

SOME OF THE
MISTAKES OF EDUCATED MEN.

THE BIENNIAL ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

Phrenokosmian Society of Pennsylvania College,

GETTYSBURG, PA.

BY JOHN S. HART, LL.D.

Delivered September 18, 1861.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE,
September 18, 1861.

JOHN S. HART, LL.D.

Dear Sir: The Phrenakosmian Society tender you, through us, their sincere thanks for the very able and interesting Address which you did them the honor and the kindness to deliver this afternoon, and respectfully and unanimously solicit a copy for publication.

Hoping that you will comply with our request,

We remain, yours truly,

C. V. S. LEVY,

J. L. SMITH,

J. C. DIZINGER,

D. GARBER,

C. G. SCHMUCKER,

Committee of the Phrenakosmian Society.

TO MESSRS. C. V. S. LEVY, J. L. SMITH, J. C. DIZINGER, D. GARBER,
and C. G. SCHMUCKER, Committee of the Phrenakosmian Society.

GENTLEMEN:

The manuscript of my Address is herewith communicated, agreeably to your request. Thanking you for your very kind reception of it and of myself, I am, most respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN S. HART.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 20, 1861.

A D D R E S S.

NEAR the top of one of the loftiest summits of the Rocky Mountains, more than ten thousand feet above the level of the ocean, are two fountains, so near, and so nearly on a level, that it would be no great stretch of the power and art of man, to divert the streamlet which issues from either fountain into that which issues from the other. If you follow the course of one of these infant rivers, you find it, from some slight inclination of the plain, taking an easterly direction, and after traversing for some distance the broad plateau in which it rises, descending from valley to valley, receiving every few miles a fresh impulse from some tributary stream, until at length, uniting with a thousand others, it finds an ocean home in the Gulf of Mexico, through the mouth of the great "Father of waters." If now, retracing your steps to the point of departure, you follow in like manner the course of the other stream, you find yourself descending gradually in a westerly direction, until, by a process exactly the counterpart of the former, you are led through the mouth of the

Columbia into the bosom of the great Pacific. To go from the terminus of one stream to the terminus of the other, you must overcome an ascent of more than ten thousand feet, and travel not less than five thousand miles! Yet in their outset, these two streams were neighbors. Neither of them seemed to have any positive or determined bias one way or the other. A very ordinary amount of effort would seem to be sufficient to make the easterly stream run west, or the westerly stream run east.

GENTLEMEN OF THE PHRENAKOSMIAN SOCIETY:

Does my parable need explanation? Two ingenuous youths, fresh from the scene of their triumphs at College, emerge upon the broad platform of life, equal in talents, equal in knowledge and intellectual culture, with equal social advantages, and without any very special or decided bias on the part of either. There would seem to be hardly any augury of good to be made of one, that might not with equal propriety be made of the other. The friends of both might seem to be equally justified in expecting the same prosperous and useful career, the same praiseworthy and honorable termination. Yet if you go forward a few years, and see the actual termination of their respective careers, you find these two youths, who had been so equal in opportunities, as wide apart as are the mouth of the Mississippi and the mouth of the Columbia, and between them a barrier as

difficult of passage as the almost impassable mountain ranges of the Oregon!

Suffer, then, my young friends, the word of exhortation. Allow one who has already travelled over no small distance in the boundless plain now opening before you, to recall briefly some of the steps of the way. Let us for this short hour take friendly counsel together, if perchance wisdom may be gathered from experience. My errand to you to-day is merely to talk with you, in the most familiar and unpretending way, in regard to some of the mistakes of educated and professional men,—some of those things, the neglect of which impedes their progress in their several professions. I shall speak to you with no attempt at ornament, but with the sober earnestness of one who seeks for practical results. Nor shall I attempt to go over, even in cursory review, the whole range of topics that rise before the mind on such an occasion. Nor will the topics introduced be those that in themselves are of the very highest importance. Such topics doubtless have been already often and amply discussed in your hearing. My humbler aim is rather to speak of some of those points which, because of their secondary importance, are apt to be ignored altogether on these occasions. If by the service of the hour I shall be able to remove one single obstacle from the way of advancing manhood, or to open to it one path in the right direction, the hour will not have been spent in vain.

