

AN
ADDRESS,

DELIVERED IN THE

INDIGO HALL, GEORGETOWN, SOUTH-CAROLINA,

ON THE

FOURTH DAY OF MAY, 1860,

THE 105TH ANNIVERSARY OF

THE WINYAW INDIGO SOCIETY:

BY

PLOWDEN C. J. WESTON,

Member So. Ca. Historical Society.

Hon. Member Md. Historical Society.

Cor. Member N. Y. Historical Society.

CHARLESTON:

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H. D. Baller,
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[CORRESPONDENCE.]

GEORGETOWN, MAY 4th, 1860.

DEAR SIR:—We take great pleasure in transmitting you the following resolutions of the W. I. Society, passed at its Anniversary this day.

“Resolved, unanimously, that the thanks of this Society be presented to Mr. P. C. J. Weston, Orator of the day, for the very comprehensive, able, and eloquent Anniversary Oration, delivered before us, and that a copy of the same be requested, and a committee of three be appointed to carry out this resolution, and publish three hundred numbers in Pamphlet form.”

We add the assurance, that your compliance will be gratifying to us, individually, as well as to the whole Society; and remain very respectfully, &c.

M. H. LANCE,
J. R. SPARKMAN,
S. T. ATKINSON.

P. C. J. WESTON, ESQ.

HAGLEY, MAY 6th, 1860.

GENTLEMEN:—I desire to thank you most sincerely for your opinion of my Address, which is only too kind and flattering. I beg to place it in your hands, as you request, and I only regret that truths which I am convinced are of the utmost importance, should have been so inadequately treated by me.

With every personal respect, and good wish towards yourselves,

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient serv't,

PLOWDEN C. J. WESTON.

Rev. M. H. LANCE,
Dr. J. R. SPARKMAN,
Maj. S. T. ATKINSON.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth:

St. John. xviii. 37.

Truth which only doth judge itself, teacheth, that the Enquiry of Truth, which is the Love-making, or Wooing of it; the Knowledge of Truth, which is the presence of it; and the Belief of Truth, which is the enjoying of it; is the Sovereign Good of Human Nature.

Bacon's 1st Essay.

* * * * *
Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper, as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do;
Not light them for themselves: for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues: nor nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor
Both thanks and use.

Shakespeare—MEASURE FOR MEASURE—Act 1., Scene 1.

ADDRESS.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, Pupils of the Indigo Society :

AUTHORS are generally troubled with a *hope* and a *fear*—the *hope*—that they may say something that will instruct and please their audience ; the *fear*—that what they say may not be original, that undesignedly they may have mistaken an echo for a voice, and instead of giving the production of their own minds, they may be only reading off inscriptions, which have there been impressed by the photography of memory. The *hope* is too dear to me to be relinquished ; the *fear* I must be permitted entirely to dispense with. Originality is the gift of few ; it is the offspring of deep and laborious contemplation, of keen and ever-excited sensibility. The appreciation of wisdom when written, and the power of gathering together the scattered fragments of wisdom, spread abroad as they are in the unseen, held in solution (as it were) in the waters of the infinite, are the attributes of minds of a totally different order: to a mind of this latter sort I make no pretensions ; let me only be your guide to pastures already surveyed, and in which I have somewhat roamed ; let me lead you to springs not quite unknown, which well up from the regions of truth, and at which, former pilgrims have quenched their thirst. My only desire is to string together the pearls of others on a homely thread of my own, to present you with the ambrosial food on the best platter I can fashion ; I will only expose myself to half the sneer of Talleyrand, who, when he was asked, by an author, his opinion on his newly published work, said, “In your book, sir, there are many good things and many new things ;” and then checked the complacent

smile of his friend, by adding, "but the good things are not new, and the new things are not good." I shall endeavor as briefly as possible, to apply the principles of earnest men, (not sparing to quote even their very words,) to the circumstances under which we live; to Ruskin, Tennyson, and above all to Carlyle, not to mention authors of an older date, I shall always approach with awe and listen with reverence.* To them I owe any thing I may possess, and if I could induce others to apply themselves heart and soul to their works, I should think I had not written in vain; for their principles are those of truth, energy, and nobleness.

One word personally to myself. In the words I shall here utter, I must necessarily find fault, I hope not censoriously, I know not censoriously, for am I not a South Carolinian, speaking to South Carolinians? and conscious of the same foibles in myself that I wish to cure in others? I allow no man to excel me in veneration for our State character; in spite of faults born with our birth, and of foreign importations which are degrading to our character, we are

- "A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled;
- "Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
- "Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
- "Some patient force to change them when we will,
- "Some civic manhood firm against the crowd."

Princess—p. 180—Tennyson.

Everything in nature bears not only the character of contrivance but of design. Every thing appears created for some ultimate purpose, which is the end and object of its being, though it may perform other functions, each of them bearing upon other spheres of usefulness, yet its final object is well ascertained, and its use and purpose clear and patent to the examiner, (of course supposing that the examiner has attained a full knowledge of the subject,) and the higher the creature in the scale of creation is, so much the more apparent and

* My veneration for the genius of Carlyle does not render me insensible to what I humbly consider his many dangerous errors. He must be read with caution, and not without some suspicion;—it is necessary to distinguish between his principles and his opinions; he teaches us *how*, not *what*, to think. If, however, he be studied carefully, not forgetting at the same time, the careful study of the New Testament, I believe no other author will be found so useful. Most persons at first reading him, feel a disgust at his style; let them begin with his reviews, and this will soon wear off. Ruskin's "Seven Lamps," part of his "Modern Painters" and his "Four Lectures," are amongst the most instructive and beautiful books in the English language, and as for Tennyson, there are few lines which we need wish to blot.

