

TURN OVER
A NEW LEAF





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TURN OVER A NEW LEAF

AND OTHER WORDS

TO YOUNG PEOPLE AT SCHOOL.

BY

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GET ON," "OLD STORIES WITH NEW LESSONS," "ADDRESSES TO
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PREFACE.

I HAVE tried in a few brief chapters, in the plainest and simplest words, to set before the minds of boys and girls at school, some of the most practical subjects of every-day life and duty. It has been said that it is much more important that the boys and girls of our time should leave school with a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and good and evil, than that they should be good spellers and good arithmeticians.

There is no reason why they should not be well equipped in all this knowledge.

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TURN OVER A NEW LEAF.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW LEAF.

WHAT is the meaning of this expression—this figurative language? I suppose it comes from the early lessons in writing of a young scholar at school. He begins the very slow and painful labor of making marks with a pen and ink. It is not easy to hold his pen properly, for sometimes it turns in his fingers, and almost slips through them, in his nervous efforts to hold it firmly. Sometimes a tear of vexation or disappointment drops when he bends very near to the page; sometimes he gets his pen too full of ink and drops it out in a huge blot on the white page; sometimes he gets off the line, and, in getting back, spreads too much ink over the track; almost always the ink gets on the end of his fingers, and then is smeared on the page where the writing ought to be; and so, as he gets down towards the bottom, the whole page looks smeared and unclean, and he is ashamed to let the teacher see it. And a sorry sight it is to see; and if the teacher should mark the page, as was the custom in my early days, with certain letters, such as “G” for good, “I” for indifferent, and “B” for bad, it is easy to see how such a page as I have described will be marked. But the teacher comes

along and says, "Courage, my lad : turn over a new leaf, and try it again."

Some time ago I went on board the ship at Liverpool that was to bring me home to Philadelphia. There were few cabin passengers ; but more than a thousand in the steerage. Most of these got on board at Liverpool, but several hundred came on at Queenstown. They were from many of the nations of Europe, and were coming to America to better their fortunes. Of course, all kinds of religion were represented among these passengers. Among the saloon passengers were an English gentleman and his wife. They were very good people. The gentleman was interested in the steerage passengers, going among them, reading the Scriptures and making addresses to them. Some gave attention to what he said and some seemed as if they would have stopped him if they could. As well as I could hear, he was saying good things, and things that were well worth saying and hearing, for the lessons that he was trying to impress upon the passengers were drawn from the Holy Scriptures. But whether it was because they were not practical lessons or because they were very familiar, very few listened with interest or even civility to what he was saying.

Leaning over the rail of the upper deck one day, and looking down on the people, some of whom were engaged in games and plays, some singing, and some dancing, a lady said, "How much better, it seems to me, it would be if the gentleman would talk to these people about what a change in their lives it is for them to go to America, for I suppose most of them are going to stay : how much better to tell them of the great

trials before them, and something of the discouragements that await all emigrants; how good it would be to tell them that now is the time to leave all their old and bad habits behind them, to give up all drinking habits and swearing habits, and ‘Turn Over a New Leaf.’”

And why should not my young readers take some hints from the same words, “Turn Over a New Leaf?” Some, perhaps many, of the leaves of your past lives may be blurred and blotted with mistakes and faults, and vicious abuse of your opportunities. In ways best known to yourselves you have come very short of what was required of you, and have failed most seriously of a true purpose to learn—have indeed missed your mark.

This is a good time then to “Turn Over a New Leaf” as to your duties at school. Have you made the best use of your time? You have the best text-books; they are hard, many of them; it is so from the nature of the case, but they are the very best, in the judgment of those who are well qualified to know, that are published. You have good teachers, of large and successful experience, who understand their profession; who are “apt to teach;” and you have the advantage of their experience and skill. You have the best appliances for instruction. Your school-rooms are well lighted, and well warmed in winter, and are admirably adapted to their purpose. Now look back and see whether you have made good use of all these advantages! Have you studied your lessons as faithfully as you could? Have you recited them well when they have been well prepared? In other words, have you

done as well as you could in the study and recitation of your lessons? You must not forget that the time is passing, and rapidly too; the weeks and months and years are going faster than you think, and the time will come when your school-days will be over, and when, whether well or ill prepared for life, you will leave school and go out into the world to make your own living. It will depend very much more than you now think, or are willing to believe, on the thoroughness of your education, whether it will be easy or hard for you to make a living. It is important that you be well educated. Now, as you look at your school life, are you satisfied with it? Do you feel that you have done your best? If not, then this is the time for you to "Turn Over a New Leaf."

Then, as to your behavior in school, what has it been? Do you remember any times when you have answered sullenly, or not answered at all, the questions of your teachers, even when you knew the lessons fairly well? Did you never, secretly or openly, defy your teacher's authority? Have you not been punished more than once for want of attention or want of obedience? Have you not misbehaved in many ways, and been punished for it?

Now, is not this a good time to "Turn Over a New Leaf?" If I were a boy at school, under this appeal for improvement, I would say to myself, "I will turn over a new leaf." "I will not any more give occasion for punishment." Once, at the annual distribution of prizes in a large school, there was one boy who came to the platform, of whom it was said, "This boy had not a single demerit mark for the whole year!"

What one can do, others can do. All honor to that boy ; but suppose a large proportion of them had formed this high purpose and kept it ; why, that school would have been almost a paradise.

Let us consider some of your personal habits, such as

1. Your talk with your companions. Very much of the evil in the world comes from foolish and bad talk. It began in the Garden of Eden, where Satan tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. It has been kept up ever since down to our time, to this very day. Many a boy, many a girl has been corrupted and ruined by bad talk. Look back over your short lives and see if you do not remember some person whose evil conversation first put bad thoughts into your minds? Now when the time comes, if it ever should come, when you wish to forget all this, you will find how very hard it is, indeed almost impossible, to forget these bad words, these evil impressions, and blot them out. If any of you are in the habit of talking with each other in language that is indelicate or profane, is it not time to stop all this, and "Turn Over a New Leaf?" Remember that the Holy Scriptures say, "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

2. Then as to evil thoughts. These are known to yourselves only, until you speak them out. You may indulge very bad thoughts in your hearts, and for a long time they may hurt you only, but this cannot be continued very long secretly, for in unguarded moments they will break out in speech and betray and ruin you. "Keep the heart then, with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," and "Turn over a new leaf."

3. As to idleness. You know what an idle boy—an idle girl—is. You know how they must be urged and pressed to do the daily task in the school. Can such a boy or girl ever hope to come to any good? Does a gentleman or lady wish to employ in any way an idle boy or girl? Will you, when you become a boss or a foreman?

Courage, then, boys and girls; do not be content unless you are doing your best all the time. "Turn Over a New Leaf," in your behavior generally, in your school-rooms, in your play-grounds, in your personal habits of thought, and speech, and industry—make true boys and girls of yourselves, for it is entirely in your power.

Now, it is about time to ask, What is your purpose in life? Some of you older boys and girls must be asking yourselves this question, and asking it with more or less anxiety; for you are soon to enter life for yourselves. The day is not distant when you will pass out from school. Most of you will look forward to that day with eagerness, as feeling that then, at least, you will be free from the restraints which have bound you so long; and some, who, perhaps, will feel sincere regret at parting with old friends and associations of your school-days. And to all of you it will be a time of great trial, for it will depend very much upon the manner in which your life has been spent at school whether your future is to be successful or otherwise. Whether or not, therefore, you have formed any wishes or plans of life after your school-days are over, the time will come when you must leave school. What will become of you? What manner of men and women will

you grow to be? Who will befriend you in that great world into which you will enter and of which you know so little? There are few things that move me more than to see a boy or girl launched out on the sea of life, and ignorant of the laws of navigation. So many fail—so many care more for self-indulgence than to behave themselves with propriety. So many fall into bad habits—so many forget entirely the good things that they have learned at school.

The purpose of education is to make true men and women. You can all be self-reliant, upright, honest, sober, God-fearing people. You can be examples to others; you can be examples of all that is best in American citizenship. Whether you will or not, depends upon yourselves. For you will remember that you have advantages over others who are not as well educated as you are. Going from school equipped as many of you will be for the struggle of life, almost anything will be within your reach, if only you will behave yourselves. What a heritage you have, if you will only prepare yourselves to receive it!

A modern poet has said that "We are living in a grand and awful time," and it is literally true. It seems to me that it was never as well worth while to live as it is now, for the world is so full of enterprise and discovery, and then there is such a demand for vigorous and skillful men and women. But there is no chance whatever for drones, or idlers, or for the thriftless, or lazy or self-indulgent. There are too many of them now. In cities and towns they lounge about street corners in the evenings, the men smoking and defiling the

pavements, and going into drinking-saloons, and worse places, and step by step going down hill, until at last they find themselves without friends, in the station-house, the almshouse or the prison. Heaven forbid that any boy or girl who reads this should come to such an end.

Among the steerage passengers that came on our ship at Liverpool was one at least who was drunk. He had been drinking heavily just before going on the ship, yet he had a wife and children. Very probably his gay friends had been giving him what they called "a send-off." But he must have been an habitual drinker and a hard drinker. Soon he was attacked by delirium tremens, and was put in the hospital or sick-bay.

And there he lay in the ship's hospital, the victim of drink. Under the influence of that most awful disease, delirium tremens, he lay, tossing from side to side, knowing nothing in reality, but tortured by the most horrible delusions, scared by a continual nightmare, torn and stung by serpents that were writhing and twisting about his unprotected body. And as this malady, the worst of all maladies, yielded to medical skill, and he lay all exhausted and helpless from its dreadful ravages, another form of disease followed which lifted the shadows from his mind only to let him see that he was soon to die—that no human skill could save him. There was no wife or child near to minister to his wants, to give him drink when he needed it, or to wipe the clammy chill of death that was gathering on his face. So he died.

One bright day at noon the captain of the ship came quietly

to me, as I sat alone reading on the upper deck, and asked if I would attend a funeral. I followed him to the forward part of the vessel on the lower deck, when the body of the dead man was brought out of the hospital. The hour chosen was the hour of noon, when the steerage passengers were below at dinner. The body was sewed in canvas, with a heavy weight at the feet. It was stretched on a board and covered with a flag—the English Union Jack. There were present the captain, the doctor, the purser and myself and the four sailors who carried the corpse. The captain was in full uniform; the upper rail at the leeward side was removed, the board on which the body lay was lifted to the top of the next rail; the captain read the very brief burial service; at a sign from him the body was raised, and, as the vessel leaned a little to the leeward, the men who had hold of the board lifted the inner end quickly, and the body slid off into the sea with a splash which I shall not soon forget, and down it went under the blue waves, down and down, never to be seen again until the sea gives up its dead.

And he was gone—gone from his fellow-passengers—gone from his wife and children, whom he left but a few days ago, with promise for a better life for himself and a better home for them in the new country to which he was going—gone from the bright blue sky and the rolling sea—gone from the world of which he had made so little good use, or which he had so much abused—gone from the opportunities of amendment of life, no more “Turning Over a New Leaf” for him—gone down into the depths of the fathomless sea, to rest on its

bottom or to float indefinitely in its deep untroubled waters, fit emblem of the eternity into which his soul had entered. What a wasted life—what a sad and mournful death and burial!

Is it possible that any boys or girls who read this will miss the true object of life, forget all the instruction received at school, all the good counsels, all the warnings against evil, all the good resolutions made, and go into the ways that are forbidden, into paths that lead to destruction, and be lost? May God in his infinite mercy forbid it.

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CHAPTER II.

WALKING IN TRUTH.

IN the dim light of the early morning, a bound and helpless man stood before a Roman magistrate. Betrayed by one of his own followers, he had been arrested at midnight by a band of soldiers in the deep shadows of Gethsemane, where he had retired for prayer. First they took him to the Jewish Council, and there subjected him to the mockery of a trial, with false witnesses, and brutal treatment; and then they took him to the Roman Governor; and, not being able to enter the house of a pagan, "lest they should be defiled," they stood in the court outside, and made their charges.