I. The first advice, then, that I have to give you, is *that you take care of your bodily health*. From a large acquaintance with literary and professional men, and after a careful survey of the whole subject, it is my sober judgment that more educated men fail of distinction through the want of bodily vigor than from any other cause. The high prizes in any of the professions are not to be won without exhausting labor. We talk a great deal about genius. What we say is no doubt all very fine. But, much as it may seem to you to be letting the subject down, depend upon it, you will not go far astray practically, if you define genius to be an extraordinary capacity for labor. I know well enough that such a definition does not exhaust the idea. But I have taken some pains to investigate the problem of the productions of genius, and the nearer in any given case I have been able to get at the very interior essence of things, the more have I been satisfied that no world-wide greatness was ever achieved, except where there has been a prodigious capacity for work. Genius, at least that kind which achieves greatness, is not fitful. It has an iron will as well as an eagle eye. This is not indeed the idea of genius that young men are wont to imagine. They picture to themselves rather the sudden erratic flash, that blazes upon the world without premonition and without adequate cause. It was once the fashion, for instance, to represent Shakespeare as a sort of inspired spendthrift, who dashed off his Plays with

negligent and wanton ease, in the mere exuberance and riot of a heaven-gifted intellect. But a more careful investigation has dispelled this illusion. So far as anything is certainly known of the life of the great Dramatist, it all points the other way. It shows him to have been rather a man of care and method, of decided thrift in regard to worldly affairs, and of patient, almost plodding industry. Doubtless there was in the man at times portentous energy and fire, the fervid glow and heat of first conception in the original composition of his Plays. But there was also the slow, toilsome, and patient finishing and working up. Shakespeare appears in fact to have been more than twenty years in bringing his Plays gradually to maturity and perfection, so that they may be called a growth rather than an instantaneous creation. To accomplish, indeed, great results in any line, literary, scientific, professional, or administrative, there must be great capacity for work. There must be the iron will that cannot be appalled by any possible accumulation of details, but works its way steadily through them by dint of constant, untiring, unyielding toil.

Now it is obvious that, in order to any such career, the body must have adequate powers of endurance. Long-continued mental labor, especially where the feelings are enlisted, makes fearful drafts upon the bodily frame. To go through the wear and tear of any of the ordinary professions, at least when a man has succeeded in acquiring a considerable practice, re-

quires vigorous health. How continually do we see professional men obliged to stop short in the full career of success, simply because their bodily powers give way. They cannot carry out the conceptions of their minds, because their bodies are unequal to the task of carrying them through the necessary toil. With sound, sturdy bodily health, you not only can labor mentally more hours in the twenty-four, but you can, while working, throw into your task a greater amount of intellectual force. A mind of great power, putting forth its full energy in some special effort, is like a warrior armed in heavy mail, going forth to battle. If the horse which carries him be small and puny, the warrior must needs fail. If, on the other hand, the horse be a powerful and generous animal, fully equal to the occasion, how much is the force of the rider himself increased thereby. So the mind gathers impulse and force from the body, whenever the latter is in high health and vigor. So, too, when the latter is feeble and sickly, the mind is either checked and hampered in its impulses, or, attempting to ride them boldly forward, it breaks down altogether. The man dies prematurely, or—worse still—he becomes a drivelling idiot.

My first advice, then, to young men pursuing or completing a course of liberal studies is, take care of your bodily health. Without this, your intellectual attainments will be shorn of more than half their value.