defined is this object; so much more definite is the application of the general law. Nor do some seeming incompatibilities offend against this rule; its inconsistencies forward its purpose, its opposing forces urge on its course, and it advances by antagonism. If this be true, man, the creature, has some designed object of his existence, and lives for one particular purpose. Although he is mixed up of a thousand dissimilar ingredients, and is allied to the most noble of intelligences, and the most earthly of sensual existences, yet this same animal, this bundle of contradictions, this heap of incongruities, this butt of opposite and contending forces, has one directing power—CONSCIENCE, one goal—DUTY, one spirit which witnesses to its spirit—TRUTH. Man differs from the lower world by the superiority of his aspirations, and by those moral necessities which are alluded to by the words, should, ought, right, just, &c., which involve a continual sacrifice of the lower and sensual propensities;—and from the higher world, by being cut off by an unpenetrated veil from the object he desires, and thus is compelled to project himself into the future, and to quote the well known words as true in philosophy as religion, “to walk by faith and not by sight.” But I have already lingered too long in attempting to prove what the instinctive feeling of a man’s heart receives as an axiom, that man has duties to fulfil, that are the object and end of his existence; which axiom is the basis of all investigations into moral science, and includes within itself all the practical rules for the guidance of human life. The means by which these objects are attained, fall under the general appellation of *Labor*, or *Work*.

There is an old monkish proverb, (and the monks were the men of action, endurance, and the civilizers of their day, however useless they may be now)—“laborare est orare,” “to labor is to pray,” or (to preserve in English the alliterative gingle of the Latin,) “*work is worship*.” This is a deep and profound truth, worthy of being written in letters of gold, and which will always be the phylactery of those who are *not* Pharisees. It is real, it is earnest, it is deep—it is therefore sublime. It proceeds upon a principle the reverse of

selfish; it supposes that man is to labor—not for the purpose of saving himself from harm, or that of propitiating other beings more powerful than himself, or of doing the greatest good to the greatest number, but it boldly grapples with the question of right, without regard to consequences, and does that which ought to be done without regard to the corollary of expediency, or, in other words, as being worship, it offers itself up to the great source of right and justice, to whom alone worship is due. And this reminds me that the Greeks called the Deity “The Demiurge,” the operative or worker, and that in old French, he is often spoken of as “Le grand Laboureur,” as if they conceived work to be an essential principle of the divine nature, and consequently, of the highest human nature, which is the nearest allied to the divine.

To be constantly occupied with the production of new creations and for the preservation of old, seems to be the necessary law of Divinity. It is certain, that such is the necessary condition of man’s happiness and utility. To be constantly engaged, let the occupation be what it may, is a refuge from a thousand distractions and incessant lacerations, which the mind inflicts upon itself. Left to itself, imprisoned in the solitude of its own emptiness, condemned to tread that most tedious of all tread-mills, the constant contemplation of itself, floating from vain imagination, to imbecile reverie, stretched on the rack of the too-easy chair of self-concentrated indolence—what can be so terrible as the torments of the human soul, if “torment” be not too active a word to express a disease of which the worst symptom is insensibility? and such would be the fate of the greatest portion of mankind, if a kind Providence had not compelled most men to labor, either by imperious necessity, or by presenting to them objects that attract their attention, and to the resolute pursuit of which, they are coerced by the various passions of the mind. The savage alone, untouched by these inducements, spends nine-tenths of his time in listless indolence; the civilized man either works that he may live, or that he may live better than his neighbors. As long as a people work, as long as they hold one object steadily before their intellects, which

they pursue with earnest application, so long is there a hope for that nation. As long as they wish for something, and work for that something, so long they are not to be despaired of. Let the object be mean, let the tendency be sordid, let their labor be mercenary, yet, since they *have* an object, since they have a *real* tendency, and since they *do* labor, the sun does not set on that people, and though obscured, may shine again. Their hopes, their expectations, may turn towards more creditable objects; truth, honor, and duty, may take the place of low ambition and the pride of money-getting; and the capacity of labor, power of strict attention, and incessant vigilance will help them forward in their new career, as the heroes of ancient mythology carried the powers gained and the strength perfected in the dusty conflicts of this lower world, into the asphodel meadows and ever-blooming fields of Elysium.

Was there ever an age like the present? in which the masses of men were so burnt up with ardor for material improvement, so thoroughly subjected to the thirst for wealth, so forgetful of the higher powers which man has received, as his most valuable auxiliaries; and those who are somewhat free from this absorbing mania, are in general, those who are indifferent to every thing, and who hide their indifference under the phrases of liberality, of sentiment, and tender sympathy for the feelings of others.

This abominable liberality, (for so I will call it, a *true* liberality is the highest grace of the highest man)—appears to me, the most thorough treason against the cause of all the honest men, against all the rogues in the world. This is the true way of stating the case. There are two armies under different banners, and under different leaders, who, ever since the world began, have waged war upon each other. Their hostility has been unceasing, their enmity continual; on *one* side, the men and women who worship truth, who hate evil, who “think it foul scorn,”* that

* “We think it foul scorn that Spain or Parma or any other prince should dare to invade the borders of our realm.”

Queen Elizabeth's Speech at Tilbury Fort.

evil or indolence shall have footing within their borders; who attack the abuses which they see straight before them; who labor and work incessantly, to cut down the world covering forest of error, which resounds, and ever shall resound, with the stalwart blows of their axes. On the *other* side, those who live under the shade of that forest, and worship the foul things that roost in its branches.

But why should I seek for illustrations or metaphors? the simple truth is plain enough; on the one side are the seekers of right, on the other, the seekers of self.

