyond measure. You need seasons of meditation, by which the feelings become soothed and softened, and the judgment rendered clear and decided.

The future lies before you. It will come, it will bring changes to you; some of them will be trying, and hard to bear. There will be sorrows and disappointments in your progress. You need to anticipate the future, so far as you can do it, by sitting down and looking calmly at the possible events which may lie before you. He who never looks out and anticipates a storm, will be but poorly prepared to meet it when it comes. I do not mean that you should go into the future, and there take a possible calamity, and then grapple with it as with your destiny, and thus mentally endure evils which probably will never come; for no one is likely to hit upon the real evils which will overtake him: but I mean that the thoughtless man, who never communes with himself, is the man who meets troubles with the least resignation.

You have plans, too, for the future, which need to be laid in your own bosom, and to be first

matured and reviewed there, till they are perfected, under all the light which frequent contemplations can throw upon them. Your thoughts, while alone, are the best means with which to ripen the fruit of future exertions.

Some are afraid of themselves, and dread few things more than to find themselves alone. Every thought of the past or of the future only discourages; and they can be comfortable only by forgetting themselves. But this is not wise. Were it possible for a friend to whisper all your failings, deficiencies, and faults into your ear, without wounding your feelings, and causing you to revolt under the discipline, it would be an invaluable blessing to you. What such a friend might do, you can do for yourself, by your thoughts, when alone. A man can thus be his own teacher, and, after repeated trials, can weigh his actions, conduct, and character very accurately.

He who does not know himself, will never be ready so to make allowance for others as to be greatly beloved. He will be in danger of being harsh and censorious. While, on the other hand, he who is in the habit of reflecting and examining himself, in the cool moments of retirement, will seldom fail of knowing so much of himself that he will regard with tenderness the failings of others. In studying your own character, you have a wide field opening before you. You will fail of doing yourself any good, if, in looking at yourself, you do not make it your determination faithfully to reprove yourself for your failings and faults. Mark the places where you trip, and be sure to shun them the next time. Note every instance in which you trespassed upon the kindness, the feelings, or the rights of others; and in

all cases in which you have failed to observe the golden rule, reprove yourself with due severity, and see that you amend. You will find that, at some particular places, you have shown a heart that was selfish or wanton, a temper that was revengeful and unkind, a spirit that was jealous, or envious, or malicious; a self-conceit that was unpleasant, or a positiveness that required others to acknowledge your infallibility. No one can be alone, and look over his character, and the manifestations of that character, long, without seeing numerous deficiencies, and marking many places at which he ought to set a guard in future.

One of the best criterions by which to judge of your character, is, to examine the characters of those of whose society you are especially fond. You will be more intimate with some than with others. They will be more likely to flatter you; and no better index can ever be found to a man's real character, than those who are his flatterers. If you can discover—and who cannot, if he tries? —who are most frequently flattering you, it will be easy for you to see where you stand. In no moral excellence will you be likely to be above those who pay for your company by their flatteries. You can, in this way, obtain some knowledge of the state of your heart; and in your hours of meditation you will be unwise to neglect to submit your life to this ordeal.

By attention to your thoughts when alone, you can obtain what can in no other situation be obtained—definite and correct views of the character of God. No reading, or preaching, or conversation, can ever give you clear conceptions on this great subject, without meditation. From our infancy we hear the character of God described; we read the descriptions of his character

in his word; but, after all, we are not likely to attach correct and precise ideas to this language, unless we reflect much alone. On other subjects it is not so. If, from your infancy, you should hear all the parts and powers of a steam-engine described, as you grew up, your ideas would become definite and settled by experience. You would see the engine frequently, or converse with those who had seen it. But our conceptions of the character of our Maker do not become definite by experience. The same terms may convey wrong impressions, all the way through life, if we never make this the subject of meditation. Let my young reader try it, and he will find that a single hour of close thought alone will give him views of the character of God which are more definite, clear, and satisfactory, than anything of which he has ever made trial.

6. *Be in the daily practice of reading the word of God.*

The whole journey of life is a continued series of checks, disappointments, and sorrows. In other words, all the dealings of Providence towards us are designed for the purposes of moral discipline. On no other supposition can we reconcile God's dealings with his infinite benevolence, or feel resigned in the circumstances in which we are frequently placed. But those views of God, and of ourselves, which are essential to our peace and discipline of heart, are to be found only in the word of God. I have often been struck with a passage in the travels of the celebrated Mungo Park, describing his situation and feelings when left alone by those who had plundered him in the very heart of Africa. "Whichever way I turned, nothing appeared but danger and difficulty. I saw myself in the midst of a

vast wilderness, in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals, and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement. All these circumstances crowded at once on my recollection, and I confess that my spirits began to fail me. I considered my fate as certain, and that I had no alternative but to lie down and perish. The influence of religion, however, aided and supported me. I recollected that no human prudence or foresight could have arrested my present sufferings. I indeed was a stranger in a strange land; yet I was still under the protecting eye of that Providence who has condescended to call himself the stranger's friend. At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification irresistibly caught my eye. I mention this to show from what trifling circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation; for though the whole was not larger than the top of one of my fingers, I could not contemplate the delicate conformation of its roots, leaves, and capsula, without admiration. Can that Being, thought I, who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with apparent unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after his own image? Surely not. Reflections like these would not allow me to despair. I started up, and, disregarding both hunger and fatigue, travelled forwards, assured that relief was at hand; and I was not disappointed."

This is a touching incident in the life of a brave man. But let us notice the fact that God has made two distinct revelations of himself to this world, each of which is perfect in its kind.

The one is by his works, so clearly revealing his eternal power and Godhead in these, that the very heathen are inexcusable for not worshipping him. The heavens, the earth, all his works, even to the little "moss" which lifts its humble head in the sands of the desert, unite in teaching his wisdom, his power, and his goodness. And it was very natural for Park thus to gain confidence and instruction from this microscopic forest, planted and watered by an unseen hand; but I am confident that, had he, at the same time, looked at the other revelation which God has made, and drawn relief from the Bible, he would have had a confidence still stronger, and even joy in again committing himself to Him who suffers not the sparrow to fall without his special direction. In the nineteenth Psalm is a beautiful parallel drawn between these two revelations of Heaven, and the superiority of the written most decidedly extolled. The monarch of Israel seems to have been walking on the top of his palace, on one of those clear, delightful evenings which hang over Palestine, and contemplating the works of his Maker. He breaks out in praise, declaring that the heavens and the starry firmament beam out the glory of God; and looking down upon the earth, he says that every day speaks to the one that is to follow it, and every night to its successor, declaring the character of God; and though no speech is heard, and no language is uttered by the works of God, yet they reveal him through all the earth, wherever the sun shines. He then seems to forget all the brightness of the heavens and the glories of earth as he turns away to the word of God, that better revelation of himself. His harp rises in its strains as he celebrates that; for here is a reve-

lation which is perfect, complete, reaching the soul, commending itself to the conscience, gladdening the heart, enlightening the understanding, enduring in its effects upon the soul, gratifying the taste, and, beyond all, restraining from sin, and purifying the heart.

There is a fine eulogy upon the Bible from the pen of that masterly scholar, sir William Jones. It was written on a blank page in his Bible, and also inserted in his eighth discourse before the society for Asiatic researches. "The Scriptures contain, independently of a Divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected, within the same compass, from all other books that were ever composed in any age or in any idiom. The two parts of which the Scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance, in form or style, to any that can be produced from the stores of Grecian, Indian, Persian, or even Arabian learning. The antiquity of those compositions no man doubts; and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief that they were genuine predictions, and consequently inspired."

Deists and sceptics, in swarms, have studied the revelation of nature, and professed to see and know God: but from this source they draw no truths in which they can agree, no precepts which in any measure break the power of sin within the heart, no consolations which bow the will to that of God in the hour of suffering and trial, and no hope that can sustain and cheer the soul when she is called to feel her house shake

and fall in pieces. "The Bible resembles an extensive and highly cultivated garden, where there is a vast variety and profusion of fruits and flowers; some of which are more essential or more splendid than others; but there is not a blade suffered to grow in it which has not its use and beauty in the system. Salvation for sinners is the grand truth presented everywhere, and in all points of light; but the pure in heart sees a thousand traits of the Divine character, of himself, and of the world; some striking and bold, others cast, as it were, into the shade, and designed to be searched for and examined,—some direct, others by way of intimation or reference."