Before the Jewish Court they had accused him of blasphemy, but, knowing full well that the Roman would not listen to such a charge, they accused their victim of treason against the Roman Government. Now the Jews hated the Romans, as well as everything that reminded them that the Romans had conquered them; and, naturally, anything that looked like opposition to their conquerors would enlist their sympathy; but their hatred to Jesus was greater even than their hatred to their masters; and they had the baseness to urge against their victim that which, if true, should have commanded their admiration.

It is not likely that Pilate believed that the helpless man,

with bruised and bleeding face, that stood before him, was the leader of an insurrection, or that he was one who would be likely to occasion much uneasiness to the Government; and apparently rather to amuse himself with some idle talk, than because he believed the charges, he asked the prisoner some questions, intended to show the folly of such apprehensions as the people seemed to entertain.

In answer to one of these questions, Jesus said that his kingdom was not of this world, that he came not to overthrow governments, but to bear witness of the Truth.

Then came the question, "What is Truth?" or, "What is your Truth?" "the Truth of which you speak."

Pilate did not wait for an answer to his question. He turned away to the Jews, as if he had no interest in such a subject. Why should he care what a Jew might think of Truth? It was no concern of his. He was satisfied, however, that Jesus was innocent of the charges which were urged against him, and probably thought him a harmless enthusiast. Oh! if he had waited for an answer; and if that answer had been recorded, what we might have learned!

Fifty years or so after this, in another city, an Apostle, whose life was drawing to its close, writes a letter to a Christian layman, in very familiar terms, and says, counting him as one of his spiritual children, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

What did our Saviour mean on that memorable morning when he stood before Pilate, by the word Truth?

What did the venerable Apostle mean, standing almost at the

end of life, what did he mean by saying that he had no greater joy than to hear that his children were walking in the truth ?

In other words, and to come back to Pilate's question, "What is Truth ?"

It is not merely truth as opposed to error, for, while this is true in a general sense, it is hardly what is meant here. It is not merely truth in the sense in which we speak of religious truth—meaning the doctrines of Christianity. It is not a set of notions—no theory about God. It was too early yet in the life of Christianity to make creeds or systems of theology. It had no reference to the interpretation of Scripture—the writings of commentaries to explain the Scriptures had not yet begun. It refers rather to conduct than to belief—rather to a life than to a creed. It is not mere knowledge—such knowledge as is acquired in the schools ; if so, the ignorant could not be true. It is not merely abstaining from telling lies. A man who would not, distinctly, tell a lie, may be as untruthful as one who does, for lying in words is only a small part of untruthfulness.

Even a dumb person, not able to speak a word, may be a liar ; and the devil, who prompts all lies, who is himself the father of lies, does not speak with words.

What then is truth, if lying words form so small a part of untruthfulness ? What is this truth on which St. John lays so remarkable an emphasis, and why does he so emphasize it ? What is the truth which our Lord spoke of as he stood before Pilate ? I believe that our Lord meant, by Truth, righteousness and peace, love and obedience, honesty and purity. He

said of himself, that he was the Way, the Truth, the Life. And this is the kingdom that he came to set up in this lost world. This is the truth for which he died. He came to put away all error and falsehood of every kind. He came to show men how to find their way into the kingdom of heaven. He came to a people who had departed from the ways of their fathers and who had given themselves up to believing lies—a people who were chosen by God to hand down his truth to men, but who had corrupted it, who had betrayed their trust.

There are men who hold Scripture truth intellectually, in its purity, but they do not walk in the truth. They are very careful to observe the law in its minutest points, as they think, but their lives are not in accord with their belief. They may be thoroughly well informed in all Church order and practice—may know their prayer-books and their catechisms from beginning to end :—men of hard hearts, without sympathy for the poor and suffering, caring little for the feelings of those below them, whether human or brute. They do not walk in the truth, as our Lord used the word, or as St. John used it.

“Truth is doing, each moment, what each moment you know to be right.”

To walk in the truth is to walk in the footsteps of our Lord: it is to hate error of all kinds. One must hate error if he loves truth; for our Lord is Truth, and to love truth is to love him.

Lying is the most common of all sins. It is the sin which besets one earliest in life; long before we know what other forms of sin are, long before we know what truth is, we begin

to lie. The temptation to suppress the truth—to make evasive and false statements—to mislead without lying in words, besets us in early life, and continues with us all through life. We are never free from it. We deceive ourselves, and then it is comparatively easy to mislead and deceive others. Truthfulness in words, but most especially in life, is the most difficult of all the virtues to cultivate.

Was walking in the Truth confined to the Christian believers only in the early Church? No! Is there such a thing as walking in the truth now? Can men and women, who live in these days, walk in the truth? Can young people walk in the truth? I believe you can; and I will try to show you how.

I have already said that walking in the truth is rather a kind of life and behavior than any form of doctrine. There are many creeds and many churches, or many branches or sects of the one church; but it is not necessary now to consider them. What we need to understand is, what kind of life is that life which consists in walking in the truth?

One may be poor and plain—not widely known—not very popular; but if he walks in the truth, he is entitled to the highest regard.

He may not live in history—may not be famous; but if he walk in truth, he may live in the very heart of him who is the Way, the Truth, the Life.

A boy may be bright—have fine talents—good scholarship; may be handsome—have amiable qualities; he may excel in

all athletic games and sports ; but if insincere, if he does not walk in the Truth, his life is a sham—a deception—a lie.

There is nothing in the world so beautiful as the Truth, and nothing so rare.

What wonder, then, if truth be what I have said, that so few find it ! For broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many walking in it never find the truth ; and narrow is the way that leadeth to Life and Truth, and few there be that find it. For truth in man is the purified heart receiving what is real from God, and loving it and clinging to it. The truthful heart is the pure heart that sees God. Truth is not merely a matter of words. Truth dwells in the soul and keeps one humble and pure. To be truthful in everything is to give up everything that is unreal and selfish. Perfect self-denial can alone be truthful. It is the sober, earnest, well tried, manly, warrior spirit, ready to do or suffer all things for Christ.

Cultivate then, sincerity—frankness—candor. Be above all meanness and trickery. Do not take advantage of the ignorance of others. Do not use any unfair means in dealing with others. Be honest on the playground and in the school-room. So conduct yourself that you may be depended on to be on the right side in any question where truth is involved. Make to yourself such a character for integrity and truthfulness that all who know you may say, “there is a boy who is walking in Truth.” Half the misery in the world comes from trying to look, instead of trying to be, what one is not. I would that not God only, but all good men and women, might see me through and through.

No one who loves and chooses a secret can be of the pure in heart that shall see God.

Never hide anything from those that love you. Never let anything that makes a nest in your heart grow into a secret, for then at once it will begin to eat a hole into it.

You have a wide future before you. The ways you go when you leave school lead in many directions. Some of you will become distinguished in the many and various occupations of life. Many of you will get rich. I fear you will think more of this and desire it more than is wise ; more of you must be content with moderate means—with plain living and humble surroundings ; all may be happy if you will, whether rich or with small means ; but when I hear from you in the life after school, nothing will give me greater satisfaction, if I may use the words of St. John, than to hear that you are walking in Truth.

CHAPTER III.

DOING ILL, DOING WELL.

THERE are two great forces in the world, constantly at work fighting each other. They are the good and the bad, the true and the false, the right and the wrong. And all the time, every day, we are helping one or the other of these fighters. For we are very near to them—so near that we cannot be neutral. We cannot stand aside and look on and say, "Fight it out as you can," for the fighters are in our own hearts, and one or the other must conquer.

We have all been doing evil, every one of us. We have sinned against God. Do you not remember many a time when you did things which you knew were wrong? Do you not remember many a time when you said things which were wrong? Do you not remember many and many a time when you had thoughts which you knew were wrong—which would cause you to blush even to tears if they were written on a blackboard so that all could read them?

It is so easy to fall into habits of evil! And in this respect, "no days are more important than school-days; then the strongest habits are fixed." Then we form acquaintances which become firm friendships. Then we copy the vices of others much more readily than their virtues. You are surrounded by companions, some of whom are ready to help

you in good ways—many of whom are just as ready to help in all manner of evil ways. Naturally, you are inclined to evil. If left to yourselves, with none to advise and warn and instruct you, you will certainly go astray, and go on and on doing evil, and only evil, and that continually.

They who instruct you in school want to save you. They want to reach out hands and help you over the hard places in life. You will find many hard places; you will meet many trials and temptations, and you will need advice, counsel and help. It is offered to you now while you are young and inexperienced in the ways of the world and in the ways of your own hearts.

“Cease,” then, “to do evil.” I leave it to your own consciences to tell you what evil you have been doing. I cannot read the heart as God does; but you know, each one of you, what are the evil ways into which you may have fallen, the evil habits you may have already formed. If they have been evil deeds or evil words or evil thoughts, give them all up; cease from them, put them away.

What is it to do well? It is to do good. If you want to do right, you must renounce all sin, resolving to put away everything that is wrong, however dear it may be to the heart. Some sins you may love. I do not know what they are; I cannot describe them; I only want to tell you that if you are willing to give them up, God is willing to pardon them. And then I must tell you that when you do resolve to give them up, they will return again and again and try to regain possession of your hearts. There are temptations—

temptations which assail you in every conceivable shape—and you must fight them. An evil thought tempts you: don't yield and say, "Well, if I have the evil thought, I am just as guilty as if I had done the deed." It is not so; cast out the thought. If you have a struggle over it, and are partly defeated, don't give it up, don't consider it as bad as a complete overthrow; fight every inch of ground. An evil thought, bad as it is, is not as bad as an evil deed. An evil thought distresses yourself only; an evil deed distresses and injures others as well as yourself.

Begin again and again. Life is a series of fresh beginnings. How often are we told to "turn over a new leaf!" Remember that God is always ready to forgive all the past; no matter how evil it has been, he will forgive it and blot it out for the sake of Christ, if we repent of it. Do not, then, be discouraged by the fact that our sins are known to others, to our companions; let us bury the past. We wish we could wipe out the memory of our sins from others, but if God remembers them no more, we need not fear man. Let not the heart sink, let not the shame that sin leaves behind it lead us into the company of those who are living in sin, without any desire to reform, without any wish to do well.

We need to fight battle after battle, with no burden of the past hanging like a weight about our necks. If we truly repent of our sins, God will forgive and blot them all out. He will remember them no more forever. He only can forgive sin.

My readers are young people; I am thinking of your earlier

years, of the influences about your childhood ; I wonder how many of you have Christian mothers who taught you to pray and say, " Our Father who art in heaven " ? I wonder whether any of you have ever wept when you have read or heard of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross ? I wonder if the Holy Spirit has ever moved your young hearts ? Have any of you ever had such a thought as this : " I ought to be a Christian ; I ought to repent of my sins and lead a new life ; I know I am a sinner in the sight of God ; however fair I may seem to others in my outward life, God, who looks into my heart and knows all my thoughts—God knows that I am a sinner, and that I deserve to be punished " ? Have any of you ever had such thoughts ? Have you such thoughts now ?

I do not know what are the secret thoughts of your hearts now ; but I look forward. In a few years many of you will be in the world mingling among men and women, striving, as all are striving, for a place and a name, a home and a support.

What will be your course then ? Will you remember the earnest words that are said to you so often now in your youth ? Will you seek the society, the companionship of the good, the virtuous, the true ? Will you follow the advice which sympathizing Christian people give you, and cease to do evil ? Or will you, in the first enjoyment of that freedom from the restraints of school which some of you so long for, plunge into the vices and follies of a sinful life ?

I look further into the future. You boys have grown to

be men ; you girls have grown to be women. You are no longer young. The bloom, the freshness of youth has long since passed away. Most of you, I hope and believe, will be in honest, virtuous households, living useful lives, doing the work of good men and good women in society. Remembering the trials of your own youth, you will be endeavoring in all proper ways to help the young who will then be about you, showing them by kind and sympathizing words what an evil and bitter thing it is to do wrong. And thus you will be the means in the hands of God of saving some souls—it may be, “ plucking them as brands from the burning.”