The answer to these doctrines I am announcing will be a sneer at fanaticism;—I reply, they are the maxims of heroism and not of fanaticism. Every hero, so far as he is a hero, casts away the notion of self; in pursuit of certain objects, he despises difficulties and dangers; he remembers his object and forgets himself; the fanatic has also great objects for which he is ready to do and to suffer—he wants that *first* of heroic virtues, *faith*; he has not that calm and implicit belief in the triumph of right, as to act strictly according to the rules and requirements of right; his own paltry fears, his disquietudes, and his hopes lead him to enlist other champions besides truth and honesty in the great combat in which he is engaged.

Providence is not, in his opinion, capable of managing its own affairs, and as has been well said, he ekes out the lion's skin of Divine justice with the fox's hide of fraud and lying.

In speaking thus, I know that I lay myself open to the imputation of being a wholesale carper at the ordinary motives of men; it is the custom of many, even sincerely good men, to give prudential reasons for their line of conduct, and in one way or the other these motives of safety or reward mix themselves up with almost all the moral and religious teaching of the day. To this I answer that, in so far as this reasoning is faulty, it should be reprobated, the whole moral scope of an action consisting in its teaching or motive, and men are singularly disinclined to give the highest and holiest reasons which actuate their conduct. The shy and timid fear the laugh of the unthinking and the sneer of the envious;

the prudent know how dangerous a thing it is to promulgate a strict code wherewith to try their own life. They know how dangerous a thing it is to profess to be better than one's neighbors, and are content with acting high and speaking low; whilst the noble-minded prefer that silence which is ever a proof of a deep mind, and will not let the ignoble meddle with the golden chains which bind them to their proper habitation.

But I feel I have been too tedious in laying down my principles, and have taxed your attention with what you may consider a useless paradox. Permit me to read you an extract from a great writer who gives in two sentences what I have been striving to convey to you during many minutes.

“WORK, and therein have well-being. Man, son of Earth and of Heaven, lies there not, in the innermost heart of thee, a Spirit of active Method, a Force for work;—and burns like a painfully smouldering fire, giving thee no rest till thou unfold it, till thou write it down in beneficent Facts around thee! What is immethodic, waste, thou shalt make methodic, regulated, arrable; obedient and productive to thee. Where-soever thou findest Disorder, there is thy eternal enemy; attack him swiftly, subdue him; make Order of him, the subject not of Chaos, but of Intelligence, Divinity and Thee! The thistle that grows in thy path, dig it out, that a blade of useful grass, a drop of nourishing milk, may grow there instead. The waste cotton-shrub, gather its waste white down, spin it, weave it; that, in place of idle litter, there may be folded webs, and the naked skin of man be covered.

But above all, where thou findest Ignorance, Stupidity, Brute-mindedness—yes, there, attack it, I say; smite it wisely, unweariedly, and rest not while thou livest and it lives; but smite, smite, in the name of God! The Highest God, as I understand it, does audibly so command thee; still audibly, if thou have ears to hear. He, even He, with his unspoken voice, awfuler than any Sinai thunders or syllabled speech of Whirlwinds; for the SILENCE of deep Eternities, of Worlds from beyond the morning stars, does it not speak to thee? The unborn Ages; the old Graves, with their long-mouldering dust, the very tears that wetted it now all dry—do not these speak to thee, what ear hath not heard? The deep Death-kingdoms, the Stars in their never-resting courses, all Space and all Time, proclaim it to thee in continual silent admoni-

tion. Thou too, if ever man should, shalt work while it is called To-day. For the Night cometh, wherein no man can work.

ALL true Work is sacred ; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labour, there is something of divineness. Labour, wide as the Earth, has its summit in Heaven. Sweat of the brow ; and up from that to sweat of the brain, sweat of the heart ; which includes all Kepler calculations, Newton meditations, all Sciences, all spoken Epics, all acted Heroisms, Martyrdoms, up to that 'Agony of bloody sweat,' which all men have called divine ! O brother, if this is not 'worship,' then I say, the more pity for worship ; for this is the noblest thing yet discovered under God's sky. Who are thou that complainest of thy life of toil ? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother ; see thy fellow Workmen there, in God's Eternity ; surviving there, they alone surviving : sacred Band of the Immortals, celestial body-guard of the Empire of Mankind. Even in the weak Human Memory they survive so long, as saints, as heroes, as gods ; they alone surviving ; peopling, they alone, the unmeasured solitudes of Time ! To thee Heaven, though severe, is *not* unkind ; Heaven is kind—as a noble Mother ; as that Spartan Mother, saying while she gave her son his shield, "With it, my son, or upon it !" Thou too, shalt return *home* in honour ; to thy far-distant Home, in honour ; doubt it not—if in the battle thou keep thy shield ! Thou, in the Eternities and deepest Death-kingdoms, art not an alien ; thou everywhere art a denizen !"

Past and Present—Carlyle, Chapter XII.

Let me now say something more immediately practical, especially to those who have yet the journey of life to run ; and on whose account we have met together to-day.

This day is the anniversary of the institution in which you are receiving your education ; an institution founded in times so remote that its very name carries back the memory to a state of things of which the tradition only lives. The excellent men who founded it, probably thought that the business by which they gained their properties was likely far to exceed in duration the infant society which they put in being. Two or three generations have passed away ; their descendants in the 3d and 4th degree are now amongst my hearers ; not one of whom even remembers the cultivation of Indigo, whilst the *Indigo Society* still exists, blessing and being

blesed. You have the advantage of antiquity ; your associations are somewhat with the past ; you are descendants of an honorable line, and are bound to maintain the dignity of your house. You receive at least one peculiar responsibility ; instructed yourselves through the generous foresight of the past, you are bound to continue the succession of instruction and make yourselves useful to your own generation, and to those who may succeed you. As you have received liberally, (and, as I trust, acquired largely,) so give freely of whatsoever there may be in you worth communicating. Give nobly, give generously, for in the giving of knowledge there is no waste ; the most splendid bounty is not followed by penury in the giver, far from it, it enriches the giver even more than the receiver.