You cannot enjoy the Scriptures unless you have a taste for them; and, to this end, read them daily. Many have tried to read the Bible, and were entirely unsuccessful. They have obtained new editions, in different forms, and yet there was no enjoyment in reading. One reason was, that they never were in the habit of reading the Bible every day; and unless you have this habit, it is in vain ever to hope to see or feel any of those excellences which others praise. You could enjoy no study, if it were taken up only now and then. Every student knows that he feels interested in any study in proportion as he continues to attend to it day after day for some time.

A little before his death, the great Locke, being asked how a young man could, "in the shortest and surest way, attain a knowledge of the Christian religion, in the full and just extent of it," made this memorable reply: "Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, salvation

for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter."

I would not only most earnestly recommend you to read the Scriptures daily, but would add a few hints as to the best method of doing it.

(1.) *Read the Bible alone in your retirement.*

The reason of this is obvious. Your mind will be less distracted, the attention less likely to be called off, your thoughts less likely to wander. You can read deliberately, understandingly, and with personal application. It will soon become a delightful habit; and you will shortly greet the time when you are to be alone with your Bible, with as much interest as if you were to be with your dearest earthly friend. No taste is so much improved by habit and cultivation as the taste for the word of God.

(2.) *For all practical purposes in your daily reading, use the common translation of the Bible.*

For accurate and critical study, the student will of course go to the original, and to commentators. But to obtain a general knowledge of the revelation in our hands, and to cultivate the moral feelings of the heart, the common translation is incomparably superior to anything else. It is of great importance to obtain such a knowledge of the Bible as you will obtain by reading it in order. I suppose the word of God was given in parcels, from time to time, as was best adapted to the state of the world, and best adapted to give us correct conceptions of the character and government of God. One part of your time should be employed in reading the books in order, going regularly through the Bible in this way, as fast as your circumstances will admit. At another sitting, and in another part of the day, you may read some portion that is

strictly devotional, such as the Psalms, the Gospels, or the Prophets. No young man can be too familiar with the book of Proverbs. There is an amazing amount of practical wisdom treasured up there; and the young man who should have that at his command, will be likely to do wisely. All the proverbs and wise sayings of the earth can bear no comparison to those of Solomon for value; and there is scarcely one of any value, the essence of which is not already in his.

(3.) *Read the Scriptures with an humble, teachable disposition.*

The strongest of all evidence in favour of the inspiration of the Bible is the internal—that which the good man feels. This, indeed, is such as no arguments of the infidel can shake. On other evidence you can throw doubts for a moment, bring objections which cannot, at once, be answered; suggest difficulties which perplex; but you may heap difficulties up like mountain piled upon mountain, and the good man feels that his Bible is from God. This is just as you would suppose it would be with a book from heaven. But, besides this, there is evidence enough to crush every doubt for ever. It is well to measure the base and examine the foundations of the building, if your circumstances will allow of it: but if you cannot do it just now, reserve it for some future time. But you cannot derive good from the Bible unless you have an humble mind. A child might say that the sun and stars all moved round the earth; that his reason taught him so; and that it was befitting that God should thus form the universe. But the reason of the child cannot decide such points. You must not say that you can decide what and how much God

ought to reveal himself and his word. We cannot explain or understand the mysteries which hang around every grain of sand and every drop of water; much less can we expect at once to have a revelation about a Being whom no eye ever saw, and a country from "whose bourne no traveller" ever returns, without meeting with difficulties and mysteries. Humility will teach us to sit at the feet of revelation, and receive her instructions without cavilling. Reverence towards the Author, and the contents of the Scriptures, and a regard for our own everlasting welfare, demand that we read with humility. We must be docile. We are ignorant, and need instruction; we are dark, and need illumination; we are debased by our passions and sins, and need elevating. The torch of reason cannot enlighten what hangs beyond the grave; the conjectures of the imagination only bewilder; and without receiving the Bible with the spirit of a child, you will conjecture, and theorise, and wander, till you find yourself in an ocean of uncertainty, without a chart to guide you, a compass by which to steer, or a haven which you can hope to make.

(4.) *Read the Scriptures under a constant sense of high responsibility.*

If the book in your hand be the only revelation which has been made to man, and if God has spoken his mind and will in that, then you have a standard to which you can, at all times, bring your conscience, by which you can cultivate your heart, and grow in purity. You have a book which is able to fit you for the highest usefulness, to point out the noblest ends of your existence; the best method of attaining those ends; which can soothe you when the heart is

corroding by vexatious cares; which can humble you when in danger of being lifted up by prosperity; which can sustain you when your own strength is gone; and which, after having led you, as the star led the wise men of the east, through life, will at last conduct you to a world where the soul shall live and act in her strength, the mind be enlarged to the utmost of its capacity, and where your wishes will only be commensurate with your enjoyments. Can you neglect this book without doing yourself injustice? You are but of yesterday, and have had time to learn but little of what is around you; and without Divine aid you never would learn what is the destiny of your nature, or any thing of what awaits the soul in the eternal world; but God has given you his own word to teach, to direct, and to sanctify you. If you have any wisdom, you will read the Scriptures daily; if you do not do it, you may be sure the reason is, you are so in love with sin, that you are unwilling to have a light poured upon you which would rebuke you.

7. *Be in the habit of faithfully reviewing your conduct at stated seasons.*

When these stated seasons shall be, and how often they shall recur, is not for me to say. But they should recur often, and periodically. A heathen philosopher strongly urged his pupils to examine, every night before they slept, what they had been doing that day, and so to discover what actions are worthy of pursuit to-morrow, and what vices are to be prevented from slipping into habits. There are particular times when, by the providences of God, we are especially called to examine our conduct, which are not periodical. For example, if the hand of sickness has been

laid upon you, and you have been made to feel your weakness and helplessness, the time of your sickness and of your recovery should both be seasons in which to pause and hold close counsel with your heart. If you change your residence, go from home, or go to a new institution for study; such a change affords you the best possible opportunity to examine and see what habits, what moral delinquencies you ought to change for the better, what have been the rocks of temptation on which you have split, what the companions who have led you astray, what sins you have fallen into which would grieve your parents, which have pierced your own soul with sorrow, and which, if persisted in, will eventually preclude you from any service in the holy kingdom of God. These changes in your circumstances ought always to be made pausing places, at which you faithfully review all your life, and, with penitence for the past, and new resolutions made in reliance on Divine aid, set out for a better life in future.

But these are not the periodical times which I am especially urging. At the close of every sabbath, you should make a conscience of performing the duty, and retire and review the week which is now past. It is a good time. You have had the soothing rest of the sabbath, and you are now one week nearer the hour of dying, and the hour of being judged. You have had the advantages of another week; now is the time to see how you have improved them. You have had another week in which to influence others; now is the time to see what that influence has been. You have had the responsibilities of forming a character, under the highest possible advantages, for the service of God during the past week;

now is the time to inquire how you have acted under such responsibilities. Make this review thorough, and be sure not to omit it once. If you allow the season to pass without this close self-examination, you will be likely to do it again and again; for there is no duty in all that pertains to the discipline of the heart so irksome as that of self-examination. Some will say that they had rather their friends would point out their defects. But why should you be like the child who asks for a looking-glass in which to examine his hands, to see if they need washing? No doubt it is more agreeable to have a friend to do this, than to do it yourself; and for the obvious reason that you will be able to see a thousand sins, and a thousand wrong motives, which his eye cannot reach. Such an exercise, too, is exceedingly well fitted to close the Sabbath, and to fasten upon the soul those sacred impressions for which the day is especially designed.