I dwell upon this point, and emphasize it, because on every side of me, in professional life, and especially in the clerical profession, I see so many helpless, hopeless wrecks. Verily there is some grievous mistake among us in this matter. Whether it be our climate, or our habits of student life, or our social and domestic habits, I am not prepared to say. But of the fact I make no doubt. Our educated men do not achieve half that they might achieve, for the want of the necessary physical vigor. It is painful to see the dyspeptic, sore-throated, attenuated, cadaverous specimens of humanity that student-life so often produces among us—men afraid of a puff of air, afraid of the heat, afraid of the cold, afraid to eat a piece of pie or good roast beef—men obliged to live on stale bread and molasses, who take cold if they get wet, who must make a reconnoissance of a room to see that they can secure a place out of a draft before they dare to take a seat—men who by dint of coaxing and nursing and pampering drag out a feeble existence for a few short years, and then drop into a premature grave,—martyrs to intellectual exertion!

I do not recommend the fox-hunting carousals of the old time English clergy. We need not go back to the material apotheosis of the classical ages. But verily we have something to learn in this matter. We have to learn that high mental exertion taxes most severely the life-force. We have to learn that the man of supe-

rior intellect, who puts forth his powers with resolute vigor, requires more bodily health and force to sustain the strain, than an ordinary laboring man does. Instead of being pale, delicate, feeble, and sickly, the student needs to be stalwart and hardy. He should have tougher thews and stronger sinews and a more vigorous pulse than the man who merely ploughs the soil. He need not have the brawn and bone of the athlete and the gladiator. He need not be a Spartacus or a Heenan. But he should be of all men a man of good, sound, vigorous, working bodily health.

It is no part of my errand here to-day to give you a lecture on hygiene. I do not propose to tell you how this strong physical health is to be secured. All I wish, or deem decorous, is to call your attention to the subject,—to impress upon you, if possible, the earnest conviction that something is to be done in this matter by those who lead a student life. Let me, however, say this much. We must live more in the open air than we do. We must warm our blood less by closed rooms and airtight stoves, and more by oxygen breathed upon the beautiful hillsides. We must spend more time in innocent outdoor amusements. We must cease to count gunning and boating and bowling among the seven deadly sins. When a professional man is exhausted by intellectual labor, it is not in a dismal, solitary walk to recuperate him. Better let him pull off his coat and join the young folks on the green in some kind of ho-

nest game. Let him take a real hearty romp with the children. Let him have a little thoughtless fun. It will do him infinitely more good than lonely walks or swinging at dumb bells. Yet, I dare say, if the lawyer of the village, the editor, the politician, the judge, the physician, the professor, and the minister were to go out into the fields and engage in a game of ball, it would be thought highly undignified! Do our judgments on these subjects need no revision? Are we sure that we are quite right, in the cold shoulder that we give to athletic sports and games?

Do not misunderstand me, young gentlemen. I am not for turning life into a holiday. My views of life are serious, almost severe. But, for the stern realities of duty, we all need, and none more than those who do brainwork need, the recuperation which comes from active bodily amusement in the free open air. The English and the Germans understand this matter better than we do. We criticise the Englishman's fox-chasing and grouse-hunting and intense love of field sports, as being frivolous,—as betokening an inferior style of civilization. But does our plan turn out statesmen such as PALMERSTON, who, already long past his threescore and ten, still handles the helm of empire with the fresh grasp and the vigorous step of youth?

In connection with this point of bodily health, let me say in passing that we in this country pay too little attention to the cultivation of the bodily senses and

organs. The intimate interdependence of mind and body has not yet been duly appreciated among us. The man who has learned drawing or painting, sees more than other men do. The man who has studied music, hears more. The cultivation of the eye, the ear, the hand, and of the other bodily organs and senses, multiplies in an ever increasing ratio the occupations and capabilities of the mind. It produces habits of exact observation, and it gives to one's observations utility and point. Not only, then, aim to secure vigorous bodily health, but lose no opportunity for acquiring any kind of mechanical skill based upon a development and cultivation of the bodily organs.