But on the subject of knowledge, there are two opposite errors on which I may as well touch for a moment. Firstly—that knowledge, in itself, is so great a boon, that it can afford to stand without the assistance of virtue or religion ;—besides that, this is clearly contradicted by facts, since some of the most learned men have been amongst the worst, and some of the best instructed nations the most vicious, it seems to go upon the supposition that man is purely rational and intellectual, and will take the right path if it be but once pointed out to him.

Secondly—that honest ignorance, as it is called, at least in the ordinary mass of men, is one of the best securities for well-doing. Now if matters could be so arranged that men could be kept without any knowledge at all (which is clearly impossible,) or could be so ingeniously managed that all the little knowledge acquired should be good, and all that is of bad tendency excluded ; (an undertaking perhaps not very easy,) I might perhaps have some respect for this doctrine.

If in the summer a person were to prove to me that he could cover me round with some security against the assaults of the climate, if he should admit none but a pure atmosphere, clear of miasmatic influences, I should certainly discharge my caution and my doctor ;—but, if (as I believe,) I must still be exposed to these influences, I must be content to breathe a

vitiating atmosphere rather than none at all, and correct its ill effects by the ordinary precautions of medicine. Let us beware, lest, in putting our patient in a glass-case, we do not subject him to an exhausted receiver, and suffocate him for fear his health might suffer some detriment from the fluid he breathes! By the constitution of man's mind, he must receive both good and evil—his mind is like a prism; it is not until the light has passed through it that the many colors composing it are perceived. What real dependence can be placed upon the virtue of a very ignorant man, whose stability is at the best a sort of quiet, stolid, brutishness? In a mind that knows little, very small things have an immense influence, and the whole intellectual faculties are, as it were, enveloped in a mist in which objects are so distorted that no calculation can be made of their appearance. The whole man is like an unhelmed vessel, anchored by a thread—if that thread breaks, it is at the mercy of every current and every wave. There may be, of course, an education which will unfit a man for his situation in life, and it would be the height of cruelty to put a chasm between his habits of thought and habits of life. It would be to place a race-horse in a cart, though (for my part) I think that thorough-breds draw even *carts* better than others. There is a much mis-used saying which the enemies of light are constantly throwing into the face of their adversaries. "A little learning is a dangerous thing"—the whole stress of which lies upon the word "*little*." Is there absolutely such a thing as "a little learning?" are not little and big necessarily relative and comparative terms? does the man exist who will venture to say he has *much* learning? Newton declared just before his death, and at the end of the most splendid discoveries ever made by man, "that he felt like a child who had been gathering up shells on the shore of an immense ocean," and such has been the constant cry of the men of knowledge, as they ascended higher the prospect opened wider. If all men *must* have *some* knowledge (and all have received their knowledge gradually) at one time in every man's life, he must have had "*a little learning*." As in

the words of the Prophet, "Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little."

* By gradual accretion, it must grow, from less become more, and I suppose the more it increases the less dangerous it must become. Besides which, I cannot conceive that any gift has been bestowed on man which it was not intended he should cultivate and improve, and reason which is cultivated by the plough of thought and the manure of knowledge, is certainly one of the unmistakable endowments of man. As well might we say that infants are not to practice walking because there is a danger of their falling down, and arms and legs are not to be used because we may steal with the one and escape from justice with the other, as to suppose we must not cultivate our intellects because of the mischiefs of an ill-regulated intelligence. It is necessary sometimes to put shackles on arms and legs; it is also sometimes necessary to confine the efforts of the mind, but this should be done for crimes perpetrated, not for evils expected.

I must beg you to beware of a very common misapprehension, viz: that a knowledge of facts constitute learning—it no more does so than does the sill of a house constitute its roof. Without the sill the roof could not be supported, without the roof I think the house would be of very little use.

Though a great memory generally forms a portion of great parts, yet we constantly find men who remember almost every thing and can connect nothing. They have the stuff of which a house may be built lying loose in their premises, but they want the skill to frame and put it together. This sort of mind appears to me to be more common now than it was; the immense number of books which are to be bought at almost *no* price, and which really are worth nothing, have spread abroad an infinite number of facts with which the unfortunate rising generation are to have their heads stuffed. The gold of knowledge is being beaten out into the very thinnest leaf spread over the largest possible surface, or

* The whole of this subject, "the dangers of knowledge," is beautifully treated in one of the *Rambles*, in Johnson's very best manner.

scattered in infinite small pieces. There is hardly an advertisement of a school in which more is not professed to be taught than Methuselah (if he had the abilities of Bacon) could possibly have learnt. I hope you will not think me running into the opposite extreme when I ask you to learn (at least) *one thing well*: that will be a sure stand wherefrom to learn many others. The ascent of the hill of knowledge is like that of the icy peaks of the Alps ;—you must cut a place for your foot in the slippery wall, plant your foot firmly there, then cut another one above, and so on, until you reach the summit.

Be careful to read few books—by *read* I mean *study*—but *those* make your dearest and inmost companions, they are the heir-looms of the past and deserve the reverence of the present. Living in this constant companionship with the great and wise, a companionship which no envy can dim, no arrogance can dissipate, and no ingratitude can shatter, you are, (as it were,) assumed into the essence of the highest class of intellects, you are permitted to follow the roads which they have cleared, to partake their experience without their sorrows, and to share that fund of knowledge which they so laboriously have heaped up from every quarter and from every source.