But what shall I say of others ? There may be those among my readers who are tired of these plain words. You may have made up your minds that you will do as you please in this matter—that you will have your own way, no matter where that way leads you. You will some day be your own master or mistress and do as you please. And so you can ! And no human hand can restrain you ; unless you violate the law, you can have your own way in all sinful indulgences.

So entirely is this whole subject in your own hands that I almost wish it were not so. If I could, I would probably force you to cease to do evil and learn to do well. But I can't ; no human being can. God can ; why don't he ? Because, if God forced you to do what you are unwilling to do, you would no longer be a free moral agent. It would degrade you into a mere machine. You have seen a locomotive-engine. It is a powerful machine, and can pull or push a hundred cars. But look at it as it stands on the track, with no fire in

its furnace, no water in its boiler. It is nothing but a piece of beautiful mechanism. A half dozen strong men can hardly push it on its smooth rails. Put wood and coal in the fire-box and light a fire there, and put water in the boiler, and when the water boils and the steam rises there is a sort of life created within the ponderous machine, and it puffs and breathes as if it wanted to start. But it is nothing without an engineer. When he takes his place and lets on the steam, the great rod moves, the wheels turn round, and the engine starts off on its track, full of life and energy, ready to pull its long train of cars a hundred miles. But it has no choice ; it cannot move itself ; it cannot go forward or backward, or fast or slow ; it is nothing but a piece of machinery.

Suppose, now, it could be made alive, and could have a mind such as yours, and could act freely and intelligently, and could go hither and thither as it pleased ; how immeasurably more valuable it would be ! It would be worth a thousand ordinary engines, and would be a world's wonder. All men would respect so powerful a machine because it could do as it pleased.

God has made you free to do as you please. He might have made you otherwise, but he did not. You can obey or you can refuse to obey. You can cease to do evil, you can learn to do well. But you must do them of your own choice. And it is not enough to learn to do well only ; you must cease to do evil. There was a man who had grown rich by making whiskey. He had become one of the richest men in the city where he lived ; had built a splendid house, and filled it with costly furniture, and pictures and statuary and

other works of art, and flowers ; and had his horses and carriages, and men-servants and women-servants, and everything that money could buy. With all this he was charitable and gave large sums to benevolent objects and to help the poor ; and he said once that he knew he had made his money in a way that many people thought was wrong, and he was somewhat afraid was wrong, and he would like, therefore, to do some good with his money.

“ Ah, but,” said one to whom this story was told, “ why don’t he give up that business of making whiskey, by which so many hundreds of thousands of persons and families have been ruined?—why don’t he give it up? It is not enough to do good. This is not the first thing. He ought first to cease to do evil ; he ought to close up his distilleries, put out his fires, and then learn to do well.”

It is said that when a man becomes an habitual drunkard, drinking to excess whenever he can obtain spirits, until he has reached the condition of delirium tremens, the coatings of the stomach become destroyed, and the system so nearly ruined that the greatest care and skill are required to save the patient ; and that when the person is to be cured, doses of spirits must be given every day, each day a less and less quantity, until after a time the daily quantity, which was large at first, is reduced to a few drops, and finally to nothing, when the habit of drink is broken and the drunkard is cured. I do not know how this may be, but I know that this course of treatment will not do for sin. You can’t break off that habit day by day by reducing the quantity. You can’t be cured of sin by

doing less and less of sinful things day after day. You must break off altogether and at once. You must cease to do evil now ; you can't parley with it ; you can't reason about it ; you can't treat it tenderly ; you must break away from it as you would escape from a burning house whose walls threaten to fall in and overwhelm you.

How can you do this ? Who will help you to do this great work ? Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, came to save you from sin, and he will save you if you look to him and to him alone. Will you do it ?

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT SHALL I DO?

IT would seem that one who has lived as long as I have, ought to have learned many things from experience that are worth telling to others, especially to those who are young. Life is lived to very little purpose indeed if one does not grow wiser as he grows older. In looking back to my own childhood, I can see that if the things had been said to me that I am wishing to say to you, I might have been a wiser, a better, and a happier man. I am sure that I should have avoided certain things which I now think were mistakes, even if they may not be called by other and harder names.

I think at that time the boy was not regarded as so important a factor in life as he is to-day; he was not quite as well cared for, he was not treated with as much consideration. When he was the child of well-to-do parents he was sent to school, then to the academy, then to college; and in many instances he was left to such moral influences and associations as happened to be around him. His intellectual nature was carefully trained, but his moral training was usually left to Providence or to chance. It is probable also that the temptations of childhood were not so many nor so fierce as they are now, but this is not certain.

Now-a-days, the boy is a very important factor in life—
(26)

never so important as now. Whether we have yet found the best methods of instruction or training, or what are the most important things for a boy to learn, I do not know ; but I do know that more pains are now taken to educate boys, to train them and care for them, than ever before ; and if we do not turn out from our schools of to-day, boys who are better equipped for the real duties of life than our predecessors have done, it seems to me it is our fault.

But however careful and skilful your teachers and other instructors are in giving you good advice, the real work of preparing yourselves for life after your school-days are over, must be done by you. It is very easy to give advice, but who can make you follow it? This must be your own act, your duty.

Nevertheless, it is well to tell you the things which you ought to do while still at school, and after your school-days are over.

At the risk, then, of saying things which you don't care to hear, or of saying things which you have heard before, I now give you some hints.

Learn all you can in the school. One who has a good education is much more likely to succeed than one who is poorly educated. You have good teachers and good text-books ; and, while the course of studies may not include all the higher branches, you will all be taught at least reading, writing and arithmetic ; and these are at the foundation of a substantial education.

A boy wrote to me from a distance, asking me to help him

to get a place. His letter covered a little more than one page of a sheet of note paper, but in that short note there were at least seven mistakes. I sent his letter back to him, marking the errors and writing him as kindly as I could, telling him not to be disheartened, but to apply himself diligently to learn the three things which I have just mentioned to you, and that when he was able to write a more correctly expressed letter, with better spelling and syntax, he might do so, and I would help him if I could.

I have a letter from another boy, written not long ago, in which he says, "I regret that I did not make better use of my time in school in studying my lessons. I study hard now every day to make up for lost time. Boys will find out to their cost and regret after they leave school that they did not take advantage of the opportunity and learn at school. I remember how very often you advised the boys to study hard, but as it was so near the time of leaving school, I did not make the best use of my time until it was too late. For my part, I hope each and every boy in the school will study hard and try to do his duty, as he never will have the same chance again."

And the time is so short. There are four or five hours a day in the schools, and these days will soon be over. And for many of my readers this is the only opportunity for education.

What will you do when you leave school? Some of you will go to new homes, some into mills where you will work during the long hours of the day, among the noisy machinery and the grime and dirt of factories. Some of you will go into

clerkships ; and, if you behave as you ought to behave, you will make friends among those with whom you go to live ; they will be kind to you, and treat you as you would wish to be treated. Some of you may go to work on farms, where you will find long hours of labor, and hard work, and small pay, and it will seem very hard for you to keep on, under those conditions ; but remember that anything that is valuable must be got by hard work. Many of you will go into shops, where you will be treated roughly sometimes by those who are at the head—the “bosses”—the men who lead ; but remember that this is part of the discipline of life, and you cannot altogether escape it. Don't be discouraged at rough treatment. Do your work well, and don't be hasty in leaving one place for another, except you have very good cause ; for the new place you may not like as well as the first ; and “rolling stones gather no moss.” Wherever you go when you leave school, the work which you will have to do will be new work. It will not be easy at first, but it will get easier shortly. Even in professional life success can be secured only by the hardest work. You will meet with new companions, you will be exposed to the temptations of making friendships with people of whose good character you are not sure, and you must be very careful about this. It is no bar to your success in life if you are poor, for it is very well known that many of the men who hold high places were once poor, and worked themselves up from low places ; but they had self-respect, and determined to succeed. There is no reason why you should not succeed ; any of you

—all of you—if you set about it in the right way, and I am trying to show you that way.

How shall you behave in the new homes or the new places to which you are going?

Do not drink anything that will intoxicate. When you leave school, you will be constantly exposed to the temptation to drink beer and whiskey. Have nothing to do with either, or with any intoxicating drink.

Do not be idle. No one can afford to be idle except when resting. Some work-people talk lightly of “laying off a day” without any good reason for it. The next thing—they are looking for a “job” and don’t find it.

A man called at my house—looking for a “job.” He said he was an upholsterer, and had some tools with him. He wanted to repair some furniture. He was shown a piece of furniture, and asked if he could put it in order. He said, “I can.” “How long will it take you?” “A day,” he replied; “but I am not quite ready now, and will come to-morrow.” He said he was very poor. I gave him a dollar in advance, and told him to come to-morrow and do the work. To-morrow came, and the man did not come until late in the day, when he said he would rather take a full day to do it, and would come the following day. But he never came.

Do not be untidy. You are taught to be neat and cleanly now. When not at work, wear good clothes—clean clothes, and you ought to have clean hands and clean shoes when not at work.

Do not be too fond of fine clothes and jewelry. This will

be a sore temptation. There are so many smartly dressed people—so many who seem to wear their very best every day—that a few words may not be out of place on this subject. It is the duty of all young men to be well dressed, and clothing is so cheap that any well-to-do young man can have a best, or Sunday suit, but a young man at work or in business of any kind ought not to wear his best clothes every day. I have seen more than one boy, as soon as he earns a little money, sporting his fine clothes or kid gloves, or flash jewelry : apparently too glad to get rid of his plain clothes. And I have had the regret that he did not save more of his wages, or pay, and lay it up as the beginning of a capital to begin business with. “It is not fine feathers that make fine birds.” The desire to dress beyond his means has led many a young man to lay hands on what did not belong to him—and steal. Many a tailor or clothing store has suffered from young men who dress beyond their means. It is little better than stealing.

Don't buy things on credit ; that is, to be paid for when you get the money. You will often be tempted to buy things before you are able to pay for them ; indeed, the better you are in reputation, the more you will be persuaded to buy things ; a watch, or jewelry, or clothing. Save a little of your wages all the time. A young man who spends all his earnings is in danger of spending more than he earns, and then he is no longer honest. This is very true.

And don't be ashamed of plain manners and homely ways of your relations. If you have learned better manners and a better style of conversation at school, don't let it weaken your

respect or affection for those who sent you to school, and whom you ought to love and honor. Don't make a parade of your good education anywhere.

Do not be ashamed of your poor relations. It is one of the highest of ambitions for a young man to be able to take care of his mother, if she be a widow, and his sisters, if they need his support. If he gets ten or fifteen dollars a week he can take a little house in a little street and live very comfortably on that pay. I have heard of one who has done this—a fatherless boy of eighteen years making a happy home for his widowed mother—a splendid thing for any boy to do. And some of you may do the same thing.

Be prompt, cheerful and faithful in your obedience. You will always have somebody over you whom you must obey. No one is entirely independent.

Try to get to the head in everything—somebody must be—why not you? If you go into an institution, financial or otherwise, a Bank, Trust Company or Railroad Company, work as if you expected some day to be at the head. But don't say so. Be very careful of the company you keep. Ah! you don't know how much this means. Be warned by me against so-called friends who will lead you astray.

Always tell the truth, no matter what it costs. No lie thrives. Truth is the foundation of character. A lie is a lie; call it by no softer name. It is a base, a detestable thing—but, alas! so common. I beg you, I implore you, tell the truth always. Remember that character is one thing, and reputation is another. Character is what you really are, and reputation

is what you seem to be. You see there is a wide difference. One who indulges in secret vices, and keeps a fair outside, is a hypocrite.