II. It is an important element of success in life to acquire *the habit of being beforehand with whatever you undertake*. I can, perhaps, best illustrate what I mean by an example taken from another branch of the subject. There are two friends, gentlemen of large means, whose estates and whose annual incomes are about equal. One of these is always short of money, buys everything on credit, and on the longest credit that he can command, often when travelling has to borrow money to take him home, and really has to make as many turns and shifts to get along as if he were poor. All simply because he lives just twelve months on the wrong side of his income. The other man, whose annual income and expenses are about the same as those of his neighbor, never has an open ac-

count, buys everything for cash, always has a plenty of money in his pocket, and a plenty more in bank, and is apparently without a care in the world, so far as money is concerned. All simply because he lives just twelve months on the right side of his income. The two men have equal resources. In the course of their lives they spend about equal amounts. Yet the one is always poor and harassed, the other is always rich and at his ease.

The picture has its counterpart in the history of many professional men. Some men in their intellectual disbursements are always beforehand and at their ease, while others of equal resources live habitually from hand to mouth. You will see an editor scratching and scrambling for copy at the very latest moment, and living, it is to be feared, in greater dread of the office devil than of the other personage of the same name. You will see the professor quaking over his incompleted experiments or his half-finished manuscript, anxiously dreading the summons to lecture. You will see the clergyman locking himself up on Saturday to push through under high pressure the sermon that must be delivered on the morrow. These all, and others like these, simply in consequence of a bad habit of mental action, pass through life in a perpetual state of discomfort and professional poverty. Brain-work so done is generally badly done, besides being done at a ruinous waste of the life-force.

As an illustration of a different mode of doing things let me cite an historical example. The late Doctor MURRAY, of Elizabeth, New Jersey, a few years since, was at a clerical conference, where each minister told for the benefit of the others his own experience in the matter of composing sermons. The Doctor said that he spent usually the entire mornings of five days, never less than four days, in the composition of a sermon, and that he was never without at least three finished sermons ahead! It is a recorded fact that after his death there were found in his desk no less than four finished sermons, fully written out, which had never been preached, besides a fifth sermon already on the stocks. I am informed that he has at times had as many as eight sermons ahead. The Doctor moreover was abundant in other labors of the pen. He wrote several books. He wrote many popular lectures and addresses. He wrote almost every week an article for the New York Observer, filling from one to two columns of that paper. He was a frequent attendant upon ecclesiastical councils of various kinds, and upon literary festivals such as the present. Yet he never seemed to be in a hurry, never pressed for time. He had all the comfort of a gentleman of leisure. It was simply because he early formed, and ever adhered to, the habit of being beforehand with every engagement. I knew him well, and I had from his own lips the circumstances in which he began his ministerial career. Immediately

after leaving the Seminary, he entered upon an important charge at Wilkesbarre, Penna. He told me that on his first Sabbath there, he exhausted his entire stock in trade, so far as written sermons went. He had gone to the place with nothing prepared but his Presbyterial trial pieces, and he had used those all up the first week of his ministry. On the Monday morning following, the first thing after breakfast, he went to his study and put his next sermon on the anvil, and hammered away at it the entire morning, and he continued thus to work at it every day, to the exclusion of every other thing, until the sermon was completed. He settled this irrevocably and unchangeably as his method of procedure, and he kept it up through life. It was the same with every other professional engagement. He never allowed himself to drift along till near the time when any public duty was to be performed, and then turned in with frantic haste to make his preparations. He pursued no such spendthrift course as that, but on the contrary was always in ample time. He lived intellectually on the right side of his income. The consequence was, he was never hurried, never anxious, never thrown out by unforeseen accidents. The habit gave him a feeling of ease and independence, that shone forth in his very face. I commend to you his example. The only sure method of securing intellectual thrift and comfort, of doing what you do without distraction, and so of doing it in the most healthy condition of your faculties, is to

establish this habit of forehandedness in your work. It is a good rule for all men. It is especially important for students.

If you will pardon a reference to the speaker himself, I would say that while for the last twenty years, my other professional duties have been neither few nor light, I have yet during nearly all that time kept up an almost continual connection with the press, some of the time having engagements of this sort enough to occupy the ordinary working hours of one who had nothing else to do; and yet, in all that time, though my habits of composition are laborious and slow, it is my boast that I have never kept a printer waiting for an hour. It is not that I have worked harder than many others, and certainly not that I work faster, but simply because it is my habit to be beforehand with whatever I undertake to do. If it were not so, I would have been dead long ago. Nothing so soon wears a man out as working under the lash.