It has been said by some, that we can judge of the bent of our characters by examining every morning to see about what our thoughts have been employed during the night, as it is supposed we shall, of course, when off our guard during sleep, go about the business which we should like best, if our inclinations might be followed. There may be some truth in this, but not enough, probably, to enable you to make it any criterion by which to judge of your character; for every student knows that a noise like the falling of a pair of tongs, may hurry him away to the field of battle; a single coverlet too much, may cause him to groan with a mountain upon him, in his sleep. This much is generally true—that, if you have a troubled night, you have, probably, either

abused the body by eating or drinking too much, or tasked the brain by too great a draft upon its functions at a late hour at night. Dreams will at least indicate how much you are abusing your corporeal and mental powers.

But at night, at the close of the day, when you have passed through the day; have added it to the days of your existence on earth; when its hours have fled to the judgment-seat, and reported all your doings, all your words and thoughts, the day which must inevitably have more or less effect in shaping your destiny for ever; this is the season when you ought to review, most faithfully and most strictly, all your conduct. You may not at once see the advantages of doing so; but they are really greater than language can describe. You will find duties omitted during the day; will not the examination lead you to repent of what was wrong, and to avoid it to-morrow? You will find time wasted, an hour here, and half an hour there; will not the examination do you good? You will find that you have spoken unadvisedly with your lips; and ought you not to know of these instances? You will find that you have sinned with the thoughts; will it not do you good to recall these instances? Perhaps you have made one effort to resist temptation, and to do your duty; and it will cheer you to recall it. To-morrow you will be still more likely to be successful. Every man, at night, can tell whether he has made, or squandered, or lost property during the day; and so every one, by proper care, can tell whether he has gone backward or forward in disciplining his heart, at the close of every day. He who passes weeks and months without this frequent, faithful review, will wonder, at the end of these

long periods, why he has not improved in moral character, and why he has no more confidence in his hopes for the future. The fact is, we may live, and be heathens, under the full light of the gospel, and perhaps, too, while we are cherishing some of its forms. But life will pass from you while you are making good resolutions, and hoping to do better, unless you bring yourself to account daily; and when death shall come to call you away, you will find the touching and affecting language of the dying heathen philosopher most suitable to your case:—*Fœdus hunc mundum intravi, anxius vivi, perturbatus egredior; Causa causarum, miserere mei:*—"I was born polluted, I have spent my life anxiously, I die with trembling solicitude; O thou Cause of causes, have pity on me." The pain which our deficiencies and sins give us on the review, will be salutary, desirable, and necessary; and it is at a fearful hazard that any one under as great responsibilities as those under which we are placed, ever retires to rest without such a review of the day as I am recommending.

8. *Be in the habit of daily prayer.*

The most distinguished authors, such, I mean, as have been the most widely useful, have always sought the blessing of God upon their studies. Doddridge used to observe frequently, "that he never advanced well in human learning without prayer, and that he always made the most proficiency in his studies when he prayed with the greatest fervency." When exposed to dangers which threaten the body, such as the perils of a journey, a malignant epidemic, a storm at sea, or the rockings of an earthquake, no one esteems it enthusiasm or weakness to ask aid and protection from God. But how many feel, that, in

sitting down to study, when they are tempted to go astray in a thousand paths of error, when they are liable to have their opinions, views, plans, habits, all the traits of their character, wrong, they have no need of prayer! The very heathen felt so much need of aid, in their mental researches, that they seldom, if ever, began a study or a book without invoking the aid of the gods. Surely the student who knows his dependence upon the true God, and who knows how easily the mind of man is thrown off from its balance, how important it is that the mind be clear, and all its powers in full vigour, will not feel that, as a student, to say nothing about a higher character or destiny, he can do his duty to himself, without forming and cultivating the habit of daily prayer.

I know that thousands, when pressed on this point, will say that they have no time, their studies are so pressing, so urgent, that they have neither the time nor the spirit necessary for prayer. I reply, that it will not hinder your studies. On the contrary, the mind will be calmed, rested, and refreshed, by being daily turned off from your studies for prayer. Ask any distinguished man, who has ever tried both methods of study, and he will tell you that he has been prospered in his studies in proportion to his faithfulness in performing this duty. What shall be said of such a man as bishop Andrews, who was such a proficient in study, that he could read fifteen different languages, and yet never spent less than five hours daily in private devotion?*

* The excuse of neglecting prayer, on account of want of time, is well compared to a workman saying that he had not time to sharpen his tools.

You will find, I trust, the following hints of advantage to you in the performance of this duty.

(1.) *Have regular hours for prayer.*

Habit, in regard to every duty, is of the first importance: but for none is it more important than in regard to prayer. You cannot walk and lift up your heart to God, or sit in your room and do it, so well as when retired. The direction of Christ, to enter the closet, was founded on his knowledge of human nature. Have particular seasons, and if your heart be right with God, when the hour arrives, you will hail it as that which is the most pleasant in the whole day. The return of the hour brings to mind the duty, which might, otherwise, be crowded out of mind. System should be rigidly adhered to, in this duty, for the sake of insuring its prompt performance, and especially for the sake of enjoyment. No man ever enjoyed his religion who had not regular seasons devoted to prayer.

(2.) *These hours should be in the morning and in the evening.*

In the morning the mind is calmed; the temptations of the day have not beset you; the duties of the day have not filled the mind and begun to vex you. Before you go to the duties of the day, to its cares, and anxieties, and temptations, begin the day with prayer. Temptations you certainly will meet: trials of virtue and patience will overtake you; and many times before night you will need the aid of your Father to shield you. Go to him, and ask his counsel to guide you, his power to uphold you, his presence to cheer you, his Spirit to sanctify you. Then will you have done what is equivalent to half the duties of the day, when you have thus

engaged his care and assistance. And when the evening comes, when you have done with the duties of the day, when the body is wearied and the mind is jaded, when the world is shut out by the shades of night, when you come to look back and review the day, when you see how many deficiencies have marked the day, how many imperfections still cluster around you, how many sins stare you in the face, how little you have done for yourself, or for others, or for God, during the day past, then is the hour of prayer. It will be sweet to feel that you have One to whom you can go, and who will hear you; One who will forgive you, if you are penitent, and ask in the name of Jesus Christ; One who will accept your evening sacrifice, and give you strength for the morrow, and clothe you with his own righteousness. This hour, if rightly improved, will be like the cheering countenance of a most beloved friend. Take care that nothing comes between you and these hours devoted to God. Think of Daniel, prime minister of Persia, with the affairs of one hundred and twenty provinces resting on his mind, yet finding time to go "into his chamber three times a day, that he might pray and give thanks to God." Think of Alfred, with the cares of monarchy; of Luther, buffeted by the storms of papal wrath; of Thornton, encompassed with a thousand mercantile engagements: yet never allowing the hurry of business to intrude on their regular hours of devotion.

(3.) *Keep your conscience void of offence in other respects, if you would enjoy prayer.*

If you are aware of any sin, be it what it may, in which you allow yourself, you may be sure that will ruin your devotional hours. Either

that, or communion with God, must be relinquished, and certainly will be. If you do not keep the sabbath; if you are light and foolish in conversation; jealous and censorious; or given to the indulgence of vile thoughts and practices in secret, you cannot welcome the hour of prayer.

It may seem strange that I urge this duty upon them, when they perhaps do not profess to be Christians, or religious people. But am I to blame, if they do not even profess to wish to obey and honour God? If you have lived so long under the government of God, under all the advantages which you have enjoyed, under all the responsibilities which have been resting upon you, and still are living without prayer, are you to plead this neglect of duty as a reason why it should not be urged upon you? Shall I be a faithful friend to admit this excuse, and to allow, that, because you have so long tried to escape the eye of God, and have neither thanked him for his mercies nor asked him for his goodness, neither sought his friendship nor deprecated his displeasure, you ought still to be left, and no warning voice reach you? No. And if you urge that you have not been in the habit of prayer, I assure you that you are inexcusable; that you are losing great peace of mind, and daily satisfaction in laying all your wants and trials before Him who can relieve them: you are losing those great principles which make character good, great, and stable; and you are losing opportunities which are passing away rapidly, and whose misimprovement will bring down great anguish upon you.