Do not let angry passions get control of you. In the heat of passion you are tempted to catch hold of the first thing within reach, and sometimes serious injury and even murder are committed when there was no intention to do it. It was in the heat of passion. And then it is wicked, because God looks upon the heart, and whether one follows the evil prompting of one's heart or not, God regards the thought of the heart.

Do not be selfish. It is not well to keep a seat in a street car if older persons are not seated, and you ought to give a seat always to a woman, whether she is young and good-looking, or old and ugly.

Do not be profane. It is useless, ungentlemanly, wicked; it is a violation of the Third Commandment.

Do not indulge in indelicate thoughts, looks, words or actions. Do not read books and papers that have indelicate passages, such as you could not read aloud to your mother or sister.

Don't be too much in the streets in the night; and when you are out at night, be in such company that you would not be ashamed to be seen with. You will be safer with company, if it is the right kind, than to be alone. If you have a comfortable home or even a comfortable room, spend most of your time there, and bring your friends there, and keep out of the streets at night. Make the most and the best of your time

when not at work. Read books, not newspapers only, but books. Don't buy books—at least buy very few—get them from some library, even if you have to pay a small sum.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the rich iron master of Pittsburg, in his extraordinary pamphlet called "The Gospel of Wealth," says :

"When I was a working boy in Pittsburg, Col. Anderson, of Allegheny—a name I can never speak without feelings of devotion and gratitude—opened his little library of four hundred books to boys. Every Saturday afternoon he was in attendance at his house to exchange books. No one but he who has felt it can ever know the intense longing with which the arrival of Saturday was awaited that a new book might be had. My brother and Mr. Phipps, who have been my principal business partners through life, shared with me Col. Anderson's precious generosity ; and it was when reading in the treasures which he opened to us that I resolved if ever wealth came to me, that it should be used to establish free libraries, that other poor boys might receive opportunities for which we are indebted to that noble man."

How well Mr. Carnegie kept that resolution was shown by the great free library which he gave to Allegheny City.

And well do I remember how, when I was a lad not able to buy books, a kind-hearted gentleman took me to his book-case, and told me that I might take and read at any time any books I chose.

Be honest in every way—in little things and in big things.
Be gentlemanly. It is not education, it is not fine clothes,

it is not money, but behavior, that makes a true gentleman.

Be a Christian. This is the last and the best advice which I give you. But it must be real religion—no sham, not assumed. I mean the religion that will keep you right in all ways ; that will keep you from being harsh and cruel to other people, or to dumb creatures ; that will help you bear patiently, harshness and cruelty when other people treat you so ; that will lead you to read a portion of the Scriptures every day, and to pray to God every day, if it be only a few sentences of Scripture or a few petitions of prayer. If some people sneer at religion and religious people, why don't they show us something better? All hypocrites are not in the church. Many a man, not a professor of religion, is leading a double life, seeming to be honest and clean in the eyes of his fellow-men, when at heart he is all wrong. He is just as much a hypocrite as a man who professes to be religious and who uses his religion as a cloak for wrong-doing, but who has no love of God in his heart.

When you leave school don't fail to go to some church on Sundays. Let it be the church of your father and mother, or the church of your choice. I have nothing to say about what church it shall be. I don't wish to determine this question for you : I would not if I could ; but I want you to go to some church—to any church, and do your duty as a Christian ; and remember that God loves you, that the Infinite Redeemer loves all boys and girls just as much as if there were but one boy or one girl in the world ; that He, who was born in Bethlehem,

and lived in Nazareth, and worked in the carpenter's shop, and walked up and down the hills and valleys of Judea, preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins, and who was put to death by wicked men on the cross—that he loves you.

CHAPTER V.

MONEY NOT THE CHIEF GOOD.

It is a very common belief—so common as to be almost universal—that happiness consists in having everything that one wants ; so that a rich man, who has money enough to buy whatever he wants, must be a happy man ; and that a poor man, who cannot buy what he wants, cannot be a happy man ; that the more one has, the happier he is : and that, therefore, a rich man must be happier than a poor man.

I want to show you that this is not true—at least not true to the extent that is generally believed. I say it to give you better views of life than this belief is likely to give you—because I wish you to look at the subject in a more sensible way.

To prove this, I appeal

1. To human experience ; and
2. To the Holy Scriptures.

A boy receives to-day a pocket-knife ; to-morrow he is given another ; the next day another, and so on until he has a knife for every pocket. What can he do with them all ? At first he is highly delighted : he opens and shuts all the blades of each knife ; he feels the edge, the point ; he thinks this blade will sharpen his lead-pencil ; this will do to whittle with ; this to cut a big cane in the woods ; this to

pare his finger-nails with, and this file to smooth things with. But after a few days, when the novelty wears off, he chooses one from the half-dozen that have been given him—the best one for all purposes—and quietly puts the others away: he uses only one.

Next to a knife, a boy probably most wants a watch. He sees a man with a watch, that he takes out of his pocket and looks sharply at, and then shuts the case with a snap, and puts it back in his pocket. So the boy wants a watch. After a while, at Christmas or on his own birthday, or as a reward for good behavior or hard study, somebody gives him a watch. He is greatly delighted indeed; he wants to know very often what time o' day it is, and wants to tell other boys who have no watch as yet. By-and-by somebody, not knowing how well off he is, sends him another watch—a little different kind—not so pretty as the other, or perhaps prettier. Now what?

Well, for a day or two, he is greatly pleased: he takes out one, then the other; he shows them to his friends; he talks of the two as to which keeps the better time, for they don't agree exactly; he had not thought of that! He wants them to go exactly alike, but they don't—and he can't make them. Then some relation from a great distance sends him another watch. Of course he is pleased at first, but this pleasure is very short-lived, for soon he is troubled to know what he shall do with all these watches. If he appears with three watches and chains, or even with two, he will be ridiculous—the boys will laugh at him. He can wear but one at a time;

he does not want to change watches every morning ; what shall he do ? Why, he will put away in a safe place two of his watches, as the boy did his knives, and he will wear one watch. Is he happier or better for having an abundance of watches ? Or is the other boy happier or better for having half a dozen pocket knives ?

It is the same with clothing. A boy can wear but one suit of clothes at a time ; he wants a change, but not too many. It would be a great bore to be obliged to wear a suit of new clothes every day, or a pair of new shoes or a new cap. If a tailor should offer you a suit of new clothes every day you would accept gratefully for a few days, and then say, " No, I don't want to be bothered with them ; they don't all fit me ; one suit is too tight, another too loose ; these trousers are too long, these are too short. No, no : give me a suit that I like and let me wear it till next Sunday." Happiness is not in having an endless change of clothing.

So with everything that money can buy. Is it cakes and candies ? You buy and eat till you make yourself sick. Is it jewelry ? You would not like to wear more than one scarf-pin at a time, nor wear a different one every day. If you had all the rings in a jeweller's store, you would not wear three rings on each finger of both hands. It would be barbaric.

You know how you enjoy your Christmas dinner ! It is so much better than the every-day dinners. But suppose you had a Christmas dinner every day, do you think you would be the happier ? Why, there are many people who have a din-

ner as good as a Christmas dinner every day. Do you think they are the happier for it? No; they have pampered their appetite and indulged their love of rich food until their healthy taste is gone; they have little or no appetite, and they require the most highly spiced food or they can eat nothing with pleasure. What would not such rich people give for a strong, healthy appetite such as most boys have!

The disappointment you experience in early youth in learning that the great abundance of things will not give satisfaction, nor bring contentment, nor happiness, will follow you all through life. A man who makes money in his trade or business and who thinks he would like to put his money in houses—small houses at first—is never satisfied: he goes on and on, adding house to house after denying his family as generous a support as they are entitled to, so that he might add to the number of his houses, the value of his real estate. So the farmer, with the same desire to accumulate, when criticised for his inordinate desire for more farms, says he only wants to buy that which joins his own land!

The store-keeper is not satisfied with a comfortable living and a moderate sum to add to his capital every year. He must enlarge his business so as to increase his profits; must go in debt more heavily; until he finds he is doing too much business for his capital, more than he can manage well, and he fails. He thought that the larger his business the greater his profits, and the happier he would be: he finds his mistake when too late.

What is Life? Not the mere act of living, eating, drinking,

breathing, sleeping, waking, moving, working, thinking, loving, remembering, for all these faculties we have (wholly or in part) with the brute creation. But Life, true life, is, in the highest and best sense, usefulness, happiness, contentment; and these consist not in what one has, but in what one is.

It is a very common error that we must do all we can, honestly, to get rich; not only for our own pleasure, but for the good of others who are dependent upon us. There is enough truth in this to make it attractive to people generally and enough that is not true in it to lead us to pause and think about it.

While looking at the truth that is in it, we must not suffer ourselves to exaggerate the thought, lest, in trying persistently to do the best we can, we give ourselves up to money-getting, not merely for the good that money will do for us and others, but for the sake of the amount that we can heap up that we may be rich.

What then is likely to make life most pleasant and useful to us.

It is not ingetting the greatest number of good and pleasant things.

It does not consist in getting rich, or famous, or popular.

Money will not make a gentleman: we know too many rich ill-bred, rough, coarse men, to think so. A real gentleman is a well-bred, well-educated man of high principles, of sterling integrity; of kindly, gentle manners; of innate, instinctive purity; of unselfish devotion to others; in short, an unaffected, unfaltering, consistent Christian.

Money will not make a scholar : we know too many instances to the contrary. Money will send you to the best schools and the best colleges, and place you under the best teachers, but it will not necessarily educate your mind.

Money may make you famous and popular, but being famous does not make one good, and being popular does not make one useful. Money is not the chief good.

True life or true happiness means a contented mind, a willingness to think more kindly of other people, and help other people, even in small things ; to forget one's own convenience and comfort.

A contented mind means not anxiously trying to get something beyond your reach ; not getting angry with yourself or anybody else, if you don't get what you think you ought to have ; but an honest determination to do the most good with what Divine Providence gives you.

The true object of life is to live uprightly ; to be what you ought to be ; to do what you ought to do always and not now and then.

It is to do the best you can all the time, everywhere.

If in school, be the best boy and the best scholar in your class, and so you will help to make your class the best in the whole school, and if others do so, the school will be the best of its kind.

If you are at work in a shop, let your work be the very best work that can be done. Make yourself master of everything that you have to do. Make up your mind that you will be at the head of the shop, not merely for the high wages that

you will necessarily get, but to show what character and an honest purpose can do for one who has determined to do right and be right always.

If you are in a counting-house or store, let everything that you have to do be done in the best manner. Do not be idle, or shiftless, or slipshod, or untidy, in anything you are or have to do. And be ready to help your fellow-workers if they get behind or if their work is harder than yours.

Let it be your purpose to live for others, rather than for yourself. You will surely accomplish more in this way than if you start out to live for yourself alone.

Be distinguished for truth, integrity, honor, purity. Let your life consist in these.

One life well lived in any community, whether school, or shop, or store, or family, will do more good than any sermons; and he or she who cares more for wisdom than for wealth; who cares more for goodness than for comfort; who cares more for self-culture than for self-indulgence; who cares more for serving others than for pleasing one's self; who thinks it a higher honor and a greater pleasure to live for the service of God than to save up money for the sake of being rich, has a better idea of life than those who, when they pass away, leave millions and millions of dollars, so that people don't ask how much good he did, but, how much money did he leave?

We so often hear people spoken of as being very successful, who have only made money, as if this were the only kind of success, or the best kind of success. I wish to correct this impression, to give a better definition. Success is getting the

best things, the things which will last—a character which shall be known as truthful, honest, pure, courageous, lovable, religious, every way trustworthy. A boy or girl who gets such a character has gained the highest possible success, no matter if poor in this world's goods. It is very likely that some of my readers may become rich, for I have known men who got rich, not as well educated as you are ; but this is not what I want for you. You can be just as truly successful in life at its best, even if you never get above moderate circumstances.

It is well to get good wages for your work : you must strive for this ; but it is better to deserve good wages and higher wages than to get them : better even if you should never get them, although you surely will.