III. Another point on which young men make a mistake, is in *not holding on to the calling or profession which they choose*. Of course, one may make so foolish a choice, may err so egregiously in the first step, that to retrace it, and begin anew at something else, is indispensable. In this matter no absolute rule is possible. The tendency however is very strongly in one direction. Where one man perseveres in a calling that he ought to abandon, a dozen men abandon their calling

who ought to stick to it. It is not difficult to account for this. All those kinds of business which are surest in the end, which pay best in the long run, are slowest in beginning to yield a return. The young lawyer or physician has to creep along at first at a most discouraging pace. In those early years of professional probation, when the man is hardly earning his salt, some other business opens before him, that promises an immediate income,—something that will bring him at once two or three times what he is now receiving. The temptation is strong indeed. In the eagerness for immediate results, he is apt to forget one essential point of difference between the two prospects. The one is a little rill, which is destined to flow on with ever increasing volume, till it becomes the brook, the stream, the majestic river. The other is a canal, no bigger or deeper at the end of its course than at the beginning. In determining the question, then, whether to hold on to the profession or business which you have chosen, think not of the present size of the rill, but whether it springs from a living fountain, and whether it is likely to expand as it proceeds. And be not easily disheartened. Let me say for your encouragement, if it be needed, that of the more than four thousand young men who have been under my care as an educator, and whose career in life it has been my privilege more or less to observe, I have very rarely known one to fail, who industriously persevered in the calling which he chose. “*Tenax propositi*”

is the commendation of the Roman moralist. Stick to your purpose. It is a most valuable habit of mind to cultivate. You need not carry it to obstinacy,—though even that error is better than its opposite. Do not shrink from the reputation of being a plodder. It is a better augury of a young man than to hear of him as being precocious,—as being prematurely brilliant,—as starting off in the career of life with a grand dash.

Look into your own minds now, while just pausing upon the threshold of your career, and see if there is within you this vacillating disposition. See if you are disposed to begin a study or an enterprise of any kind, and after chasing it awhile, butterfly-like, to give it up for some newer fancy. It is a not uncommon habit of mind with the young. It is, however, a habit which at your age may be overcome. I have known hundreds of instances of young men, who from being unsteady and fickle of purpose, have become steadfast, unwavering, tenacious. What is needed to bring about such a change, is an honest deliberate review of one's character in this respect, and a firm resolve to amend what is found amiss. It is with a view to do for you what thirty years ago was wisely done for me, that I now place this point so distinctly before you. Tenacity of purpose is the indispensable condition of success in whatever you undertake. You must learn to hold on.

Every one of you has just chosen his profession, or is about to make the choice. It is not my purpose to

discuss that subject with you. The one duty which I do urge upon you, in connection with it, is, stick to your choice when made. I do not say, stick to it, right or wrong. But having begun on any course of action, let it not be an even weight of argument against it, which shall lead you to abandon it. Do not give up what you have deliberately chosen, unless the arguments for receding are a great deal stronger than those for going on. To change from one profession or business to another, is in a great measure to throw away all the progress you have made in the one already begun. It is to go back to the beginning of the course for a fresh start. The different professions in this respect are not so much parallel tracks, where you can be switched from one into another, without loss of progress, but rather tracks radiating from a common centre. To pass from one to another, you must in each case go back to the original station. You must begin your career anew. The comparison of course cannot be applied with rigor. In many particulars it is not true. Yet it has substantial truth. The man who is tinkering away, first at one thing and then at another, rarely succeeds. It is not in the nature of things that he should succeed. On the other hand, a man's choice of a profession must be very bad indeed, if patient, persistent, tenacious continuance therein do not in the end crown him with success.