(4.) *Offer your prayers in the name of Jesus Christ.*

He is the only Mediator between God and man. He it is who sits with the golden censer in his right hand, and who ever lives to intercede for us. He is a great and a merciful High Priest, who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. We have no righteousness of our own; we can have no confidence in offering prayer in our own names. But he who has most of the spirit of Christ; who has the most exalted views of the Redeemer, and the most abased views of himself, will enjoy most at the throne of grace. Your prayers will be cold unless they come from a heart warmed by his love. Your petitions will not be fervent unless you feel your need of an almighty Saviour. The songs which are the loudest and sweetest in heaven, we are told, are kindled by the exhibitions which he has made of what he has done for us.

(5.) *Ask the influences of the Holy Spirit.*

Christ promised the Holy Spirit to those who prayed for his influence; and no gift can be compared to this. All that is done for man in the way of calling his attention to eternal things, sanctifying the heart, and preparing the soul for the service of God here and hereafter, is done by the Holy Spirit as the agent. Solemn warnings are given in the Bible, lest we should abuse this last, best gift of heaven. He is the Sanctifier to purify your heart, the Comforter to sustain and cheer in life and in death.

Ask his influences, and you will be shielded from temptation, trained for usefulness here, enlightened in your views, expansive in your feelings, pure in your aims, contented in your circumstances, peaceful in your death, and glorious in immortality beyond the grave.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OBJECT OF LIFE.

How many beautiful visions pass before the mind in a single day, when the reins are thrown loose, and fancy feels no restraints! How curious, interesting, and instructive would be the history of the workings of a single mind for a day! How many imaginary joys, how many airy castles, pass before it, which a single jostle of this rough world at once destroys! Who is there of my readers that has not imagined a summer fairer than ever bloomed, scenery in nature more perfect than was ever combined by the artist, abodes more beautiful than were ever reared, honours more distinguished than were ever bestowed, homes more peaceful than were ever enjoyed, companions more angelic than ever walked this earth, and bliss more complete, and joys more thrilling, than were ever allotted to man? You may call these dreams of the imagination, but they are common to the student. To the man who lives for this world alone, these visions of bliss, poor as they are, are all that ever come. But true Christians have their anticipations, not the paintings of fancy, but the realities which faith discovers. As they look down the vale of time, they see a star arise, the everlasting hills do bow, the valleys are raised,

and the moon puts on the brightness of the sun. The deserts and the dry places gush with waters. Nature pauses. The serpent forgets his fangs; the lion and the lamb sleep side by side, and the hand of the child is on the mane of the tiger. Nations gaze till they forget the murderous work of war, and the garments rolled in blood. The whole earth is enlightened, and the star shines on till it brings in everlasting day. Here are glowing conceptions, but they are not the work of a depraved imagination. They will all be realized. Sin and death will long walk hand in hand on this earth, and their footsteps will not be entirely blotted out till the fires of the last day have melted the globe. But the head of the one is already bruised, and the sting is already taken from the other They may long roar, but they walk in chains, and the eye of faith sees the hand that holds the chains

But we have visions still brighter. We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. No sin will be there to mar the beauty, no sorrow to diminish the joy, no anxiety to corrode the heart, or cloud the brow. Our characters may be brought to the test, in part, by our anticipations. If our thoughts and feelings are running in the channel of time, and dancing from one earthly bubble to another, though our hopes may come in angel robes, it is a sad proof that our hearts are here also.

Is there anything of weakness in these hopes of good men? Are we not continually seeking rest for the soul? A few years ago, a youth went up to the mast-head of a large whale-ship, and there sat down to think. He was the only child of his mother, and she a widow. He had left her against her wishes and remonstrances, her prayers

and tears. He had for many years been roaming over the seas, and was now returning home. He was thinking of the scenes of his childhood, all the anxious hours which he had cost that mother, all the disobedience on his part, and that love of hers which no waters could quench. Would she be sleeping in the grave when he once more came to her door? Does his home still look as it used to look? the tree, the brook, the pond, the fields, the grove—are they all as he left them? And his mother, would she receive him to her heart, or would she be sleeping in death? Would she recognise her long-absent boy, and forgive all his past ingratitude, and still love him with the unquenchable love of a mother? And may he again have a home, and no more wander among strangers? The pressure of these thoughts was too much. He wept at the remembrance of his undutifulness. Troubles and hardships did not break his spirit, did not subdue his proud heart; but the thoughts of home, of rest, of going out no more, suffering no more, engrossing the love of a kind parent, melted him. Is not this human nature? And is it weakness in a true believer to rejoice at the thought of that day when death shall be swallowed up in victory? when the Lord God shall wipe away all tears, and take away the rebuke of his people, that they may be glad and rejoice in his salvation? "I am going," said the great Hooker, "to leave a world disordered, and a church disorganized, for a world and a church where every angel, and every rank of angels, stand before the throne, in the very post God has assigned them."

The world, the great mass of mankind, have utterly misunderstood the real object of life on earth; or else he misunderstands it who follows

the light of the Bible. You look at men as individuals, and their object seems to be to gratify a contemptible vanity, to pervert and follow their low appetites and passions, and the dictates of selfishness, wherever they may lead. You look at men in the aggregate, and this pride and these passions terminate in wide plans of ambition, in wars and bloodshed, in strife, and the destruction of all that is virtuous or lovely. The history of mankind has all its pages stained with blood; and it is the history of a race whose object seemed to be, to debase their powers, and sink what was intended for immortal glory, to the deepest degradation which sin can cause. At one time, you will see an army of five millions of men, following a leader, who, to add to his poor renown, is about to jeopardize all these lives, and the peace of his whole kingdom. This multitude of minds fall in, and they live, and march, and fight, and perish, to aid in exalting a poor worm of the dust. What capacities were here assembled! What minds were here put in motion! What a scene of struggles was here! And who, of all this multitude, were pursuing the real object of life? From Xerxes, at their head, to the lowest and most debased in the rear of the army, was there one who, when weighed in the balances of eternal truth, was fulfilling the object for which he was created, and for which life is continued?

Look again. All Europe rises up in a frenzy, and pours forth a living tide towards the Holy Land. They muster in the name of the Lord of hosts. The cross waves on their banners, and the holy sepulchre is the watch-word by day and night. They move eastward, and whiten the burning sands of the deserts with their bleaching bones. But of all these, from the fanatic whose voice

awoke Europe to arms, down to the lowest horse-boy, how few were actuated by any spirit which Heaven, or justice, to say nothing about love, could sanction! Suppose the same number of men, the millions which composed the continent which rose up to exterminate another, and who followed the man who was first a soldier, and then a priest and hermit, and who has left the world in doubt whether he was a prophet, a mad-man, a fool, or a demagogue, had spent the same treasures of life, and of money, in trying to spread the spirit of that Saviour for whose tomb they could waste so much; and suppose this army had been enlightened and sanctified men, and had devoted their powers to do good to mankind, and to honour their God, how different would the world have been found to-day! How many, think you, of all the then Christian world, acted under a spirit, and with an object before them, such as the world at some better period will approve, and especially such as the pure beings above us will approve?

Look a moment at a few of the efforts which avarice has made. For about four centuries, the avarice of man, and of civilized men too, has been preying upon the vitals of Africa. It has taken the sons and daughters of Ham, and doomed soul and body to debasement, to ignorance, to slavery. And what are the results? Twenty-eight millions have been kidnapped and carried away from the land of their birth. The estimate is, that the increase in the house of bondage since those times is five-fold, or nearly one hundred and seventy millions of human, immortal beings cut off from the rights of man, and, by legislation and planning, reduced far towards the scale of the brutes! This is only a

single form in which avarice has been exerting its power. Now, suppose the same time and money, the same effort, had been spent in spreading the arts of civilization, learning, and religion over the continent of Africa, what a vast amount of good would have been accomplished!