What I want most for you all is, that you shall be trustworthy, for then you must be respected ; then and not till then will your life be what the Saviour meant it to be.

Now, having made my appeal to human experience to show that money is not the best thing to live for—that it rarely, if ever, satisfies him who accumulates it—I appeal to the Holy Scriptures : what do they say ?

We read in the 37th Psalm that “ The little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked,” and in the 5th chapter of Ecclesiastes, “ He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver,” and in one of St. Paul's epistles to Timothy, “ The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, which some reaching after, have been led astray from the truth, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

I could point you also to the words of our Lord as recorded

by St. Luke in the 12th chapter, "Beware of covetousness," which means all covetousness—not only the desire to have more than we now have, but the desire to get more by almost any means, and to have more enjoyment than we now get, out of what we already have.

There are many instances in the Old Testament, such as Balaam, who took a bribe to curse the people of Israel ; Achan, who stole gold and silver and rich garments and hid them in his tent ; Gehazi, who robbed his master's guest and lied about it ; and in the New Testament, Judas, who sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver, and the Pharisees, who were ready to do anything for money ; and Ananias and Sapphira, who professed to give up everything to the Lord, but who kept back part of the price of the land ; all these instances and others that might be mentioned show how common it was in the old time, as common as it is now, for men to give up everything for money, to forget their best interests, and do the basest deeds for the sake of money.

And I point you also to the words uttered by the Lord Jesus, words which have been constantly in my mind while writing this chapter, words which ought to be committed to memory by every one, words to be "gotten by heart," words which might well be emblazoned in letters of light on the walls of every counting-house and bank and insurance company and railroad office, in every school-room, on the walls of all churches, on every place that the eye rests on : "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth."

In the last day, when we shall all stand before the judgment

seat, the question asked will not be, "How much money did you make, money which you had to leave, money which was wasted, squandered by those whom you left behind you, ruining many; but what good did you do with your money? What good did you do with your life? Did you do all the good you could? Or did you only do that which you could not well help doing? Did you ever deny yourself something you wanted, so that you might have more to give to others?"

"What shall we do then," you say, "not try to get ahead, not try to make money, not try to get our wages increased?"

No, I don't mean that. I would not discourage in the least, industry, energy, frugality, economy: these are all virtues. But I do want you to understand and believe, that when money is hoarded, piled up, even in small heaps, with no thought of doing good with it, and beyond the reasonable needs of any one family—when it is hoarded for the sake of hoarding, when the ambition is to be called rich, richer than this man, richer than that family—when it is saved for such unworthy purposes, it ceases to be a blessing and becomes a curse. And I remember that the same gracious lips that spoke the words, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth," said these words also: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

CHAPTER VI.

DON'T.

AN American publisher has sent out a little book which he calls "Don't," a manual of mistakes and improprieties prevalent in conduct and speech, which ought to be avoided. In a series of chapters he discusses these mistakes and improprieties as they occur at the table, in dress and personal habits, in the drawing-room, in public, in speech and in general.

I have not read all of the book, but have turned over many of its pages, and have found much amusement and no little instruction from it; although there is much in it which is unnecessary, and some things possibly foolish; yet I wish all boys and girls knew the book well, for I am sure they would find many useful hints for the cultivation of polite behavior, which is not too small a subject for the oldest and the best to consider.

The title of the book and its contents have suggested to me the subject of this chapter. And I say to you the things which I wish had been said to me when I was a school-boy.

I go at once, then, to my subject, without further introduction.

Don't be impatient of good advice. You hear a good deal of it, and it may not always be to your taste. But the best medicines are not always the most palatable, and it is the

duty of your teachers to say just the things which ought to be said. There is no pleasure in giving advice which you don't want to hear, and it is often much easier to talk in a different strain and tell you interesting stories ; but I have so vivid a recollection of my own youthful needs that I wish to help you as far as I can over the hard, rough places of your early training.

When I think of you at school one of the first questions that comes to my mind is, do you consider why you were sent to school? And as I think of the older scholars I ask myself the question, "What good will this boy and that girl get from all this 'going to school'?" Will you make good use of your advantages, so that you will get ahead and keep ahead of those who do not go to school as much as you do?

Don't suppose, however, that you will be educated unless you work hard. You are very likely to make this mistake unless you are warned against it. Many parents seem to think that, when they have sent their sons and daughters to schools, especially away from home—schools of good reputation—they have secured their education. And many boys and girls are so foolish as to suppose that, when they have passed fair examinations, and have graduated, they are educated. But this is not education. Education is not cramming. It is not a burdening of the memory with pages and pages from textbooks. It is not a glib recitation of the rules of grammar or arithmetic, however accurately repeated. Education is learning how to think. A boy may know the name of every tool in a carpenter's shop or a machine shop, and be able to describe

the purposes of them all, and yet not know at all how to use those tools. A boy may be able to commit to memory, and recite accurately, whole pages of history, and have in his memory a list of the principal events of history, ancient and modern, and know very little of the philosophy of history, or the purpose of writing history. He may be able to do every "sum" in the school arithmetics, and not know when the proper change is given him for purchases in the market. He may be able to write beautifully on card paper, and not be able to put a common every-day letter to a friend in proper shape on a sheet of paper. He may be able to parse almost any sentence in English, and not be able to speak or write a score of lines free from errors. He may be able to do an abstruse example in mathematics, and not be able to set figures under one another on a slate, nor add them up when they are properly set down by others.

Now why is all this? And why is it that a newly graduated school-boy is so often at fault in the simplest requirements of an office, a store, or a shop? I think it is because he has failed to understand, while he has been at school, the very purpose of his going to school. In a general way he understands that he is at school to be educated, without knowing really what education is; but he has not asked himself with an honest purpose whether he is doing what he can do to help himself. He seems to think, or acts as if he thought, that somehow or other, now that he is at school, he will be educated in spite of his neglect or indifference; and it is this thought that I wish to correct, when I say that you cannot be educated,

and the time will be wasted, unless you work hard. And this means, not working hard for a while, a sort of spurt, but continuous hard work. Now I should hardly have the courage to urge you to this hard work, if it hindered you in your plays and games. I would be very unwilling even to shorten your recreations in the play grounds and elsewhere ; but all that I urge is quite compatible with the fullest and heartiest enjoyment of your games and plays.

Don't think that education will of itself make you a good man or a successful man. Of course I mean now, intellectual education. There are people who seem to think that if a boy is well educated he has had all done for him that is necessary to his success, and that he is fully equipped for life. But, high and important as the education of the mind is, there is a higher and better education still ; it is that of the morals ; the general character. President Allen, of Girard College, was once asked to send a boy to a gentleman who wanted one of his brightest and best. "I do not send you my best scholar," said he, "but I send you one of my best boys." And the career of that boy has proved the correctness of the President's choice.

Some of the most brilliant minds, and some of the most highly educated men, have been men utterly destitute of moral principle. I have been asked to name a man who was well qualified to undertake the management of a most important part of a great commercial establishment ; and the names of several persons came to my mind, well qualified for that work, or who could easily adapt themselves to it : and it was

a place of large pay, and I knew some persons mentally qualified, but I could not recommend them because I had no confidence in their integrity. They were bright enough in intellect, and with quite sufficient mental cultivation, but alas! their moral character was not such as to be commended.

There are men in the great cities of this country and other countries, men of high education and brilliant natural powers and large wealth, authors of books, and publishers of books, who are men of infamous character. Education has not made real men of them, though with every natural advantage. High culture and bright natural gifts have not saved them, for nothing can make useful and honorable men in the absence of high integrity and moral principle. There may be persons who think that the education of the mind is all that is required to make real men, but those who have charge of you do not think so; therefore they try to provide the purest moral and religious instructors for you.

Don't think that your education is complete when you are graduated. The student at college who went up to his professor to take leave of him because he had "finished his education," as he said, was wisely rebuked by his professor's reply, "Indeed! I am only beginning mine."

Once a gentleman asked me if I knew of any one who wanted a young man as secretary who was an expert short-hand writer, and who could conduct correspondence in a satisfactory manner. I asked how old the person was. The reply was, "About twenty-five years." I said, "If he were seventeen or eighteen years old I thought I could get him a place." "May

I send him to you?" said he. "Certainly," said I, "and I will do what I can to help him." In a day or two he came, and I found the young man of good appearance and bright intelligence. He told me his story, and I am sure it will interest you.

After graduation he went to a mechanic who was doing a large and profitable business. He lived with him six years. During this time he studied short-hand writing. He had no teacher, but he bought the necessary books at a cost of something under five dollars and taught himself. "It was real hard work," he assured me, harder than his work in the shops during the day. He studied at night after the day's work was over, and often when he was tired enough. More than once, as he told me, he sat up all night, and went to his work the next day as usual; so determined was he to succeed. He did succeed, of course he did, and then when he left his master he went into the service of a railroad company. After this he went to another place where he had better pay, but he discovered that the methods of doing business were such as his conscience could not approve, and he did not remain there long. Then he was out of employment a while, and then was told he might call upon me. But before he could see me he had been offered and had accepted a place in one of our largest mercantile houses, as a short-hand secretary, at a salary of \$1000 a year to begin with. He told me further, that he was a member of a church, and a teacher in the Sunday-school. Now if this boy had thought that his education was finished when he left school, and had spent his evenings as too many do, in loung-

ing about the street corners and worse places, and dropped all his studies, do you think he would have been as successful as he has been ?

Don't suppose you can afford to associate with vicious persons. I cannot dwell on this now, and will only add that this advice will be just as good for you when you leave school as it is now ; with this in addition, when you go out into the world you will be much more exposed to this danger than you are now.

Don't suppose that you can contract foolish or wicked habits while young, and drop them at pleasure as you grow old. Habits are very easily contracted, at least bad habits are, but are not easily laid aside. A boy may learn to smoke tobacco, beginning with cigarettes, or to chew tobacco, which is much worse, and have the habit so fixed upon him that it is next to impossible to drop the habit in after life, when he would willingly do so. So the habit of drinking liquors becomes so fixed that the victim believes himself helpless, and so irresponsible ; and he comes to feel that intemperance is a disease, when in reality it is a crime, and a crime to be punished. So with the habit of profane swearing.

Don't be discouraged and despair. Don't suppose you can be a good man and a successful man without the help of God. And do not consider it a matter of course that he will help you whether you care for him or not. It is true he makes his sunshine on the evil and the good, and his rains to fall upon the just and the unjust. But the time for settlement between the soul and its Maker may not be now. God is a personal being, and

not merely an abstraction. He has all knowledge, and the name of every boy and girl is as well known to him as if there were but one boy or girl. This knowledge he does not need to acquire as you and I acquire knowledge of persons and things, but he has all knowledge from his nature. Just think, any of you, that the great God knows everything that is passing through your mind, and remembers everything that has ever passed through your mind! Just think, from the time you rise in the morning, until your eyes are closed in sleep at night, every thought you entertain in your minds, whether spoken or not, and every word you speak to your companions in the play-grounds, or to your teachers in the schools, is heard and remembered by him, for he cannot forget. Oh—if only he could forget! And then remember, that this great being, whom we call God, has all power; that he can turn the hearts of men, that he does turn their hearts, and makes bad men to be good; that he controls events in ways which we cannot understand, but which we can't help believing; that he overrules the wickedness of men and brings good out of it, without in the least clearing the guilty; that in some most inexplicable way he speaks to us in our hearts and consciences, and tells us when we do wrong, and warns us against it, and encourages us to do right, and punishes us when we disregard his teachings; that he can make us sick, and make us well again; that our lives are in his hands; that he can do what he will with us and all people, and no one can call him to account; that he "doeth his will in the armies of heaven as well as among the people of our world;" that he claims our time and talents, and

all that we have and are, for his own ; that he is our Father also, and loves us with a truer, a warmer, a more affectionate love, than any earthly father could have for us ; that he not only permits us, but invites us to come to him in prayer every day, and tell him all our wants, all our troubles, and has promised not only to hear us but to give us the things that we need ; that he sent his Son into the world to die for us, and has promised to save all who believe in him, and has told us that we must all appear before him at the last day and be judged—I say, when we remember all this, can we hope to be good men or successful men in any good sense, if we neglect so great and so good a being !