Choose those authors particularly who give forth their knowledge clearly and without concealment ; reject those who throw a pomp of glittering words over the muddiness of their conceptions and the obscurity of their utterances. This is but the gilded scum that covers the turbid and fetid ditch-water. Truth should always be able to stand a clear and steady light ; the flickering blaze and smoky glare of a light-wood torch may deceive the eye both as to distance and as to form ; but the clear, pure, and unruffled beam of the Drummond light shows every thing in its proper proportion and its natural shape. In great authors there may be much that you will not at first understand, but there will be much that you *will*. If this, which you do understand, appears simple and genuine, take the rest on trust ; increasing age will increase your powers. Never regard any book as worth any

thing which seems to tell its whole tale so perfectly as that you yourself find nothing to add. If, on the contrary, you find it sets your mind into a state of earnest activity to complete processes of reasoning which are only hinted at in the text, and to lay in lights and shadows where only outline is given, then *that* book is worth reading, it is worth studying, it is worth being made a friend of. Let me particularly recommend three books—which appear to me to be worth all the rest in our language. One of them has higher claims to our reverence than can be stated here. I merely speak of it as a *Book*. I mean the Bible, the Plays of Shakspeare, and the Essays of Bacon. The truth to nature, the fidelity of portraiture, the exquisite subtlety, and still more exquisite clearness of disquisition, the depth of reflection, the sober common-sense of the counsels, the grand, noble, and heroic sentiments fitly clothed in the most perfect language, contained in these volumes, will ever render them the fittest instructors of youth, the soberest guides of manhood, and the most cordial and consoling companions of age.

But only a small portion of our knowledge can come to us from books ; they only form one portion of the diet of the mind. External nature, the operations of the intellect itself and the whole variety of the interlacing social system, feed the mind and supply it with the most necessary portion of its aliment ; a vigorous curiosity is one of the surest signs of a strong mind. Those who are superior to others have become so in consequence of the greater attention they have paid to the matters with which they were concerned. The strength of memory depends upon the amount of interest which the object to be remembered produces, and he on whose mind every impression is strong and vehement, is likely to forget but little. Such a curiosity may be likened to one of the new reaping-machines, which cuts down the grain, gathers it together, and conveys it to its proper receptacle. The intellect acts upon what has been collected, like a mill ; it divides the straw from the grain, and the grain again is rendered fit for use and stored away in rooms, of which Will and Memory keep the key. This gathered

knowledge again acts upon all other knowledge as it is brought into the mind, attracting that which is similar to itself, thus augmenting each separate fund and making continually larger the whole store.

There are two motives for reading, one merely to pass the time, the other for instruction, and they operate on two different classes of mind. Some men seem never to digest, or even to chew, what they read, and remind me of the German tale in which a skeleton at table drinks with the company, who see the wine plashing through his ribs and hear it pattering down on the floor. The impression made on such is like the footprint of the sea-bird made on the beach, "as he chases the ebbing Neptune," instantly swept away by the returning wave.

Probably no species of knowledge is valueless in the study of any given subject; and the larger the knowledge, and the more extended the intelligence, the more easily is each new acquisition made. I, of course, suppose that the intellect maintains its rightful supremacy over its knowledge, and (as Robert Hall expressed it) "you do not crush your brain with the weight of too many books." A constantly increasing store of learning is sure to be the fortune of every intelligent man, whether he have access to books, or not. The creation is so rich in the materials of every species of science, that his daily walks will supply him with daily pages of interest, and of wisdom; and this is an unfailing source of joy, but one too commonly missed; the eyes are shut to what has not the glitter of novelty, and millions and millions of wonders are overlooked because they are constantly before our eyes. Think how differently a great philosopher (say Agassiz) would be interested in ascending one of the rivers that feed this harbor, to one of his negro boatmen! What splendid visions! what high speculations! what noble scenes! what perceptions of glory and sublimity would be suggested to the mind of the one by even the most cursory view of the most ordinary productions of nature, which would be either entirely unperceived by the other, or give him none but the most earthly and sensual sensations! And this renders the

cultivation of some science or art besides your regular profession, so rational a source of comfort ; a change of labor being the best of relaxations.

But let nothing take your attention off from the professed business of your life ; “though pleased to see the dolphins play, I mind my compass and pursue my way.” Every man, however favored by fortune or by birth, should have one real and main business which should occupy his attention, to the *preference*, though not necessarily, to the *exclusion*, of all others, and this business should be chosen principally from conscientious reasons, and not merely from preference. The question should be carefully asked and candidly answered, “what does Providence apparently intend *me* to do?” “is there not some course of life seemingly marked out for me, somewhat rough, perhaps, but which appears ready-made for my journey?” It must be recollected that all employments are in themselves equally honorable ; it is the spirit with which we follow them which makes us honorable or not. The highest abilities and the most conscientious endeavors may be well employed (and by a good man *will* be employed) upon the humblest trade. A sincere sense of duty will act as the sun upon a “pestilent congregation of vapors,” tinging their gray outlines with gold and purple, and making them blaze forth in flame almost as vivid as that of the orb which adorns them. Be you capitalist or carpenter, overseer or omnibus-driver, merchant or mill-owner, ditchman or doctor, lawyer or legislator, tailor or trumpeter, planter or policeman ; **STICK TO YOUR TRADES, AND YOUR TRADES WILL STICK TO YOU.** In fact treat your trades as you ought to treat your wives—love, honor, and cherish them—and they will give back a thousand joys by the opening of a steady and accustomed path of duty, and by filling up the great portion of our time with habitual industry ; thus “doubling our pleasures and our cares dividing.” But very few men have minds of such a peculiar constitution as to be particularly fitted for one line of duties ; few, in fact, have, what are vulgarly called, *missions*, and there is nothing we ought to distrust so much in ourselves as the very com-