I am trying to lead you to look at the great amount of abuse and of perversion of mind, of which mankind are constantly guilty. When Christianity began her glorious career, the world had exhausted its strength in trying to debase itself, and to sink low enough to embrace paganism; and yet not so low as not to try to exist in the shape of nations. The experiment had been repeated, times we know not how many. Egypt, Babylonia, Persia, polished Greece, iron-footed Rome, mystical Hindooism, had all tried it. They each spent mind enough to regenerate a nation, in trying to build up a system of corrupt paganism; and when that system was built up — let the shape and form be what it might—the nation had exhausted its energies, and it sank and fell under the effects of misapplied and perverted mind. No nation existed on the face of the earth, which was not crumbling under the use of its perverted energies, when the gospel reached it. Our ancestors were crushed under the weight of a druidical priesthood, and the rites of that bloody system of religion.

Another striking instance of the perversion of mind, and the abuse of the human intèllect and heart, is the system of the Romish church. No one created mind, apparently, could ever have invented a scheme of delusion, of degradation of the soul, the intellect, the whole man, so perfect and complete as is this. What minds must have been employed in shutting out the light of heaven,

and in burying the manna which fell in showers so extended! What a system! To gather all the books in the world, and put them all within the stone walls of the monastery and the cloister; to crush schools, except in these same monasteries, in which they trained up men to become more and more skilful in doing the work of ruin; to delude the world with ceremonies and fooleries, while the Bible was taken away, and Religion muttered her rites in an unknown tongue! And when the Reformation held up all these abominations to light, what a masterpiece was the last plan laid to stifle the reason for ever—the Inquisition! It was reared through the nominally Christian world; the decree, by a single blow, proscribed a large proportion of the printing establishments then in existence, and excommunicated all who should ever read anything which they might produce. A philosopher who, like Galileo, could pour light upon science, and astonish the world by his discoveries, must repeatedly fall into the cruel mercies of the Inquisition. The ingenuity of hell seemed tasked to invent methods by which the human mind might be shut up in Egyptian darkness; and never has a Roman Catholic community been known to be other than degraded, ignorant, superstitious, and sunken. But what a mass of mind has been, and still is, employed in upholding this system! And what a loss to the world has it produced, in quenching in everlasting darkness the uncounted millions of glorious minds which have been destroyed by it!

Was man created for war? Did his Maker create the eye, that he might take better aim on the field of battle? give him skill, that he might invent methods of slaying by thousands? and

plant a thirst in the soul, that it might be quenched with the blood of men? What science or art can boast of more precision, of more to teach it, to hail it with enthusiasm, and to celebrate it in song? Genius has ever sat at the feet of Mars, and exhausted its efforts in preparing exquisite offerings. Human thought has never made such gigantic efforts as when employed in scenes of butchery. Has skill ever been more active and successful, has poetry ever so kindled, as when the flames of Troy lighted her page? What school-boy is ignorant of the battle-ground, and the field of blood, where ancient and modern armies met and tried to crush each other? Has music ever thrilled like that which led men to battle; and the plume of the desert bird ever waved so gracefully, as on the head of a warrior? Are any honours so freely bestowed, or cheaply purchased, as those which are gained by a few hours of fighting? See that man, who so lately was the wonder of the world, calling out, marshalling, employing, and wasting almost all the treasures of Europe, for twelve or fifteen years. What multitudes of minds did he call to the murderous work of war!—minds that might have blessed the world with literature, with science, with schools, and with the gospel of peace, had they not been perverted from the great and best object of living!

A philosophical writer, speaking on this subject, says: "I might suppose, for the sake of illustration, that all the schemes of ambition, and cruelty, and intrigue, were blotted from the page of history; that against the names of the splendid and guilty actors, whom the world, for ages, has wondered at, there were written achievements of Christian benevolence, equally grand and charac-

teristic, and then ask what a change would there be in the scenes which the world has beheld transacted, and what a difference in the results! Alexander should have won victories in Persia more splendid than those of Granicus and Arbela; he should have wandered over India, like Buchanan, and wept for another world to bring under the dominion of the Saviour; and, returning to Babylon, should have died, like Martyn, the victim of Christian zeal. Cæsar should have made Gaul and Britain obedient to the faith, and, crossing the Rubicon with his apostolic legions, and making the Romans freemen of the Lord, should have been the forerunner of Paul, and done half his work. Charlemagne should have been a Luther. Charles of Sweden should have been a Howard, and, flying from the Baltic to the Euxine, like an angel of mercy, should have fallen when on some errand of love, and, numbering his days by the good deeds he had done, should have died like Reynolds, in an old age of charity. Voltaire should have written Christian tracts. Rousseau should have been a Fenelon. Hume should have unravelled the intricacies of theology, and defended, like Edwards, the faith once delivered to the saints."

We claim this as an age behind none ever enjoyed, for high moral principle, and benevolent, disinterested action. But what is this principle in the great mass of mankind? When clouds gather in the political horizon, and war threatens a nation, how are the omens received? How many are there who turn aside and weep, and deprecate the guilt, the woe, and the indescribable evils and miseries of war? The great majority think that the honour which may possibly be attained by a few bloody battles, is ample com-

pensation for the expense, the morals, the lives, and the happiness, which must be sacrificed for the possibility. Let the nation rush to war for some supposed point of honour. Watch the population as they collect, group after group, under the burning sun, all anxious, all eager, and all standing as if in deep expectation for the signal which was to call them to judgment. They are waiting for the first tidings of the battle, where the honour of the nation is staked. No tidings that ever came from any part of the earth can send a thrill of joy so deep as the tidings that one ship has conquered or sunk another.

Was it anything remarkable, that, in the very heart of a Christian nation, a single horse-race has brought more than fifty thousand people together? Were they acting so much out of the character of the mass of mankind as to cause it to make any deep impression upon the moral sensibilities of the nation?

A generation of men come on the stage of action; they find the world in darkness, in ignorance, and in sin. They spend their lives, gain the few honours which are easily plucked, gather the little wealth which toil and anxiety will bestow, and then pass away. As a whole, the generation do not expect or try to exercise an influence upon the world, which shall be redeeming. They do not expect to leave the world materially better than they found it.

For thousands of years the world has slept in ignorance, or fallen into utter darkness. Nations have come up, and bowed and worshipped the sun, or wood, or brass, stone, or reptile, and then have passed away. The heart of man has been broken by vain superstitions, by cruelties, by vileness, under the name of religion; and, apart

from the Bible, we see no hope that it will be otherwise, for as long a period to come. But does this immense waste, this immeasurable loss, for time and eternity, grieve and trouble mankind? Is the world at work for its redemption and disenthralment? By no means! A small portion of the Christian world alone have even looked at it with any interest. This small part are making some efforts. They are taking the gospel of God, and with it carrying the arts of civilization, the light of schools, the sacredness of the sabbath, and the influences and hopes of immortality, to the ends of the earth. But how are these labours esteemed by the mass of society? Where is the sympathy for the solitary missionary of the cross, as he takes his life in his hand, and goes to the dark places of the earth, full of the habitations of cruelty? The world laughs at the idea that the earth can be recovered; and, though lions and tigers are constantly tamed, and the deadly serpent is charmed, yet there is no faith that the moral character of man is ever to be any better. The schemes of the missionary are regarded as fanatical, the Bible is powerless as the cold philosophy of the world, and preaching has no power but that which depends upon the eloquence of the tongue which utters it. But the question is, How do you account for it, that the community at large so coolly make up their minds that the world can never be any better, and each one goes about his business, as if it were all of no sort of consequence? I account for it, by saying that mankind are supremely selfish; so much so, that the situation of a world lying in wickedness does not move them—that the great majority of men always have mistaken, and do still mistake the true object of life.

Nothing in man is great, but so far as it is connected with God. The only wise thing recorded in Xerxes is, his reflection on the sight of his army, that not one of that immense multitude would survive a hundred years. It seems to have been a momentary gleam of true light and feeling. The history of all the great characters of the Bible is summed up in this one sentence;—they acquainted themselves with God, and acquiesced in his will in all things; and no other characters can with any propriety be called great.