CHAPTER VII.

COUNTING THE DAYS.

WE are very apt to let the days pass and take little note of them. They come in such regular succession that it seems a matter of course ; and we think little of the fact that, as each day passes, we have advanced one day in the journey of life and have one day less to live. To the young, the days seem long and the hours, especially in school, pass very slowly. If you have ever watched, even for five minutes, the hands on the face of a watch or clock, it has seemed a very long time.

The English writer Sterne has given us a sad and touching picture, although entirely imaginary, of one who was literally numbering his days.

He takes a captive and shuts him up in a dungeon and then looks through the twilight of his grated door and takes his picture. He beheld his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement. Looking more closely, he saw him pale and feverish. In thirty years the western breeze had not once fanned his blood ; he had seen no sun, no moon in all that time, nor had the voice of friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice. He was sitting upon the ground, upon a little straw in the farthest corner of his dungeon, which was alternately his chair and his bed. A little calendar of small sticks was laid at the head, notched all over with the dismal

days and nights he had passed there. He had one of these little sticks in his hand, and, with a rusty nail, he was etching another day of misery to add to the heap. "As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye towards the door,—then cast it down, shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his stick upon the bundle. He gave a deep sigh,—I saw the iron enter into his soul. I burst into tears. I could not endure the picture which my fancy had drawn."

The little child counts the days that lie between him and the next holiday, or his birthday, or Christmas, and, in his impatience, thinks they will never come. The school-boy counts the days that lie between him and his graduation. He is eager to be free from the restraints of school-life, to try what he can do for himself. With the restlessness of youth he is impatient of control and wants to be his own master.

These are natural feelings, but they are not therefore right, not to be indulged.

There can be no doubt that God sees the whole of our life—that which we have lived, that which we are living now, that which we are yet to live, the whole of it—as a picture spread out before him, as a history already written. (How this can be, and we be free agents, I cannot explain—it cannot be explained.) It is infinite mercy which conceals this knowledge from us; though some foolish and ignorant boys and girls sometimes go to wicked men and women to see if the curtain can be lifted which shuts the future from us, to have their

“fortunes told.” But if we can be led to take such account of our time “as to number our days,” as if we could see into the future, then, indeed, it may be hoped that we would apply our hearts unto wisdom.

They who have passed through the season of youth, who are now passing through middle age, or who are in the afternoon of life, know something of the rough experiences of life; for they have battled with its trials, have sometimes yielded to its temptations, and bear the scars of sharp conflicts with the evil in themselves and the evil in the world. They look back with shame on some passages which they wish could be blotted out from their history; and, if they could live life over again, they would avoid some, at least, of the sins of their youth. If they have a strong desire to tell you of a few of the dangers which lie in your path, it is that you may avoid them by being warned of them.

The pilots who direct the course of large vessels up and down our river and bay have made the passage over and over again, and they know the channels to be sought, and the shoals and shallow waters to be avoided.

Idleness is the most common hindrance in the way of finding wisdom. It is the besetting sin of very many young people. It is a disinclination to work, whether in school or at other duties and tasks. An idle boy is difficult to move in any direction; it is another word for a lazy boy. There are some exceptions to this rule. There are some boys who are always at work at something, who are restless and uneasy except they have fixed employment; and if some wholesome

occupation is not found for them, they will be at some mischief. Most of you, I think, have known what it is, at times, to have to drag yourselves to your work, whether in school or elsewhere, and you know what an amount of force, or will-power, it was necessary to put forth before you could address yourselves to the duty, whatever it was.

And then the courage to persevere in the good work is often wanting. The getting of true knowledge, which is another word for wisdom, does not seem so important as it really is. The boy is easily discouraged, and the hours, the days pass by unnoticed, not counted, and the time is gone.

Another hindrance in the way of getting wisdom is the habit of reading foolish and bad books and papers. The danger from this is not so great while you are at school and under more or less restraint ; but when your school-days are over, as will soon be the case with some of you, and you are at liberty to read what you please, you will need to be constantly on your guard against that kind of reading which vitiates the taste and weakens the mind. It is of such books as these that I would say some things, in the hope that you may avoid the dangers that beset your path.

No modern book that cannot be read aloud in the presence of ladies ought to be read by young people. Let this be the test. I say modern book, because there are expressions in the plays of Shakespeare, and in the Bible, which one would not like to read aloud. But we must remember that Shakespeare was written, and the Bible was translated into English, two or three hundred years ago, when expressions in common use then

are now quite immodest. Improvements have been made by culture and the varying customs of society and changes in the use and definitions of words. But no modern book, no book in general literature printed in our day, ought to be read, that would bring a blush to the cheek, if read aloud in the presence of women. One of the most pernicious habits is that of reading useless books and papers. I mean the weak and silly books and papers which are scattered in all directions.

The most popular of all reading is fiction—not merely novels, but newspaper stories. The records of any public library will show that more than three-fourths of all the books taken out are novels. But there is a very large class of people who have few or no books of their own, and who have not access to any library; and who, therefore, depend on the weekly and monthly papers for their reading. The number of such papers is legion; they are stuffed with stories—there is little else in them. Sometimes these papers are illustrated with startling pictures, as extravagant in drawing as the text is in description.

There was some years ago, and may be now, a weekly paper of flashy appearance published in another city, but scattered through our streets by the thousand, full of pictures and high-seasoned stories; and every number of that paper contained at least one picture representing a scene of violence, in which one or more of the characters had a pistol pointed, or a club raised, or a dagger drawn. Can you wonder that the constant reading of such a paper would make brutes and savages of the readers?

Young boys, errand boys, as they walk the streets, or go in street cars, take such papers out of their pockets and forget everything in the reading. And young girls, on their way to and from their daily work in stores and mills and factories, are often absorbed in such papers. It is a fearful waste of time, yet nobody has any time to waste. There is plenty of time with most persons who have a taste for reading, to read what is entertaining and edifying ; but nobody has time enough to waste over such books and papers as these. I would not, if I could, keep you from reading stories. I am fond of them myself ; I have read many of them ; I have gained great advantage from them. As long as I am able to read anything at all, I expect to read fiction ; but I do not read that which appears in the weekly, flashy story papers ; for it is generally of the weakest and poorest description. You can learn nothing good from it ; it is a waste of time ; but this is not all. Such reading is weakening and debasing to the mind. You read of improbable scenes ; nothing like them ever occurred in human experience. Improbable characters are described ; nothing like such men and women have you ever met, seen or heard of, except in such stories. They move in society which is not to be found anywhere. They are surrounded by impossible circumstances. There is no description of life or character that is worth a straw, no duty presented, no laudable ambition excited. What possible good can come from such reading ?

Can it be in any sense a preparation for the real life that is

before you—a life which to many of you must be one of trial and hardship and struggle?

There is an abundance of attractive and instructive reading which is within the reach of all. There are novels, plenty of them, which no one can object to your reading. They are pure, elevating, wholesome. Even some which seem to have been written with the sole purpose of amusement are not without merit. Some of the finest delineations of human character ever made by an uninspired pen are found in novels. They are profound studies. Some of the most thrilling and accurate descriptions of battle-scenes ever written are to be found in novels. Some of the finest specimens of Christian life and activity, of self-denial and suffering, and of true courage and manliness are found in novels. The highest, the brightest humor, the deepest pathos, the profoundest philosophy are found in novels. Some of the best sermons, some of the sweetest hymns, the most fervent prayers are to be found in novels. Some of the finest, the best minds that have appeared within this century have been devoted to teaching practical and religious truth and duty through the thin veil of fiction.

But—who shall choose the books? Is it safe for you to do it? No—No.

Why? You lack experience. You should seek the advice of others older and wiser than you are. He or she of whom you make the inquiry ought to know you, and ought to know what books will suit you best. It is a great thing to have such a friend or teacher. I once had such a friend, a gentle-

man of extensive reading and large knowledge of human nature; and whenever I wanted a book on some special point for myself or for another, I went to him and was never disappointed. You ought not, while young, to read any novel, unless one generally approved, without asking the advice of some intelligent friend. Remember that you have much to learn. After a while, even if you do not already know it, you will be surprised to find how little you know. I have read many books, but almost every day I am impressed with the conviction that I know so little. Oh, if I could live my life over again, with the advantages which you have, I would be more careful of what I read.

Professor Jowett, the Master of Balliol, Oxford, speaking in Westminster Abbey over the grave of Bulwer, said: "It was difficult to estimate works of fiction by a moral or religious standard, but that we must admit that novels exercise a wonderful influence over us, greater, probably, in the present age than in any other, and that they formed in literature a new element, which was unknown to the ancients. They not only add to the stock of harmless amusement (which is no light matter), but, when the work of a great writer, they may justly be considered as one of the ties which bind us to each other, lowering or elevating the taste of a nation, enlarging our knowledge of human nature, and showing the world to us in many new lights and aspects."

Reading people all over the world, in all modern European languages, sung the praises of Charles Dickens, the great novelist; and many a cruelly managed boarding-school has

been made to yield to the wholesome influence of his "Nicholas Nickleby." Who can tell to what extent feelings have been softened and purses opened and homes brightened by the story of "Tiny Tim," Bob Cratchet's little lame boy? And who can tell how many hearts have been touched and opened toward motherless boys by the story of poor little "Paul Dombey," surrounded as he was by all the appliances of wealth, but with no mother?

If I wanted to work the greatest possible wrong upon a young boy or man, a wrong which no earthly power could repair, which no human love could heal, there are books which I could put in his hand which would do the work thoroughly. I need not follow it up; I need not say a word; all that I would need to do would be to give him the book, let him hide it in his breast-pocket, and read it by stealth, and the work is done; it is the devil's own work, and the devil's friends and allies are doing it every day, and young men and young women fall down slain before it and are polluted, defiled, destroyed, soul and body.

There is one book, however, which is worth more than all others, for it is full of wisdom. It is read more than any other book in the world. It has been translated into all the written languages of earth. It has been more profusely illustrated with pictures than any other book. It is full of history, of battle-scenes, of biographies, of stories, of poetry, and of didactic teaching. It has its geography, its mountains, its valleys, its rivers, and lakes, and seas. It has descriptions of travels, of voyages, and shipwrecks; of governments, of

trials before courts, of prisons, of executions. It has everything in it, indeed, that concerns man, except Science. It is the Bible.

If you want the truest and best wisdom you must seek it here.

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CHAPTER VIII.

NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT.

A BOY had completed his course of study at an academy and was about to enter college, when it occurred to him that, as he did not intend to become a professional man, he knew already enough to make him a good business man. So he asked his uncle, who was his guardian, to let him go into business at once. Very reluctantly, his uncle complied; and a place in a large commercial-house was found for the boy. He liked the business very well, was happy in his associates, and was making fair progress in acquiring a knowledge of the business, giving satisfaction also to his employers. When he had been in the place a little less than a year, the time came for him to take his vacation. He went to the mountains and lakes, and spent a month or more, for his health was not strong, and therefore his vacation was prolonged. While there, he was thrown among persons of his own age, of education and cultivation, and he discovered that, in the matter of education and general information, he was quite below them. This set him to thinking, and to wondering whether he had been wise in throwing away his chances of a superior education for the sake of hurrying into business. When his vacation was concluded, he opened the subject again with his guardian, and asked if it was too late to reconsider the subject of going to college. His

guardian was only too glad to hear him talk so, and cheerfully promised to see him through college. When I met the lad, I told him how glad I was to know that he had determined to seek a higher education, and I congratulated him most heartily on the fact that he had himself made the discovery that he was only half educated. He accordingly entered one of the classes of a college in the West.