What is true of your purposes, is likewise true of

your opinions. It is a great mistake to suppose that you are bound to discard a fixed belief of your mind, because an ingenious opponent may ply you with arguments which at the time you cannot answer. Beliefs are a sort of growth,—a gradual accretion of the mind, through a long series of years. It is very difficult for any man, on the spur of the moment, to give all the reasons which may have conduced to any one of his beliefs. Those reasons from time to time have been brought to the cognizance of the mind, have wrought their work upon the convictions, and then have been forgotten. The resultant beliefs, like successive strata, remain as a sort of fixed, permanent deposit. This is the order of nature, in mind as well as in matter, and it is right that it should be so. Otherwise we should be forever afloat on the sea of opinion. Cultivate, then, this habit of tenacity, as well in your opinions as in your course of life. It is no harm to be a little dogged sometimes. Do not give up your creed because some specialty man presses you with arguments that you cannot answer. You could answer them, had you made the subject a hobby, as he has done. You could answer them, if you had the leisure to review seriatim the steps by which you have come to your present stage of belief. Only be careful and honest in the first place in forming your opinions, and then be willing to place some confidence in your own mental results. Do not be badgered out of your position by every whipster that

comes along prating about old fogyism and the progress of the age.

IV. *Have some fresh intellectual acquisition always in hand.* Some students, after getting fairly settled in their professions, merely work on from year to year with the materials of knowledge already acquired. Surely this is not wise. The case of the professional man is like that of the pioneer in a new settlement. When the fields already under cultivation are thoroughly subdued, the stumps removed, the ditches, drains and fences all in order, the pioneer does not then settle down composedly and consider his plantation as complete. It is to him only the signal to make another encroachment upon the virgin forest. He proceeds accordingly to bring a new field into cultivation. When the process with that field is complete, he then begins with another. Thus he goes on, ever enlarging his domain, ever having under way at least one new movement in advance, until in time, one scarcely knows how or when, the poor hardy pioneer becomes the great landed proprietor. So should it be with the professional man. If he wants to make steady, healthful growth, he should always have by him some one new study,—something in hand that he can turn to from day to day, and give to it at least a few touches. It may be the acquisition of a new language, the mastering of some new branch of science, the preparation of a treatise or a book,—only let it be something not al-

ready contained in the routine of his profession, something that will add to his intellectual domain,—that will make him a larger proprietor. The danger with professional men is that of moving round and round in an unchanging circle. Clergymen especially are apt after a few years to fall into a certain stereotyped routine of thought,—a rut which they deepen perhaps, but they never get out of it. If you hear them for a year, you hear all they have to say. They do not literally (perhaps) turn the barrel over, and give the same identical sermons. But they might as well do it. They have no new ideas. It is only a continued iteration of the same old thoughts in some new dress. The only remedy against a man's thus repeating himself, is GROWTH. He must be all the while steadily invading the virgin forests of the unknown. While he cultivates diligently the fields already subdued, and duly fills his garner with the golden grain, he must all the while have at least one new wilderness tract under the process of being brought into cultivation. He must be always enlarging in some direction the bounds of his knowledge. Thus only can he keep his mind fresh. Thus only can he fulfil the Master's injunction to "bring forth things new and old."

You know the proverb about a finished city. A town that is really flourishing always shows signs of incompleteness. There are new houses or blocks of houses going up, old houses being torn down to be en-

larged and modernized, and half finished streets piled up with dirt and rubbish. Woe betide the place that is nowhere blocked up with brick and mortar. A town that is finished, that has actually stopped growing, is already in a state of decadence. We have too many finished men among us,—men who have quietly ceased growing. It is a mistake. The man who ceases to go up, has begun to go down. There is no being stationary in this matter. If you are not adding to your stock of knowledge, you are losing. The medical man, who merely goes on practising on the knowledge and theory already acquired, who takes no medical journals and does not keep himself abreast with the general progress of medical science, is inevitably falling behindhand. So with every other profession. If a man gives himself up entirely to his practice, if he becomes a man of mere routine, if he ceases to be in some substantial measure a student, making all the while fresh acquisitions, if he allows himself for one moment to entertain the thought that his professional education is, or ever can be complete, he is making a mistake. He already shows fatal symptoms of decadence.