Look at individuals. For example, you walk on the pier at one of our large sea-port towns. You notice a man by himself alone. He walks with a quick, feverish step, backwards and forwards, and, every few moments, looks away at that dark speck, far off on the "dark blue sea." He is waiting for that ship to approach, that he may see his own flag at the mast-head. For nearly three years she has been gone, and comes home now, probably richly freighted. During all this time, he has followed her, in his thoughts, day and night: when it was dark—when the storm rushed—when the winds moaned—he thought of his ship; and not for a single waking hour at a time has that ship's image been out of his mind. His whole soul went with her; and yet all this time he never lifted a prayer to Him who holds the winds and the waves in his hand, and even now, when his heart is swelling with hopes that are realized, still he thinks not of raising a breath of thanksgiving to his God; thinks of no acts of mercy which he will perform; feels no accountability for his property. Is such a man, who lives for property alone, pursuing the real object of life?

Look at another man. He is walking his

closet; his brow is contracted; his countenance faded; his eye sunken; and he is full of troubled anxiety. He looks out of his window for his messenger, and then sinks down in deep thought. It would seem as if nothing less than the salvation of his soul could cause such an anxiety. He is a crafty politician, and is now waiting to learn the result of a new scheme, which he is just executing, with the hope that it may aid him in climbing the ladder of ambition. He eyes every movement in the community, watches every change, and carries a solicitude which, at times, must be agonising. There are thousands of such minds, trying to make men their tools, regardless of means or measures, provided they can fulfil their great desire—exalt themselves. Are such men pursuing the real object of life?

Look again. There is a man of cultivated taste and refined feeling. His soul is full of poetry, and his feelings alive to every charm that is earthly. He can look out on the face of the evening sky, or watch the tints of dawn, and admire such beauties; but his soul never looks up "through nature's works to nature's God." He can enter into deep communion with what is perfect in the natural world, but he holds none with the Father of his spirit. Music, too, is his delight. He can eagerly give himself away to the melody of sweet sounds; but, with all this, he stands without the threshold of the moral temple of God, and has no wish to enter in and eat the food of angels. The thorns which grow on Sinai are unpleasant to his soul; but not more so than are the roses which bloom on Calvary. The blending tints of the summer bow awaken a thrill of pleasure; but the bow of mercy which hangs over the cross of Jesus, has

in it nothing that can charm. He lives, plans, and acts, just as he would were there no God above him, before whom every thought lies naked. Is this man—this refined, cultivated scholar—pursuing the object for which he was created? And if every cultivated man on earth should do precisely as he does, would the world advance in knowledge, virtue, or religion? Man was created for purposes high and noble—such as angels engage in, and in comparison with which, all other objects sink into insignificance, and all other enjoyments are contemptible as ashes.

The distinguished Pascal has a thought which is well worth examination, especially by all those who are conscious of living for other aims than those which ought to be the real end of life. "All our endeavours after greatness proceed from nothing but a desire of being surrounded by a multitude of persons and affairs that may hinder us from looking into ourselves; which is a sight we cannot bear." Probably few are conscious that this is the reason why they so busily waste their lives in unworthy pursuits, though none can be insensible of having the effect produced.

Every youth who reads these pages expects to be active, to be influential, and to have some object of pursuit every way worthy of his aims. That object will be one of the four following: pleasure, wealth, human applause, or genuine benevolence.

I shall not stop to dwell upon the first of these. No argument need be urged to show how utterly unworthy of his education, of his friends, and of himself, he acts, who so degrades himself as to make the appetites and passions of his animal nature the object of life, and who looks to them

for happiness. Let him know that there is not an appetite to be gratified, which does not pall and turn to be an enemy the moment it has become his master. It makes him a slave, with all his degradation and sorrows, without any of the slave's freedom from thought and anticipation. You cannot give way to any appetite, without feeling instant and constant degradation; and he who sinks in such a way that he despises himself, will soon be a wretch indeed. Conscience can be deadened and murdered in no way so readily as by indulgence: the mind can be weakened, and every intellectual effort for ever killed, in no way so readily as in this. If you would at once seal your degradation, for time and eternity, and for ever blast every hope of peace, greatness, or usefulness, I can tell you how to do it all. You have only to cultivate your appetites, and give way to the demands of your passions, and drink of those stolen waters which are sweet, and eat of that bread in secret which is forbidden, and you may rest assured that you have chosen a path which is straight—but it is straight to ruin.

The pursuits of wealth are less debasing; but they are not worthy of an immortal soul. You can pursue wealth and cultivate selfishness at every step: you may do it with a heart that idolizes what it gains, and, could it know that what it gathers to-day would continue in the family for centuries, and be constantly increasing, would idolize it still more. But here let me say to the student, if wealth be your object, you have mistaken your path. There is no situation in the land in which you could not obtain it easier and faster than by study. A student cannot

become wealthy, in ordinary circumstances, without contracting his soul to a degree which destroys all his claims to be a student.

But the strongest temptation which will beset you is, to live and act under the influence of ambition, and to sell your time and efforts, and yourself indeed, for human applause. There is, perhaps, no earthly stream so sweet as that which flows from this fountain. But you little know the dangers which wait around the man who would drink here—the archers which lie in ambush. There are so many things to diminish the gratifications which ambition bestows, that, were there no higher, no nobler end of existence, it would seem dangerous to pursue this. How many begin life with high hopes, with expectations almost unbounded, who, in a little time, sink down into discouragement and listlessness, because they find the tree higher up the mountain than they expected, and its fruit more difficult to be obtained! But suppose a man be successful, and the measure of his desires begins to be filled. As you come close to him, you discover spots which were not seen at a distance, and blemishes which the first glare of brightness concealed. These weaknesses are noted, trumpeted, magnified, and multiplied, till it seems astonishing how a character can be great under such a load of infirmities. These are vexations; they are like little dogs which hang upon your heels all the day, and which give you no peace at night. But these you can endure. You may live in spite of having every blemish, which your public character exposes, published abroad. But suppose you make a single false step, as you mount the hill—then where are you? How many, who have made the applause of men the

breath of their nostrils, have seen all their hopes dashed, in the very morning of their lives, by some step which they took in furtherance of their object, but which, in fact, was a mistaken step! The wheel was broken at once, and with it their schemes, and perhaps their hearts. But this is not the worst of what is before you, if you live for applause. Admiration for anything on earth cannot endure long. It will be always short-lived; and there is quite as much difficulty in keeping up a reputation, as in gaining it at the first. It takes us but a short time to say all our pretty sayings, and all our smart things. A reputation which has cost you years of toil to obtain, is no less difficult to keep than to acquire. If that reputation be not still rising and increasing, it will soon begin to droop and decay. Your best actions must become better still; your highest efforts must become higher still, or you sink; and, after all, do what you will, and as well as you will, still you do not more than barely meet expectation. A man writes a book: it is his first effort. There was no expectation about it. It is received well, even with applause. He writes another; and now he is not to be measured by what he did before. He must be measured by the standard of public opinion; and a reception which would raise a new author, is ruin to him. All this price you must certainly pay, if you live for the applause of your fellow-men. They will bestow no more of it than they can avoid; they will recall it as soon as an opportunity allows; and they will feel that neglect is your due, in future, as a counterweight to what has been so liberally thrown into the other scale. The pursuits of ambition are successions of jealous disquietudes, of corroding fears, of high

hopes, of restless desires, and of bitter disappointment. There is ever a void in the soul—a reaching forth towards the empty air, and a lighting up of new desires in the heart.