mon belief that we are cut out for one particular line of life, especially if that line be a high and glorious one ; many, like the family of the Knight of Arva, reject Noah's ark, and prefer going to sea, in the deluge, in some private boat of their own. A humble distrust of ourselves, united with a resolute determination always to do our best, is perhaps the most fitting preparation for a happy and useful life. Few of the men who have really taken a large part in "the world's debate," have been visited in their youth by the fantasies of unreal imaginations. They have acknowledged, in after life, that the prospect opened gradually before them, and that, if they did not see their way clearly at all times, yet they did not lose their footing by looking too high. The man who, at the foot of a mountain, fixed his eye on the summit, would be far less likely to get there, than he, who, though always ascending, kept his gaze but at a moderate distance before him. I suppose that in his youth, George Washington did not dream of being any thing higher than a good planter and a faithful soldier of the British Crown ; but, when Providence opened to him a way for the purest reputation that has ever been given to man, so well had he improved his opportunities, and so thoroughly had he trained his energies, that he followed, as it were, instinctively the path proposed to him, and died the acknowledged Father of a great and rising Empire. The great point is always to be ready for what may "turn up," which can only be done by a careful system of self-education, a constantly keeping the mind engaged on something of importance, and by a most careful attendance to the clearness of our thoughts and connection of our reasonings, one with the other. The mind thus becomes braced to continual exercise until it finds no fatigue in labor, and it may well be doubted whether the highest genius is not only another name for the highest capacity for labor.* "The way in which I have arrived at my discoveries," said Newton, "was, by keeping the subject constantly before me"—and if you will take this advice, you may be tolerably certain that when the

* This is Ruskins' opinion, but in which of his works it is to be found, I do not recollect.

door of advancement is open, you will find yourself justified in entering.

“Heaven has to all allotted, soon or late,
Some lucky revolution of their fate;
Whose motions, if we watch and guide with skill,
(For human good depends on human will,
Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,
And from the first impression takes the bent;
But, if unseized—she glides away like wind,
And leaves repenting folly far behind”

Dryden—Abs. & Ach., 225.

There is another, and still greater advantage, to be obtained, and that is, a more perfect taste for, and apprehension of, truth. It may be laid down as a certain rule, that earnestness is a great test of human character, because, without it, talents are inefficacious and virtues ineffectual. It is no matter how beautiful the model of the ship may be, and how perfect her equipment, if she wants wind to carry her on her way, she floats a useless mass on the oscillating surface of the ocean, and her very motions only serve to wear out her sails which flap against the mast. I may continue the simile still further; as the wind renders the motion of the ship easier, and the pressure of the canvas makes the guidance of the helm available, so does earnestness bear the soul through every peril, and avoids many a danger by which the mind which is without steerage-way must be overwhelmed. Earnestness, of which decision forms a great part, is doubtless an original gift, and is much stronger in some natures than in others, but it can be improved and strengthened in all. It has been well observed, that feeble minds are made strong by strong principles; history has many instances in which the feeblest of mankind have died for their religion. “I do not,” said Dr. Goldsmith, “love the man who is zealous for nothing;” that elegant writer well knew that such would be an empty fountain from which no refreshment could be procured. If earnestness be the spring which sets the mind in motion, sincerity is the pendulum that regulates it; and without these two in combination, the machine is essentially imperfect. On sincerity, taking that word in its rightful signification, depends the whole moral aspect of man; I said

when understood, for nothing can be more erroneous than the ordinary uses of that word. To be sincere in an opinion, or in a course of action, implies that we have taken every pains in our power to ascertain the truth of one and the propriety of the other. To form opinions without research, and to act without investigation, is neither faith nor morals, and we are as clearly responsible for our belief as we are for our conduct. It is not, however, what we believe or disbelieve, according to the ordinary phrase, but what we really have faith in, or we really dissent from. The most rigid orthodoxy of belief, held indifferently and without examination, easily obtained and loosely held, cannot be considered worth any thing; faith consists (and without faith man is nothing) in those things often exceedingly few, which fill the whole essence of our minds, which pervade every nook and cranny of our intellectual existence. Any thing beyond this, any pretence to others, or, what is infinitely worse and more common to *ourselves*,* is the merest sham and imposture, which must act as a canker, destroying all truthfulness and nobility of soul. Small as this portion of truth may be, which has been anxiously sought for, hardly gained, and laboriously applied, it is infinitely precious and superabundantly useful. It exceeds in value those large indefinite beliefs which descend to us by custom, or sink into our minds by association, as much as the diamond does the large mass of charcoal of which it was originally formed. One is but ashes, the other of exceeding beauty and never fading value. Regard then the intellect as a gift which can only be repaid by an extreme assiduity of culture. Let no shams intrude themselves upon the soul which muddy the pure waters of truth, and as far as in you lies, let each process of reasoning be determined on its own merits, taking first good care that your premises are correct; but beware of too stern an addiction to logic; opinions can hardly ever be precisely settled by the mere intellect.