Happily for this young man, he made the discovery before it was too late to recover himself. He had friends who could take care of him and support him until he was graduated.

But this is not the case with many of my readers. If you do not make good use of your time while at school, if you do not learn the great fact which I am so anxious to impress upon you, that a half educated youth is no match for one who is well educated, it will be too late after you leave school. Should you make the mistake this young man did, you may not be able to go back to school and repair the mistake, and make up for the neglect of the past ; it may be too late, and nothing will be left for you, if you do wake up to the reality that you have made a great blunder in neglecting your opportunities, nothing left but to work hard at nights and deny yourself many innocent pleasures. It is much easier to realize this and set about the work seriously now, while everything is so favorable. No time like the present to work hard at your lessons.

And this is so true that it goes almost without saying. The present is the only time that you have. You cannot count upon next year, upon next month, even upon next week. You will soon have completed your school-life, you will be gone.

Some of you who are reading this page may not be at school much longer. A favorable business opportunity may offer, it may be accepted and you will be gone from school ; gone, even if your education may not be entirely finished. You see, then, why it is that there is no time like the present, especially for such of you as are on the eve of leaving school.

It may not seem to you so very important a matter to be well educated ; but I hope to be able to convince you that it is.

There is no time like the present for you to work hard at your plays. When you leave school to find occupation or a home elsewhere, you will have very little time for play, and play is as necessary to a growing boy as hard study and abundant food. You cannot hope to be strong and vigorous without daily exercise ; and my advice to you is to fill up all the time that is allowed to play, in the full activity of your games. You cannot afford to be lazy, you cannot afford to lounge about the play-ground, even for the purpose of reading interesting books. There is a time for reading as well as a time for play, and we are now talking about the time which is devoted to the play-hours.

There is no time like the present to get rid of any bad habits which you have acquired. All boys and young people are tempted to fall into foolish and evil habits of thought and speech ; it may be that some of you are already under the influence of evil habits. If it be so, I beg you to believe me when I tell you that they will interfere most seriously with your progress in life, wherever your lot may be cast ; and I

assure you that there is no time like the present to give them up, while you are young and while you are more easily swayed and moved, than you will be in the coming years. There is no time so good as the present for you to drop all evil and foolish habits such as I have alluded to, for they will certainly be in the way of your progress.

There is no time like the present for the cultivation of your mind by general reading. You are well supplied with books or they are within easy reach ; and you ought to give as much of your time as you can spare to the reading of such books as will be likely to help you in the great struggle for life which is before you, for it is a struggle ; and while I hope and believe most of you will succeed, it is very probable that some of you who care but little for the good words which are spoken to you now, will sink and drop out of sight in the great race for life.

There is no time like the present for the cultivation of polite manners, for it is of very much more consequence than you can possibly be aware of now, that you should acquire, while at school, politeness in your intercourse with everybody about you. I have known many instances of success, the beginnings of which were traceable to good breeding and gentle manners, in young men. Nothing is gained by being boorish or vulgar ; on the contrary, all right-minded people are inevitably drawn towards young men who are well bred and polite, and we all know how charming are good manners in young girls and women.

There is no time like the present for you to learn to distinguish clearly between right and wrong. The world is full of

wrong doing ; we read of it, we hear of it, we see it, and it seems to be the purpose of so many people to confound or obscure the lines between right and wrong thinking and doing, that it is sometimes very difficult for inexperienced persons to distinguish between the two. While you are under the care of persons of experience and cultivation, as you are now, who are able to discriminate clearly between right and wrong, it is safe for you, when perplexed or in doubt about any question of this sort, to have it solved by an appeal to those who will but too gladly give you the benefit of their own experience.

There is no time like the present for you to cultivate promptness in all your actions. A command or direction that is obeyed sluggishly is not half obeyed. Let me give you an illustration. I was spending part of a summer vacation in a hotel in the mountains. There were two boys about the office who were called bell-boys ; that is, they answered the call of the bell which the clerk struck when he wanted any service which they could render. One was a white boy from the upper part of the State of Vermont. He was between thirteen and fourteen years old, not of much education, probably had only been able to go to school in the winter time and work on the farm or at anything else in the summer. He was one of the brightest and quickest boys to respond to a call that I have ever met. The first day I spent at the house I was struck with his promptness, his cheerfulness, his willingness to do anything that was asked of him ; and as long as I was there that boy was my admiration. When he

was not doing something which he had been directed to do, he was looking about to see what he could do to make himself useful ; one day I saw him out in the road (it was a very thronged place), while waiting to do some duty which had been assigned to him, employed in gathering up the loose pebbles out of the road-bed, which are such an annoyance to horses and to the wheels of carriages, and throwing them to the side of the road. I asked the hotel proprietor if he had ever had any other boys like that. He said he had never seen the equal of that boy ; and I felt very much inclined to follow him up and see if I could not take him and make something better out of him than a hotel servant, but then I remembered the many boys nearer home who will need some one to help them find places, and my first and deepest interest is towards such. The other bell-boy in that hotel was black—as black as the ink you write with. He had come from Bermuda some years before this. His age was about the same as the white boy. Black as he was, he was good looking, and he was almost as prompt and quite as cheerful in doing his work as the white boy, and the two alternated in a certain class of duties day by day. This boy had been at school at an academy which had been founded up in that region. His father, in Bermuda, had some means, and was supporting him there, but in the summer he was helping to support himself. He had a brother who had already been educated in that academy, and was now studying law ; and this boy, in answer to my question what he intended to do when he was educated, said he had not quite made up his mind as to what profession he would adopt. Now, when I

saw these boys day by day, prompt, cheerful, ready to do everything which was required of them, never grumbling or thinking that the work was too hard or that it was some one else's duty to do this or that ; when I saw all this, I thought I would try to persuade my readers to believe me when I say that there is no time like the present to cultivate just such promptness and cheerfulness, just such address as I saw so thoroughly illustrated in these two hotel-boys. •

There is no time like the present to pause and consider. Who am I? Where am I? What shall I be? What shall I do? Let me help you to answer.

“ I am a boy, and have my way to find in the world. I have lived long enough to know that very many boys fail and come to nothing. I do not want to fail. I want to succeed in the best sense of the word. How shall I set about it? Is it worth while to bother myself about it now, or shall I put it off until I leave school and then trust to luck to help me? ”

If any boy were to talk so to you, you would think him very foolish, because this is the extreme of folly. Don't let any one say that of you, but pause and consider, and say to yourself, “ I will not commit this folly, I will seek the best help I can get, I will look up to the Giver of all good, I will acknowledge him as the author of all mercies, I know he can do all things, I will ask him to be my Father and take care of me, and then I know I shall be safe for this world and for the world to come.”

CHAPTER IX.

BEING LET GO.

ONE afternoon a long time ago, in the late spring or early summer, two men went up into the Temple to pray. At the gate of the Temple there was a lame beggar, brought there by those having the care of him, who asked alms of the people who passed in and out through the gate. As the two men came to the gate the beggar looked up and probably held out his hand, asking for alms. The two men looked down with earnest gaze into the upturned face of the beggar; one of them said, "Look on us." The beggar looked up, expecting to receive something. But Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And he took the man by the right hand and immediately his feet and ankle-bones became strong; he rose up, he leaped, he walked.

Of course this made a great stir. It was the hour of evening prayer: people were going to church, as we should say, and a crowd gathered to see what had happened. The beggar was well known; he was more than forty years old; many people knew that he had been lame from his birth, and here he was walking, leaping and praising God! How could this be? Peter taking advantage of the opportunity and the great crowd, declared that this was not his work, nor John's work, but the

work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Under the sermon he now preached, five thousand people were converted.

Soon the Temple authorities came, the Priests and Sadducees, greatly annoyed that the new Gospel should be preached even in the very Temple, and it being too late in the afternoon to have the apostles before the Council, they threw them in prison until the next morning. The next day the Council was assembled and with them came the principal people of the Jews, some of the family of the High Priest among them, and having brought Peter and John from the prison, they inquired by what power or in what name this was done? Then Peter preached another sermon, still declaring that it was done through the name and power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, "whom," said he, "ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead." The authorities then insisted that the apostles should not speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. But this had no effect; the answer was, We shall obey God, not you. Then having further threatened them, they let them go, being afraid of the multitude if they further punished them. And "being let go," they returned to their own company.

Hundreds and thousands of children, boys and girls, are "let go" from school every afternoon. They have been kept hard at work, many of them fretting under the confinement during the long hours of the school session, and when the lessons are all recited, the tasks all done, and the "school is out," what a rush into the streets! There is generally little or no order in their going; as soon as they can seize their hats and coats they are off, out at the door with a whoop and hurrah that defy

authority. The school discipline is over, the teacher's authority does not extend to the street, all restraints are removed, they are "let go." Not content with walking quietly away to their homes, they rush into the streets, shouting, screaming, disturbing the peace and quiet of the neighborhood to such a degree, that it is often highly disagreeable for families to live near a public school. Sometimes these children insult persons driving through the streets, and even throw stones at the horses. There seems to be no way of preventing this, for the boys and girls, freed from the restraints of the school, are "let go" into the streets to fall into every kind of disorder and mischief.

Every time a holiday comes you too are "let go;" you are no longer under the control of your teachers; all restraints are withdrawn; you may be with companions or you may be alone.

When you are separated from your companions, do you keep up your good behavior? Are you always very careful where you go and what company you seek? Do you read books on your holidays, that you would not dare to read at school? And do you ever stand and look at pictures in shop-windows or placarded on the walls of houses or on board-fences, that you would not look at if one of your teachers were with you? And have you ever brought books of an improper character into school secretly? Do you get other things—things which you ought not to get, which you ought not to have, and for which you will be punished?

A vessel lies at anchor in the bay. She is held in her place and kept from drifting up and down with the tide, or from

being blown ashore by the wind, by her anchor, which is buried at the bottom. Presently it is time to start ; the sailors with handspikes and windlass, or by steam, pull the vessel up close over the place where the anchor is held ; then, a few more turns and the anchor lets go the bottom, and the vessel starts on her voyage.

A steamboat is held at the wharf by the hawsers. The steam is up and is escaping through the pipes. She is straining at the ropes as if she wanted to be off. The hour and the moment come when she must start ; the ropes are thrown off ; the machinery is set in motion ; she is let go—and away she goes with her crowd of passengers.

A train of cars is standing perfectly still at the station. The brakes are on ; the steam is shut off. Presently the conductor gives the signal ; the steam is let on ; the brakes are loosened ; the engine is let go—and the long train follows it.

A boy hard at work at school, in a shop or at business, is let go in the evening into the streets. What will he seek ? Pleasure ? Whom will he meet ? What will he do ? smoke, drink, swear, or use loose language ? What have been his restraints all day ? What has held him back ? Was it his mother at home, or his teacher at school, or the good example of his companions ? He could not do as he pleased then, but now he is away from these restraints, whatever they may have been, he is let go. What will he do ?

The fear of evil consequences is a restraint from wrongdoing. A boy in a store or shop sees money in a drawer. He is tempted to take it and spend it in some gratification of

the appetite. He is afraid of discovery and punishment. He is held back by fear.

A man has an appetite for drink, but love of drink tends to drunkenness, and he is afraid. He is held back by fear.

Love of card-playing may lead to gambling; the fear of that vice holds many persons back from card-playing.

The love of friends holds back some persons from gross sins. How can I do what will break my mother's heart, or disgrace my sister, and darken her life?

Conscience is a restraint. The inward monitor warns against all wrong-doing; remonstrates while the wrong is going on; reproaches after the wrong is done—conscience holds back. Joseph, the Hebrew slave in Egypt, said, when tempted: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" He was held back.

A sailor has been long at sea—a three years' cruise in a government ship. His wages have accumulated until he has a handsome sum of money. He is mustered out, paid off, with pockets full of money, and free from all restraints, the discipline of his hard life, he has no home to go to—he is let go! Ah, how many such go to the bad!