The difficulty does not occur usually in the first stages of professional career. In those early years, when a man is just struggling into position, there is abundant leisure for study, and commonly there is a fair amount of good solid study. But when a man has made some decided progress in his profession, when clients

become numerous, or patients multiply, or the congregation becomes large, and necessary duties increase, then is the danger. Then comes the temptation to settle down into a fixed, comfortable routine. The man in full practice finds so much that he must do, that he has rarely the courage to take up anything not absolutely required by strict professional duty.

If men in such circumstances would fairly make the trial, they would find the difficulties much less than they suppose. What is recommended, is not to attempt any great amount of extra professional study, but always to have some such extra professional study or work in hand, and to do a little at it every day. It is surprising how the thing will grow upon a man. The main difficulty is in making a beginning. And here my advice is, to begin in a very humble, modest way. Do not sketch out for yourselves some vast, unwieldy, impracticable plan, but just take up any one thing and follow it out with steady perseverance. Pick up a grain or two every day and add to your heap. You will soon learn by happy experience the power of littles, as applied to intellectual processes and gains.

V. *Avoid the mistake of limiting too strictly your studies to your own specialty, or your intercourse to your own particular sect or caste.* There are some advantages undoubtedly in exclusivism. The man who all his life does nothing but make pinheads, by limit-

ing his faculties exclusively to that one thing, will doubtless learn to make pinheads better and cheaper than the man who divides his attention among several branches of industry. It is mainly through the minute subdivision of labor, and the confinement of each operative so far as practicable to single processes, that the great modern improvements in the mechanic arts have been effected. So also in the higher walks of intellectual industry. In order to make new discoveries in science, or to follow out investigations in any direction to ultimate results, there must be subdivision of labor, and a just limit to one's inquiries. Such is the admitted doctrine, which you have all heard. I accept it in all its length and breadth, and shall say nothing that can be construed into any disparagement of its importance. Nor do I underrate the folly and danger of frittering away one's energies among a variety of pursuits. But of that danger you have often heard. It is a common topic of remark. There is danger, however, on the other side, not so great or serious perhaps, yet real and worthy of consideration, and all the more so because it is less frequently touched upon. That is the danger against which I warn you.

Man dwarfs himself, if he pushes too far the doctrine of the subdivision of labor. He may, perhaps, render himself worth more as a maker of pinheads, but he is worth less as a man. Every one ought to be, and is, something more than a mere factor in some grand for-

mula of social or economical science. He has a perfection of his own, in himself, which is his chief concern. The first question with every man is, not what he can do, but what he is, morally, mentally, physically. This excessive one-sidedness has a tendency to merge the individual in the general, to make a man a mere isolated point, a mere cog or pulley in some great machine. In the case of the mechanic, it reduces him to a state of most humiliating dependence. In the case of those engaged in intellectual and scientific pursuits, it leads to what Bacon calls the *idola specûs*, the mistakes of the man who sees things only as they appear when looking at them from one's own particular cave or den. It makes a man in church matters a bigot, in society a boor, in the household a pest. Every man, in order to his own individual perfection as a man, needs at times to travel out of the circle of himself and of his own peculiar ideas, and to come into contact with others, and those unlike himself in age, sex, occupation, tastes, and opinions. It was the everlasting sameness, the dull, leaden monotony of the monastic life, which gave to it its chief power in deforming its devotees. When men of the same age and class herd together exclusively, they always degenerate. It is the same with nations. It is by mingling freely with those different from ourselves, that we get our prejudices rubbed off. When you go into society, then, do not single out persons of exactly your own age and