There are other vexations, and certain disappointments, attending him who lives for the good opinion of men, which are unknown till they come upon you, but which are distressing in the extreme when they do come. That desire after fame which moves you, soon becomes feverish, and is constantly growing stronger and stronger. And in proportion to your desire for applause, and the good opinion of men, is your mortification deep and distressing, when applause is withheld. If praise elates and excites you, the withholding that praise will proportionably sink your spirits, and destroy your comfort. You are thus a mere foot-ball among men, thrown whereever they please, and in the power of every man; for every man can take away your peace, if he pleases, and every man is more tempted to bestow censures than applause. One thing more. If you set your heart on the applauses of men, you find that, if you receive them, the gift will not, and cannot bestow positive happiness upon you, while the withholding of them will clothe you with certain and positive misery. A disappointed man of ambition is miserable, not because his loss is really so great, but because his imagination has, for years, been making it appear great to him. I could point you to the grave of a most promising man, who lived for honours solely. The first distinct object on which he fixed his eye was, to fill an important public situation. For this he toiled day and night. He was every way worthy; but just as he was on the point of succeeding, one of his

intimate friends felt that such an appointment would interfere with his own schemes of petty ambition, and, therefore, he stepped in, and prevented the nomination. The poor man returned home sick, cast down, and broken-hearted. The loss of that election certainly was not of any great consequence, but he had brooded over it till it was of immense consequence, in his view. The blow withered him, and in a few months he went down to his grave, the prey of disappointment. Is such a pursuit worthy of man? Is this the high end of life on earth? A distinguished writer, who thus lived for fame, not only outlived his fame, but the powers of his own mind; and many were the hours, in broken old age, which he spent in weeping, because he could not understand the books which he wrote when young. What a picture could the painter produce, with such a subject before him!

> "—— souls immortal must for ever heave
> At something great—the glitter or the gold—
> The praise of mortals, or the praise of Heaven."

This brings me to the point to which I am wishing to come. This "something great" at which we "heave" may be great in reality, or only great because we make it so. But while I have thus briefly tried to show you that in neither of the ways described will you find what ought to be the object of living, you will understand that there is nothing in the spirit or philosophy of the gospel, which throws the soul back upon herself without giving her any object upon which her powers may be exerted. If we would drive the love of pleasure, the love of wealth, and the love of human applause, from the heart, we do not propose to leave that heart cold and desolate, with nothing to cheer or warm it, or to call forth

its warmest, holiest, noblest sympathies. Far from it. But what I wish is, that you may so lay your plans, and so pursue the object which you place before the mind, that you may have continued contentment and peace while pursuing it, the consciousness of not living in vain, while your soul is expanding in all noble, heavenly qualities, and preparing for a destiny which is blessed with the pure light of immortality.

You need to act under a motive which is all-pervading, which guides at all times, in all circumstances, and which absorbs the whole soul. It should be such as will lead to a high, noble standard of action and feeling, and as will call forth the highest efforts of the whole man, body and soul, in enterprises which will do good to men. There is but one motive which has these qualities, and that is, to secure the approbation of God, and to act on a scale which measures eternity, as well as time. Under the light of the Bible, with the wish to do what God would have you do, you will not fail of fulfilling the great object of life.

You will naturally ask here, Is it practicable to have the high standard of acting for the glory of God constantly before you? I reply, Unquestionably it is.

You know that we have the power of choosing any object on which to fix the heart, to look at the motives which should gather the affections around that object, and then we have the power of bending the whole energy of the soul to the attainment of that object. Demosthenes was an ambitious young man. He is thought to have had very little principle; but he fixed his eye on fame, on that species of popular applause which eloquence alone can command. The mark at

which he gazed was high. From it he never turned his eye a single moment. Difficulties, which nature threw in his way, were overcome. He gave his heart, his soul, to seeking renown; and he climbed up a hill, where most would have slipped down. His admirer, Cicero, tells us, that he always had a standard of greatness before him which was unmeasured—infinite. He determined to stand by the side of Demosthenes. He laboured; he toiled; he achieved the victory; and stands, perhaps, as high up the hill of fame as his master. We often speak of self-made men, of high renown and wonderful deeds. What made them great? What made Buonaparte the terror of the earth? He fixed his eye on the dominion of Europe at least, and towards that goal he ran like a strong man; and to it he would have attained, had there not been an Omnipotence in heaven which can make the strong man as tow. He made himself his own idol, and determined that the whole world should bow to it.

You know that one man has the power of fixing his heart on ambition, and dreaming over his schemes, till they swallow up everything else; that another can fix his heart on wealth; and another on the pleasures of sensual indulgence; and every man on the object which is most congenial to himself. Can you doubt that you have the power, by the grace and in the strength of the Lord, of making the glory of God the polar star of life?—of living for it and to it?—of rising high and strong in action?—high and bright in personal holiness, and having the image and superscription of God engraven on your heart?

"Is it my duty to make the will of God my only standard of life?"

Ask your reason. What says she? "Shall I give my heart to seeking wealth, and the treasures of earth?" No: it will take to itself wings, and fly away. Death will shortly be here, and seize you with a grasp so firm, that you must let go your wealth. You sigh after gold deeply: you must shut your eyes shortly upon all that is called wealth. Remember that "he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." But your soul spreads in her desires; she thirsts, she rises. Do you suppose that any amount of wealth which you can obtain will satisfy her? Will the little time which is yours, cheer the soul in her everlasting progress? No: the bag in which you drop your gains will have holes in it.

Ask reason, "Shall I give my heart to honours? to seeking the notice of men? to draw their attention to this or that effort?" How poor will be your reward for your pains! If you succeed in drawing the eyes of man towards you, *he* will envy you. If you do not, *you* will be bitterly disappointed. There is no house on the shores of time which the waves will not wash away; there is no path here which the foot of disappointment will not tread; there is no sanctuary here which sorrow will not invade. There *is* a home provided for the soul, but you can reach it only in God's appointed way; to none others will its doors be opened.

Consult your conscience also. What does she say is the great end of life? Listen to her voice in the chambers of your own heart. She tells you that there is only one stream that is pure, and that stream flows from the throne of God; but one aim is noble and worthy of an immortal spirit, and that is to obtain the favour and friendship of God, so that the soul may wing her way

over the grave without fear, without dismay, without condemnation. There is only one path passing over the earth which is safe, which is light, and which is honourable. It is that which Jesus Christ has marked out in his word, and which leads to glory. Let conscience speak, when you are tempted to waste a day, or an hour, or to commit any known sin, to neglect any known duty, and she will urge you, by all the high and holy motives of eternity, to live for God, to seek his honour in all that you do.

My young reader will now permit me to present what appear to me the motives which ought to bear upon the mind, to lead it thus to act, making the honour of God the great end of life.

We naturally love to have the soul filled. We gaze upon the everlasting brow of the mountain, which rises beetling and threatening over our heads, and the feeling of admiration which fills the soul is delightful. We gaze upon the ocean rolling in its mighty waves, and listen to its hoarse voice responding to the spirit of the storm which hangs over it, and we feel an awe, and the emotion of sublimity rises in the mind. So it is with the desires. There is something inexpressibly delightful in having the mind filled with a great and a noble purpose—such a purpose as may lawfully absorb all the feelings of the heart, and kindle every desire of the soul. Who ever reared a dwelling perfect enough to meet the desires of the soul? Who ever had a sufficiency of wealth, or of honours, when these were the grand objects of pursuit? Who ever had his thirst quenched by drinking here? And who ever had an earthly object engrossing the heart, which did not leave room for restlessness, a desire of change, and a fretting and chafing in its pursuit? Not so when

the glory of God fills the soul, and the eye is fixed on that as the great end of life. You may live near him, and draw continually nearer; and the soul does not feel the passion of envy, or jealousy, or disappointment, as she comes nearer the object of her desires. Having, increases the desire for more, and more is added; for sin has no connexion with the gift. They who are near the throne are full of this one thought—How can we best promote the glory of Him who is over all, God blessed for ever? No contracted plans, no trifling thoughts, no low cares, enter their bosoms; for they are already filled.

Who does not, more or less, feel the burden of sin? Make God the object of life, and you will not sin as you now do. The word of life is choked by cares, it is shut out by ambition, it is treated with scorn, when the soul presses on for present gratifications. The tempter never has so complete mastery over you, as when you fill the heart with this world, and live for its rewards: not so when you live for your Maker. In vain the tempter walked around the Redeemer, and heaped up his temptations; he found no place in him—not a spot where he could lodge a temptation. Do you never lament, at the close of the day, that you have fallen during the day?—that your heart is frozen and fearful, when you attempt to pray?—that a dark cloud rolls in between you and the Sun of life? Let the heart be filled with good, and evil is shut out.