All the moral sensations, and all the charitable sympathies

* My dear friend, clear your *mind* of cant.—[*Boswell's Johnson*, 1783.]

claim their weight in the argument, and their claims are to be refused at your peril. The light which passes through plate-glass is not purer, nor more useful, and not half so beautiful as that which streams through some Cathedral window, glowing with the pictures of Saints and Martyrs, and casting its rubid-ray over some throng collected for a high Festival. This constant battle against cant, (and cant is continual lying,) is one of the most difficult a man can wage, and in which few, even of the best, are entirely successful. But a certain success can be obtained by every one. It involves also a constant struggle with the world, and an incessant martyrdom before those stern inquisitors who occupy the high places of every society. For think not martyrdoms have ceased, or ever shall cease; the flames may have died away round the stake, and the blood may have dried on the scaffold, but as long as the combat between truth and error is maintained, so long will error have its tyrants and truth its martyrs. Still will the disciple of Truth find himself compelled to suffer from the sneer of hypocritical malice, and from the "world's dread laugh;" and still worse, (for these things will not affect the noblest and the highest,) he will have to differ from the nearest and the dearest, to put a dividing line between himself and those whom he loves more than himself, and whom he reverences only less than he does the Truth. Like Aladdin in the Arabian tale, he has to place a drawn sword between himself and his beloved.

* When a new proposition is presented to us, on which it is necessary for us to form an opinion, or at least to enter upon action, what is our first and instinctive question? Is it not "what is the creed of our Church, our political party, our ordinary society?" It ought to be, "Is this *true*?" is it founded on solid arguments? can it be deduced by careful references between which no flaw or gap can be found? This is the real question, and if you do not act thus, at first and without premeditation, depend upon it you have much mental, or rather moral training, to undergo. Such a course

* See Whately, *passim*.

as this would swamp a few politicians, and stop a newspaper or two, but the community would be a happy and a peaceful one, though there would be less outward appearance of unity. Drummond has put the whole matter in words which should be in every one's memory. "Prejudice may be trusted to guard the out-works for a short space of time, while Reason slumbers in the citadel, but if the latter sink into a lethargy, the former will quickly erect a standard for himself. Philosophy, wisdom, and liberty support each other; he who *will* not reason is a bigot, he who *cannot* is a fool, he who *dares* not is a slave."—*Academical Questions—Preface*, p. 15.

Happy the man, nevertheless, who spends his life in such a struggle; happier he who, towards the end of it, can say, in the words of the poet:

" Before thy mystic Altar, heavenly truth,
 " I kneel in manhood as I knelt in youth;
 " So let me kneel till this dull form decay,
 " And life's last stage be brightened by thy ray.
 " Then shall my soul, now lost in clouds below,
 " Soar without bound, without consuming, glow.

Sir W. Jones.

If this constant search after truth were to keep you continually within the narrow rounds of your own self-appreciation, and were to cut you off in any way from the thorough sympathies with other men and things, it would not be productive of the very best consequences. To differ from men is not to hate them; to think that in some points they are wrong and you are right, should be the greatest provocative to good will; the higher the mind the more capable it is of disinterested love and self-sacrifice. As a cloud drops its rain from above upon the trees and plants beneath it, so does the higher mind distribute amongst the lower its fund of love and affection.* Great hearts have almost always a store of tenderness within utterly unintelligible to the vulgar herd beneath whose feet these true pearls are scattered. It is an old saying, that "no man is a hero to his valet," on which it was well observed that *that* was the fault of the

* Want of tenderness, he (Johnson) always alleged was want of parts, and was no less a proof of stupidity than depravity.—[*Boswell's Johnson*, 1770.

valet, not of the hero. Next to the faculty of greatness, and perhaps even superior to it, as far as the pleasure to the possessor goes, is the true appreciation of greatness, that lower degree of veneration with which it is permitted us to come before the Altar of our fellow-man. There is a true and quick sympathy, an electric chain which runs from heart to heart, like the roots of a tree passing through a sandy soil and searching deep for water, which binds the brave and noble minded (however different their abilities, and however different their station to each other ;) they leap towards each other like iron to the magnet, for their origin and nature are the same, the vessels in which they are contained alone being different. Cultivate, then, this deep veneration for the great and good, whether living with you in your own society, or only conversing with you by books.

“For not unknown

“Each to the other, the Immortals are,

“How far soever separate their abodes.”

Cowper's Homer.

The man who truly esteems, who truly loves, and profoundly venerates, is raised in the scale of thinking beings. The vulgar, of all ranks, love nothing but themselves, and venerate nothing, for their light and passing attachments are worth nothing and fit for nothing. To have faith in any person or any thing, is, beyond all comparison, the most arduous effort of the human mind; but arduous as it is, and useful as it is, it loses half its virtue if its object be not loveable and venerable. The way in which men are led in these days to follow the leadership and swell the ranks of parties without any real belief in the leader or the cause, is one of the most piteous examples of imbecility, and almost makes one at times despair of the welfare of the country. Independence is the true arm of the mind. I mean independence in thought and opinion; for entire independence in action, or even in words, is incompatible with any notion of government. In every thing, but more especially in religion and politics, it is the duty of every man of ordinary understanding to form his own opinion, giving the judgments of the wise and good a just

weight, but remembering that it is extremely unlikely that Providence would give him that to do which he was unable to understand.

An opinion has been introduced from Europe, through the North, and is, I am sorry to say, not ill-received at the South, that a majority has some sort of Divine right to rule, (and this opinion will not be long restricted to *politics*, but will "spread with a strong contagion" to *every* branch of thought and action,) in other words, that truth may be ascertained by counting noses. Not to speak of the extreme volatility and variability of this truth, which hardly ever would be the same in two different places, I suppose that numbers must be considered the *most* incompetent test of any opinion, for of the numbers who make up any party, how very few have taken any pains to examine their principles; because A. holds an opinion, and B. and C. think him a very smart fellow, they seal his opinions with the decisive testimony of numbers. Often and often, in the history of the world, have opinions, now universally held, been only defended by the smallest number. In some cases one man has proclaimed the truth against the world in error, and vanquished at the last, though long after they themselves had vanished from the scene; for every battle for the truth is a victory, however ill her champions may fare.