Business life has its discipline, its restraints. A boy can't keep his place unless he behaves well. Somebody will see and report him. If he goes to improper places when off duty and forms bad associations, he cannot hope to keep his place, no matter how well he behaves when on duty in business hours. If he can't be trusted when he is let go, he is not worthy of trust at all.

The fear of detection keeps many from doing wrong who are not held back by a higher motive. It may not be a dread of wrong-doing, but of being caught, being found out. For exposure, detection, means the loss of everything worth having.

You see, then, one reason why people behave outwardly as well as they do—why they are not as bad as they can be. They are under restraint. They are held back from evil. They do not act out all the evil that is in their hearts.

But suppose there should be a time and a place where there are no restraints, where there is nothing to hold us back from wrong-thinking and wrong-doing, where no fear of God nor fear of man will restrain us from evil, what shall we become then? Take away all restraints, human and divine, that now hold us back, and what monsters of iniquity we shall become! We shudder at the very thought of what human beings may come to, if left to themselves.

You are at school for education. You know where you came from. You know what were the circumstances about your home, and who your playmates were, your companions.

The time will come—it is coming very rapidly—when you will leave school, every one of you; you will go to your homes, or you will go to new homes; you will be “let go.” Where will you go? What will become of you? When the wholesome restraints that have been about you are removed, will you go to your “own company,” your old companions, and fall into ways of sin and folly? Or will you determine to strike out in a new path? To make your friends

among good people, whose society, whose friendship will be good for you, who will help you to walk in the right way always.

There is a picture of an innocent child, playing among the flowers in a garden ; just before it, partly hidden, is a venomous serpent. The child does not see the serpent, but the next moment he will step on it and be struck.

A shadowy form—the child does not see it ; a stretched-out hand—the child does not feel it—restrains the child—holds it back. It is an angel—God's messenger sent to save the child.

Did you ever think that many a time angels may have been near you to restrain you from doing wrong and helping you to do right? You did not see the angel—you cannot see a spirit ; but God makes his angels ministering spirits, that is, helping spirits, sent forth to help those who shall be heirs of salvation. And you may be heirs of salvation, if you will, and then surely God's angels will be near you and care for you and help you as long as you live in this world. Do you want such help as this ?

CHAPTER X.

THE LEAF TURNED OVER.*

MOST thoughtful people as they approach the end of a year are apt to ask themselves some plain questions—as to their manner of life, their habits of thought, their amusements, their studies, their business, their home, their families, their companions, their plans for the future, their duty to their fellow-men, their duty to God ; in short, whether the year about to close has been a happy one ; whether they have been successful or otherwise in what they have attempted to do.

The merchant, manufacturer or man of business of any kind who keeps account-books, and whose accounts are properly kept, looks with great interest at his account books at such a time, to see whether his business has been profitable or otherwise, whether he has lost or made money, whether his capital is larger or smaller than it was at the beginning of the year, whether he is solvent or insolvent, whether he is able to pay his debts or bankrupt.

And to very many persons engaged in business for themselves this is a time of great anxiety, for one can hardly tell exactly whether he is getting on favorably until his account books are posted and the balances are struck. If one's capital is small and the result of the year's business is a loss, that

* A New Year's thought.

means a reduction of capital, and raises the question whether this can go on without failure and bankruptcy. Many and many a business man looks with great anxiety to the month of December, and especially to the end of it, to learn whether he shall be able to go on in his business, however humble. And, alas! there are many whose books of account are so badly kept, and whose balances are so rarely struck, or who keep no account books at all, that they never know how they stand, but are always under the apprehension that any day they may fail to meet their obligations and so fail and become bankrupt. They were insolvent long before, but they did not know it; and they have gone on from bad to worse until they are ruined. Others, again, are afraid to look closely into their account books—afraid to have the balances struck, lest they should be convinced that their affairs are in a hopeless condition. Unhappy cowards they are, for if insolvent the sooner they know it the better, that they may make the best settlement they can with their creditors, if the business is worth following at all, and begin again, “turning over a new leaf.”

It is not probable that my young readers have ever thought much on these subjects; for you are not in business as principals or as clerks, you have no merchandise or produce or money to handle, you have no account books for yourselves or for other people to keep, to post, to balance, and you may think you have no interest in these statements; but I hope to be able to show you that these things should not be matters of indifference to you.

The year which closed last night was just as much your year as it was that of any man, even the busiest man of affairs. When it came, three hundred and sixty-five days ago, it found most of you at school ; it left all of you at school. And the question naturally arises, what have you done with this time, all these days and nights ? Every page in the account books of certain kinds of business represents a day of business, and either the figures on both the debit and the credit side are added up and carried forward, or the balance of the two sides of the page is struck and carried over leaf to the next page.

So every day of the past year represents a page in the history of your lives : for every life, even the plainest and most humble, has its own peculiar history. Your lives may be uneventful ; no very startling things occur to break the monotony of school life, but each day has its own duties and makes its own record. Three hundred and sixty-five pages of the book of the history of every young life were duly filled by the records of all the things done or neglected, of the words spoken or unspoken, of the thoughts indulged or stifled ; these pages with their records, sad or joyful, glad or shameful, were turned over, and are now numbered with the things that are past and gone. When an accountant or book-keeper discovers, after the books of the year are closed and the balances struck, that errors had crept in which have disturbed the accuracy of his work, he cannot go back with a knife and erase the errors and write in the correct figures ; neither can he blot them out, nor rub them out as you do an example from a slate or from the

blackboard ; he must correct his mistakes ; he must counteract his blunders by new entries on a new page.

It is somewhat so with us, with you. Last night at midnight the last page of the leaves of the book of the old year was filled with its record, whatever it was, and this morning "the leaf is turned over." What do we see? What does every one of you see? A fair, white page. And each one of you holds a pen in his hand and the inkstand is within reach ; you dip your pen in the ink, you bend over the page, the thoughts come thick and fast, much faster indeed than any pen, even that of the quickest shorthand writer, can put them on the page. There are stenographers who can take the language of the most rapid speakers, but no stenographer has ever yet appeared who can put his own thoughts on paper as rapidly as they come into his mind. But while there is but one mind in all the universe that can have knowledge of what is passing in your mind and retain it all—the infinite mind ; and while no one page of any book, however large, even if it be what book-makers call "elephant folio," could possibly hold the record of what any boy says and thinks in a single day, you may, and you do, all of you, write words good or bad, on the page before you.

Let me take one boy, say of sixteen or seventeen years, who is waiting, pen in hand, to write the thoughts now passing in his mind. What are his thoughts? No one knows, but himself. Shall I tell you what I think he ought to write? It is something like this :

"I have been at school many years. When I began I was

young and ignorant. I found myself among many boys of my own age, who cared no more for me than I cared for them. I felt very strange. At first I was very unhappy; but very soon these feelings passed away, and in the school-room and the play-ground I soon forgot my plays and things at home. Years passed. I was promoted from one form to another; I grew in size; my classmates were no longer little boys; we were all looking up and looking forward to the school promotions, and I became a big boy. The lessons were hard, and I studied hard, for I began to understand at last why I was sent to school, and to ask myself the question, what might reasonably be expected of me? Sometimes when quite alone this question would force itself upon me, What use am I making of my fine advantages, or am I making the best use of them? And what manner of man shall I be? For I knew full well that all well-educated boys do not succeed in life—do not become successful men in the highest and best sense. How do I know that I shall do well? Is my conduct here such as to justify my teachers in commending me as a thoroughly manly, trustworthy boy? Have I succeeded while going through the course of school studies in building up a character that is worthy of me, worthy of our school? Can those who know me best, place the most confidence in me? If I am looking forward to be a farmer, or to a place in a machine shop, or in a store, or in a lawyer's office, or to the study of medicine, or to a place in a railroad office or a bank, am I really trying to fit myself for such a place? or am I simply drifting along from day to day, doing only what I am com-

pelled to do, and cultivating no true ambition to rise above the dull average of my schoolmates? And then as I look at the difficulties in the way of every young fellow who has his way to make in the world, has it not occurred to me to look beyond the present and the persons and things that surround me now, and look to a higher and better Helper than is to be found in this world? Have I not at times heard words of good counsel from the lips of those who give me and my schoolmates wholesome advice? What attention have I given to such advice? I have been told, and I do not doubt it, that the great God stoops from heaven and speaks to my soul, and offers his Divine help, and even holds out his hand, though I cannot see it, and will take my hand in his, and help me over all hard places, and will never let me go, if I cling to him, and will assure me success in everything that is right and good. I have heard all this over and over again; I know it is true, but I have not accepted it as if I believed it; I have not acted accordingly; in fact, I have treated the whole matter as if it were unreal, or as if it referred to somebody else rather than to me.

“And now I have come possibly to my last year in school. Before another New Year’s day some other boy will have my desk in the school-room. These years—how long they have seemed!—have nearly all passed; I shall soon leave school; if some place is not found for me I must find one for myself. What will become of me? Other boys have been here. They sat on these seats, they sang our hymns, they heard the same good words of advice which I have heard, they had the

good opportunities which we have. What led some of them astray? Did they believe that the good God stooped from Heaven to say good words to them, holding out his strong hand to help them? I wonder if they thought they were strong enough to take care of themselves? I wonder if they thought they could get along without his help? Do I think I can?"

Some such thoughts as these may be passing in the mind of the boy now reading this page, the boy whom I had in my mind as I began to write. He is holding his pen full of ink. He has written nothing yet; he has been thinking what he shall write on the blank page before him.

I can tell that boy what I would write if I were at his age, and surrounded by these circumstances, reading these serious, earnest words. I would take my pen and write on the first page of this year's book, this New Year's day, these words: "The leaf is turned over! God help me to lead a better life. God forgive all the past, all my wrong-doings, all my neglect, all my forgetfulness. God keep me in right ways. God keep me from wicked thoughts which defile the soul; keep me from wicked words which defile the souls of others.

"But this is a prayer," you say; "do you want me to begin my journal by writing a prayer?"

Yes; but this is not all. Write again.

1. I will not willingly break any of the rules which are adopted for the government of our school.

Some of the rules may seem hard to obey, and even unreasonable, but they were made for my good, by those who are wiser than I am. I can obey them; I will.

2. I will work harder over my lessons than ever before, and I will recite them more accurately.

This means hard work, but it is my duty ; I shall be the better for it ; it will not be long, for I am going soon ; I can, I will.

3. I will watch my thoughts and my talk more carefully than I have ever done before.

If I have hurt others by evil talk I will do so no more. Many of us boys have fallen into the habit of it, but for one, I will do so no more ; I can stop it ; I will.

4. I will be more careful to set a good example in my daily life here in all things than I have ever been before.

The younger boys look to the older boys and imitate them closely. They watch us, our words, our ways, our behavior in all things. If any young fellows have been misled by me, it shall be so no more. I will behave so that no one shall be the worse for doing as I do. This is quite within my control ; I can, I will.

5. I will look to God to help me to do these things.

For I have tried to do something like this before and failed ; it must be because I depended on my own strength. Now I will look away from myself and depend upon " God, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy." He can help me ; he surely will, if I throw myself on his mercy, and by daily prayer and reading the Scriptures, even if only for a moment or two each day, I shall see light and find peace.

These are the things that I would write, my boy, if I were just as you are.

We have now come to the end of the last chapter of our little book, and the last leaf is now to be turned over. The writer, if he could meet the reader, would like to ask: "Has the book done you any good? Are you any the better after reading it? Has it given you any higher and better views of life and duty than you had before? Do you feel that life is better worth living? Are you stronger in your purpose to fight against the evil in the world, and to strive for the good? Does true success seem more desirable?"

Questions something like these should be asked of himself by every thoughtful person as he lays down the book which he has been reading, and as the writer's sole object in making this book was to do good to young people, his purpose will have failed unless he has helped his readers to become better boys and girls, better men and women, than they would have been had they not read it.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to his works.—Rev. xx. 11–13.

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