

FIRST

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING

MANUAL LABOR

IN LITERARY INSTITUTIONS,

INCLUDING

THE REPORT OF THEIR GENERAL AGENT,

THEODORE D. WELD.

JANUARY 28, 1833.

NEW-YORK—S. W. BENEDICT & CO. 162 NASSAU STREET.

M D C C C X X I I I .

[ Postage—3 sheets periodical, not over 100 miles 12 cents; any greater distance 20 cents.]

L P 1595

5

[Entered according to act of congress, in the year 1833, by GEORGE DOUGLASS,
treasurer, and in behalf, of the "Society for Promoting Manual Labor in Lite-
rary Institutions," in the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New-York.]

increase this propensity ; and I doubt not that a spirit of gambling is often originated thus innocently, which is ultimately productive of ruin. But he who is employed in manual labor learns the worth of money, the worth of time, and the worth of relaxation from his toils. Men seldom dissipate improperly their own honest earnings.

There is another view of this subject too important to be disregarded in estimating the influence of manual labor upon the health and morals of the literary man. To relieve the lassitude, or exhaustion of nervous energy, consequent upon intense mental abstraction, the student has almost always a morbid desire for stimulants, and too often he seeks relief from tobacco, opium, or strong drink. These invariably aggravate the evil they are designed to mitigate, and indulgence increases desire, till the miserable man falls a victim to what he regarded as a remedy.

Now, the only proper cure for the intolerable uneasiness which is brought on by mental application, is, relaxation of mind, and active bodily exercise.

I regret that want of time compels me to close this subject so abruptly.

I am, Sir,

Very respectfully,

NEW-YORK, MARCH 10, 1833.

A. W. IVES.

[B]

The following letters have been recently received from the gentlemen whose signatures they bear. They are mostly the records of personal experience, and the results of observation, under circumstances which should give to their testimony peculiar weight.

Letter from Rev. B. Green, Professor of Sacred Literature in the Western Reserve College, Ohio.

While a member of college my constitution received a rude shock. I do not propose in this paper to attempt to develope and illustrate the causes to which this effect was owing. Excessive, ceaseless application to the labors I was devoted to, may, in a single breath, be given as the general cause.

During my residence as a theological student at Andover, I engaged in the work of instruction, in Phillip's Academy. My task here demanded anxious, unceasing, exhausting exertions during *eight hours* each day. In addition to this labor, I undertook to push forward my theological studies. I gave myself no recreation. I studied until a late hour at night, and forced myself to leave my bed at an early hour in the morning. I always rose oppressed with fatigue, which I worked off by vigorous exercise at the wood-pile. I passed from my books and my desk, "on the run," to the saw and the axe. Whether in exercise or in study, I felt continually hurried. Every nerve was strained. I did not pause to inquire whether I was well or sick—sinking or rising. At length, I noticed a strange appearance in the atmosphere, between my eyes and my book. The air seemed to tremble. I was alarmed; and as the ominous appearance increased, I threw down my books and fled to Boston, to a distinguished surgeon there, for advice and assistance. I assured him that I had no pain in my eyes; and, what I afterwards found to be a sad mistake, that my general health was good. He prescribed, without much inquiry, *a repletion, leeches, blisters, and the blue pill.* Half a score of leeches filled themselves at my temples; more than a dozen blisters were drawn about my neck and ears; and of blue pills, I know not how many I swallowed. My books were taken from me. Under this treatment, it was not long before I was embarrassed and alarmed with a new appearance floating before my eyes, dark spots of various forms, some of them fantastical enough. At length I gave up the blistering process, threw away my

pill-box, and resolved to use such methods as might subserve my health generally, in the hope that when my nerves, which I found were in a disordered condition, became orderly and strong, my eyes would be better.

Oppressed with the anxieties and fatigues which an agency for the Board of Foreign Missions occasioned, I "run down" to the point of spitting blood. Miserable enough—I now abandoned all efforts at public speaking; bade adieu to my books, which I had enjoyed some broken communion with, through the eyes of a friend, and gave up the labor of continuous, close thinking. A skilful physician whom I consulted, and who carefully and patiently investigated my case, pronounced me within reach of consumption, or gloomy dyspepsy. The Board of Missions set me free from my engagements with them; and my friends regarded me as probably near the end of my race. I had one thing in the midst of my ailments which comforted me. My stomach was faithful to the task allotted to it. I had, for weeks, been prevented from "taking much food," on account of the constant loathing I had for it. This was my condition for a long time. But if I committed any thing to my stomach, it was promptly and happily disposed of. My powers of digestion seemed effectually to resist the invasion of disease.

At length I went into an unoccupied shop with my book in my hand. I opened my book and laid it upon a bench. I then wrought at a lathe until I became warm with the effort. I turned from the lathe to my book, and read, perhaps, *six or seven lines*; then again to the lathe; thence to my book. At length, under the immediate impulse of muscular excitement, I became able to read a minute; then, after a while, two minutes. While pursuing this course I began to attempt, (with what anxiety!) some part of the services of a pulpit of a sabbath. I trembled as I made the experiment. How often have I not thought that the taste of fresh blood was in my mouth! How often, *in dreams*, was I now delighted with the recovered power of reading my books—and now terrified at the sight of blood, flowing from wounded lungs!