You need a principle which will lead you to be active for the welfare of men. Your reason and conscience may decide, that you ought to live for the good of your species; and, at times, you may rouse up; but the moving power is not uniform and steady. You need a principle which will

ever keep you alive to duty. You can act but a few days on earth. Between every rising and setting sun, multitudes drop into eternity. Your turn will come shortly. You will soon know whether you are for ever to wear a crown, or be clothed with shame and everlasting contempt,—soon know how bright that crown is, or how deep that despair is. All the retributions of the eternal world will soon be rolled upon you, and you want a principle abiding within you, which will bear you on in duty, active, laborious, self-denying, widening your influence, and adding strength to your character and hopes through life; but this principle is to be obtained only by seeking His approbation from whom you receive every mercy that has ever visited your heart, every joy that has cheered you, and every hope for which the heart longs.

You love to see the result of your exertions in any cause; but you cannot, in all cases in which you plan, fill up your plans. You may determine to be rich, and yet die a poor man. You may long for distinction, and yet never have it. You may sigh for pleasure, and yet every cup may be dashed, and every hope flee from you. All things around you may forsake you, and elude your grasp. Not so if you live to God. Lay up wealth in heaven, and you may increase it daily, and it cannot fail you. And thus when at last you come to be gathered to the home of prophets and apostles, and the spirits of just men made perfect, then will you still more clearly see the results of a life whose aim was to honour God. Then will the poor whom you fed, the sick whom you visited, the stranger whom you sheltered, the distressed whom you relieved, gather around you, and hail you a benefactor.

You ought to act upon principles which conscience will, at all times and in all cases, approve. Do you know what it is to sit down to meditate at the close of the day, and have something hang upon the soul like lead—to have a cloud between you and the throne of grace? Do you know what it is to lie down at night, and look back upon the day, and the days that are passing, and find no bright spot upon which the memory lingers with pleasure? Do you know what it is to lay your head on your pillow, and feel the smitings of conscience, and have the heart-ache, while the clock measures off the hours of night? This is because conscience is at her post, calling the soul to account. Do you not thus commune with your heart, at times? But if you be at peace with God, and live wholly to him, conscience will soothe you, comfort you, and bring hope to your soul, even in your darkest hour. No friend can be found to supply the place of a peaceful conscience. Men will give their property, their time, do penance, give their lives, anything to appease conscience. Let them live for God and his service, and she will not chide; she will guide to the paths of peace and blessedness. The world will sooner or later honour the man who lives for God. At times, men will shun the face of the pious, and profess to be disgusted with piety; but they will garnish the sepulchres of prophets, while the bones of the wicked lie forgotten. The name of Luther will never perish; nor will the name of Martyn or Carey, Brainerd or Payson; while thousands of wicked men, with equal or more influence while living, die, and are for ever gone from remembrance. But you wish the approbation of heaven. Though angels are ten thousand times ten thousand, and

their voices are without number, and though they enjoy the perfection of knowledge, the perfection of holiness, and the perfection of bliss, yet they are all witnesses, a great cloud, of your race. They bend over your pathway, as you run towards the New Jerusalem. Who would not be cheered, could he have the entire approbation of all his friends? But you can have what is far better. You can have the approbation of all the redeemed, of all the angels in heaven, and of the eternal God himself; and this, not for an hour, a day, or a week, for a fleeting year, but for ever! The heavens shall depart as a scroll, and all things shall pass away, except the approbation of God. That shall never pass away. It would be worth your life to have his approbation a single hour when you come to die; but you will have him as your Father, Friend, and glory for ever. Have you any doubt in your mind where wisdom would now lead you? "My first convictions on the subject of religion were confirmed from observing that really religious persons had some solid happiness among them, which I had felt that the vanities of the world could not give. I shall never forget standing by the bed of my sick mother, and asking her,—'Are you not afraid to die?' 'No.' 'No! why does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern?' 'Because God has said to me, Fear not; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee!'"

I am speaking to you, reader, in your own behalf, and in behalf of a world which needs your influence, and your highest, holiest efforts. Others may talk of philanthropy and benevolence; but who give their hearts and their

energies for the salvation of the world, except those whose minds have been enlightened, and whose hearts have been impressed by the truths of Christianity? Who built the first hospital known on earth? A Christian. Who conceived the idea of free schools for the whole community? A Christian. Who are the men who have introduced civilization among the barbarous? who have broken the fetters both from body and mind, and created civil liberty for man? Who ever made efforts, vigorous, systematic, untiring, to spread free inquiry, to instruct the ignorant, to invigorate the mind, and raise the intellectual and moral character of mankind? They are the enlightened men who act under the influence of the Bible. The only effort which is now making, on the face of the whole earth, for the good of mankind, is making by the church of the living God. Upon this, and upon this alone, as the instrument in the hand of God, all our hopes for the salvation of the world from darkness, ignorance, and sin, rest. To the youth of our nation, to those whose minds are now in a process of cultivation and discipline, we now look for the spirits who are soon to go abroad over the face of the earth, scattered, like the Levites, among all the tribes, for the good of all. Upon these young soldiers of the cross do we look, as God's appointed instruments for doing a great and a glorious work. If the mind of man shall ever be raised from its brutishness and debasement; if knowledge, human and Divine, are to go abroad; if domestic happiness is to be known and enjoyed throughout the world, the youth in our schools, who have been baptized by the Holy Ghost, have a great work to do.

Never did young men approach the stage of

action under circumstances more intensely interesting—circumstances demanding a regenerated, purified heart, a balanced, disciplined mind, a burning zeal, and a love for doing good which many waters cannot quench, nor floods drown.

You are coming forward at a time when mind seems to be exhausting itself, and genius to be leaving poetry, that it may aid in subduing matter, so that a score of miles may be reduced to nothing, and time and space so annihilated, that a journey through the breadth of a continent is only a delightful excursion of a week. Nature seems to bend to the torturing; and winds and tides, mountains and valleys, make no pretensions to being considered obstacles in the way of men. You have friends to cheer you on in every worthy enterprise, who will uphold your hands when they fall, encourage you when the spirits fail, share your burdens, and rejoice in your success. You come forward with the history, the experience, of former ages before you; and at your feet lie pictures of men whose example it will be honour, and glory, and immortality, to follow, as well as of men whose example is death. You have the Bible, too, that mightiest of all weapons, under whose broad and powerful aid individual and national character soon ripens into greatness, and one which is, of all others, the grand instrument of blessing the world. Tens of thousands, breathing the spirit of that book, are already in the field at work, trying to bless and save the earth. Some fall, strong ones too, "too much for piety to spare;" but the plan is the plan of God, and the removal of this or that agent does not a moment retard his great plans. Under the full, the pure, the purifying light of the gospel, you are called to live and act. If you live to God,

fulfilling the high destiny which is before you, you have thousands all around you to cheer you onward, to strike hands with you, and go forward as agents of a benevolence, whose aim is, to bring many sons and daughters to glory. Above you are the pious dead, watching your steps. And there, high above all principalities and powers, sits the everlasting Redeemer, holding a crown which shall shortly be yours, if you are faithful to him. He will be near you. You shall never faint. Every sin you conquer shall give you new strength; every temptation you resist will make you more and more free in the Lord; every tear you shed will be noticed by your great High Priest, who died upon the cross to ransom your souls; every sigh you raise will reach his ear. Up, then, my dear young friends! up, and gird on the armour of God. Enlist under the banner of Jesus Christ, and let your powers, your faculties, your energies, your heart, all, all be his. Bright and glorious is the day before you; white and full are the fields that wait for you; girded and strong are the companions who will go with you; beautiful upon the mountains shall be your feet, wherever they carry tidings of mercy. The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action, that everything seems to say loudly, to every man, "Do something," "do it!" "do it!" Pray earnestly for the influences of the Holy Spirit; keep your heart with all diligence; break away from every sin; repent of every sin; watch and pray; live unto God; and your reward, through his grace, shall be what "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

Self improvement