If this opinion (the Divine right of the majority) should ever gain ground here as it has done elsewhere, our last vestige of independence will be swept away; each generation will become more and more dwarfed; each man of the same size, and the very pattern of every other man; notions, opinions, and actions, will be run in one common mould; the very word will be forgotten, except in a line of an old national song; and we shall lie deep and soundly beneath "the waveless calm and slumber of the dead"—a Chinese republicanism!

Well has the poet called "Independence" "Lord of the lion-heart and eagle eye," for she carries her own fount of confidence within herself, and abashes those who dare to interfere with her rights. Bravery and true honor go hand-

in-hand with her—those three graces of the mind, which, like Minerva, are both beautiful and armed. By her side, neither the cowardice which passes insult unresented, nor that extravagant sensibility to injury and slight, which is by no means a proof of bravery, can by possibility exist. The man who having examined himself, and having found within himself something to respect, and some solid qualities which he is not afraid to subject to the view of mankind, will be loath, very loath indeed, to suppose that any one will think so lightly of him, as to dare to injure him. The lofty self-control, and the proud reticence of anger which form a distinguishing mark of the well-bred gentleman, are really and truly the property of every well-regulated and self-respecting mind. The quick resentment of fancied slight, and the fiery ebullition of an ill-controlled sensibility, always argues something weak within. It is only disease that makes a part so sensitive as not to bear the touch. Though the ordinary bravery of nerve is sometimes unaccompanied by magnanimity, the bravery of the mind never is.

“ I say, be honest, faithful, civil, true;
 “ And this may be and yet have courage too.
 “ Heroic men, their country's boast and pride,
 “ Have feared their God, and nothing fear'd beside,
 “ While others daring, yet imbecile fly
 “ The power of man, and that of God defy.”

Crabbe, v. 245.

There is one other thing in which I must say we have fallen much below our fathers; I mean in the standard by which we try ability and success. I cannot help perceiving that we are turning our list of the virtues into a price current, and hardly any value but that of money is thought to be any value at all. It cannot be denied, that in this again we are imitating the North, and raising up an idol made of gold and silver, and clothed in Bank notes. It is trite to say (but when a saying is *trite* it is generally *true*) that money may be the greatest curse or the greatest blessing. I am certain it becomes the greatest curse when it becomes the sole dream of a nation's imaginings, and the sole desire of a nation's heart.

Dulness itself is not a greater enemy to every thing that is true in art, generous in emotion, or grand in genius, than a money standard. Independence must quiet the "lion's heart" and quench the "Eagle-eye;" reason must resign her guiding staff, and wit, morality and religion, must "pale their ineffectual fires" before it.*

A famous man, who I am proud to have numbered among my acquaintance, said, "I have no time to make money;" and I believe that this saying will go down to posterity, and will be remembered when his works, great as they are, may be forgotten or superseded. This excessive love of money, enervates the mind and hardens it also, and subjects us to the presumptuous rule of a fickle and inconstant fortune.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

"Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man and master of his fate.

"Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate."

Æneid's Song, p. 19. Idylls of the King.

It also destroys every sympathy which is not in some way connected with self; and who shall tell the enjoyments, the beauties, the glories of an extensive sympathy? such a sympathy as some vast minds have possessed, and whose fruits are treasured up in volumes, which are eternal testimonies. The greatest poet of the early part of this century, (Wordsworth,) told a friend of mine that there was nothing he thanked God for more than that in old age, he had retained the fresh feelings and keen sympathies of a boy. This was no inconsiderable boon, and one which deserved the utmost

* Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
And, unawares, morality expires.—[*Dunciad*, 650,

thankfulness. But *he* was above the distracting cares, and little wants which men make for themselves, and which are made the agents of their punishment. This task was strenuously performed, as "in his Great Taskmaster's eye;" it was a great and splendid one, not unaccompanied by poverty, but I believe, that had his course of life been obscure and his task lowly, he would still have done that task faithfully, sincerely, honestly and bravely. These virtues are within the compass of all; our occupations and our stations are settled by a superior and wiser Power.

On the rising generation depends the fate of the country. It cannot be denied that the times in which *you* will come upon the stage of life will be singularly tempestuous and stormy. *We* have only felt the "whiff and wind of the fell sword;" *you* will experience its "grinding blade." It is on your fortitude, your wisdom, and your courage, that the country must, in some sort, rely; it will be with you to scorn the temptations which will beset every patriot, and to display the resources of a steady honor, and of a soul which recoils at no sacrifice. Times of danger are those in which the strong spirit goes forth conquering and to conquer; the times of distress are those in which the resolved mind opposes itself to coming evils, as does the rocky promontory to the tide of the advancing Atlantic. A long and (as I believe) an unparalleled succession of years, uninterrupted by war or any grievous calamity, could not much longer continue without exhaling the energies and enfeebling the courage of a nation. No country has ever yet existed (and, unless human nature alters, none can ever exist,) which does not require the bracing to be received from convulsion and disorder. These things are sent, not as punishments, but as blessings. The streams of virtue, wisdom and bravery, which have dried up during long seasons of material felicity, are full-charged again amid the roar of the thunder and the fast-descending storm, and every manly energy descends full-armed to the conflict, I can have only one hope, and that is, that in those days, so surely coming, you may not be found wanting; but that in

the great battle of truth and justice, good order and good government, you may plant anew the ancient principles of our institutions, and add another page, not the *least* glorious, to the history of our native State.

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