I went to Brandon, in Vermont, and undertook to occupy the pulpit which I found vacant there. This was a great undertaking. I went into a study, and, governed by my watch, in a standing posture, studied just *twenty minutes*. This was done after a long and vigorous exercise at the wood-pile in the morning. Twenty minutes gone—O how soon—I went immediately to the wood-pile, and swung the axe just fifteen minutes. Warm with muscular excitement, I hastened eagerly to my desk, and gave twenty minutes again to study. At the end of this term, I was exhausted and helpless. Now, again, the axe came to my relief, which I plied fifteen minutes. Thus I spent the time from, perhaps, 9 o'clock A. M. till 12. I was by this time spent—thrown upon my back. My dinner helped me. After, perhaps, two hours, spent partly in lounging, immediately after eating; and then again with the axe, I pursued the same course, as in the morning, till the close of the day found myself "gradually gaining strength;" till at length I was able to add five minutes to each term of study, and after a long time five minutes in addition.

Both in study and in exercise, from the time just referred to, to the present moment, I have constantly maintained a practical regard to *system* of effort. I have been enabled to add, from time to time, a few minutes to my hours of study. When I found myself able by ever wakeful care, and skilful management, to devote *three* hours in a day to study, I exulted as one alive from the dead. Over-tasking myself, however, on one day always subtracted from the resources of the next, whenever, as I generally did while resident in Maine, I preached thrice on the Sabbath, I was obliged to devote a large part of Monday to vigorous exercise. My nerves, often, at such times, felt as if torn and rent by a tempest. Nothing restored them to peace but thorough muscular toil, long continued. *The axe has always been my favorite instrument.* Were I, as I am not, a poet, I would celebrate its virtues in song.

My habits of study and exercise at present may be thus described: An hour and a half vigorous exercise in the morning; from nine to twelve I can study two hours and a half; I need to see the saw and axe during this time twice; and to continue with them fifteen minutes at a visit; from twelve to fifteen minutes past one, I get about forty-five minutes exercise, when I can, without much

embarrassment, hear a recitation of forty-five minutes; I then devote two hours continuously to exercise, when I can hear another recitation of forty-five or fifty minutes; from this time to seven in the evening, I give up to cheerful engagements, to domestic duties and domestic cares, easy of performance, and exhilarating in their influence. At seven I enter the study again, and can labor till about nine without much embarrassment or fatigue; then I need and seek my pillow as soon as possible.

A few miscellaneous, general facts, gathered from my experience, may not be uninteresting:

1. A *system* of effort, adjusted to my strength and circumstances, has been of great service to me. My ability to accomplish any thing has, under God, depended greatly on a strict and conscientious adherence to it.

2. Only *vigorous exercise* has answered my necessities. If I cheat my muscles of the play they demand, my mind is sure, as their advocate, promptly to enter a complaint. And a hearing *must* be given, and full reparation made, before I can enjoy any peace.

3. I must have exercise suited to my taste. I was forced to abandon "jumping the rope," &c. when a college student, from a deep conviction that such exercise did me no good.

4. A standing posture, while engaged in study, with a frequent walk around the room, especially when arranging thought, I have found manifestly useful to me. I arrange the trains of thought which I employ in public speaking, generally while walking back and forth in my chamber.

5. If I allow myself to engage in discussions on any subject, which, during the day, may incidentally "turn up," I find my ability to push forward my studies sensibly diminished. A careless waste of feeling always hurts me.

6. The healthful tendencies of exercise, have, in my case, been greatly quickened, and carried forward more rapidly and certainly to their natural results, by the application of friction and water to the surface of my body. When I leave my pillow in the morning, I subject myself immediately to friction. I use commonly a coarse woolen cloth; a stocking is very convenient, applying it with all my might to my breast, sides, back, and to the trunk of my body generally. Then I apply water, cold or warm, "as the notion takes me," to my body from head to foot. The moisture left upon me I wipe off with a very coarse linen towel, the coarser the better. This again I so apply as to produce the natural effects of thorough friction. Just as I retire to rest at night, I apply friction again, and cold water to my face and mouth. If I have "a hard day's work to do," especially in public speaking, I call in friction and sometimes cold water to my aid, in the middle of the day, or when the exigencies of the case may seem to require. The same means I have found greatly useful in the night, if rest was disturbed by a sense of fatigue, or by dull pains lingering about me.

7. The strictest regard to cleanliness throughout has a very happy bearing upon my health. Whatever is admitted to the surface of my body must be clean. Flannels and linen must be frequently changed; the more frequently, the better.

8. I keep both ears open to the voice of nature. I have heard her cry, till the voice became a shriek, "*To the wood-pile! To the wood-pile! To the wood-pile, now!*" And when I have seized the saw or axe, a thrill of pleasure has seemed to run through every vein, and touch every nerve. What a luxury! When I grow fatigued, or lose my interest in my exercise, I retire. When of a morning I have plunged my face in the water, I have felt the inward promptings of this kind monitor, bidding me bless God for the free use of cold water. How often have I seemed to feel the touch of an invisible hand, setting me free from the lassitude and fatigue, which was crippling and oppressing me!

9. I scarcely need say how important in all respects I have found the conviction of being in the path of duty, a clear conscience, and the influences of the blessed Spirit.

B. GREEN.

WESTERN RESERVE COLLEGE, October, 1832.