calling to talk with. This is only to carry the shop or office into the parlor. Talk rather with those older or younger than yourself, with those that know more or that know less, with those that think differently from you, with those of a different calling or business. Improvement comes mainly by comparison. Perfection is a many-sided jewel. The highest development of human character takes place only where there is this kindly mingling and fusion of things and persons essentially diverse. God who made us, and who knows best what is needed for human perfection, has himself given us, in the family, the divine model of what society should be. In the family we have three, sometimes four generations under the same roof, the old, the young, both sexes, boys and girls, men and women, young men and maidens, an infinite diversity indeed of tastes and dispositions, yet all harmoniously blending, like concordant notes in music. How much more would Christians of different churches love one another, how much would they gain in perfection of Christian character, if they came together more. So too of intellectual progress. Perfection in knowledge forbids too great a limitation of the vision. All truth is affiliated. If you would know any one thing perfectly, you must know partially many other things. A man does not become perfect in English Grammar by studying nothing but English Grammar. He must study collaterally other grammars and other languages, before

he can become intelligently master of his own. So too he must generalize the principles of Arithmetic by studying Algebra, before he can become a perfect arithmetician. So of every human art and pursuit. Nothing is isolated. While you do well to give your main attention to what you have selected as your specialty, do not neglect collateral studies, do not exclude studies even the most remote from your ordinary uses. Whatever can make you more accomplished and complete in yourself, as a man, is worthy of your attention, and will in the end make you more proficient in your particular calling.

This habitual intercourse with men and women and thoughts and things outside of your own little circle, is the true generator of common sense. How often do we see men of great ability and of prodigious learning, become, for the want of a few grains of common sense, mere ciphers in the community. You see a Professor in the lecture room, whose knowledge in his department is of the very first order, yet utterly powerless in discipline, and consequently utterly useless as an instructor. He has no common sense, no tact. His talents consequently are all thrown away. His pupils learn from him nothing, but the habit of insubordination, and skill in the arts of unmanly annoyance. We want among us, undoubtedly, profound scholarship,—that original, independent knowledge, which comes only from patient, protracted study in particular lines

of investigation. But we do not want men of merely one idea. We do not want the mere book-worm.

VI. In connection with this let me urge upon you the importance of *cultivating the art of conversation*. To be able to converse well is quite as valuable a gift as that of popular eloquence. You may think this an exaggeration. Popular eloquence is so very showy a gift, that its importance is not likely to be undervalued. But so far as I have been able to observe, the actual resolves of men are mostly brought about, not by this distant play of artillery, but by the close, hand to hand encounter of private conversation. There it is that the death grapple takes place, the home thrust is given. The ablest administrators of affairs have been celebrated for their skill in this line. Of various critical affairs, with which I have had by reading or by experience some intimate acquaintance, the real turning point has been generally decided, not by public debate, but by talking face to face, man to man. The celebrated AARON BURR had a bewitching power in this way, which wanted nothing but purity of character to have placed him at the head of the Republic. His power of bringing men over to his way of thinking, and of leading them to put themselves absolutely at his service, amounted to actual fascination. And it was all exerted by a consummate style of personal address. Of him it might well have been said:

“So on the tip of his subduing tongue
All kind of arguments and question deep,
All replication prompt, and reason strong,
For his advantage still did wake and sleep;
To make the weeper laugh, the laughter weep,
He had the dialect and different skill,
Catching all passions in his craft of will;

That he did in the general bosom reign
Of young, of old; and sexes both enchanted,
To dwell with him in thoughts, or to remain
In personal duty, following where he haunted:
Consents bewitched, ere he desire, have granted;
And dialogued for him what he would say,
Asked their own wills, and made their wills obey.”

So wonderful an instance of power in conversation is not on record. Coleridge and Sam. Johnson perhaps might be cited. But they were talkers rather than conversers. They merely harangued to an admiring little senate. They were indeed eloquent, but they did not converse. Their talk was quite a one-sided affair. Johnson particularly was of a most imperious temper, allowing no rival, no interruption or contradiction. Now the distinguishing character of conversation is that it is strictly a co-operative act, and hence arises much of its subtle power. It is not talking at a man, but talking with him. It is getting him to talk. It is bringing yourself adroitly within the lines of his defences, so that if you are really the stronger man of the two, there is no chance of his escape. In the familiar

play of private conversation, a man of skilful address and ready wit can quite disarm suspicion, and may so mix up the various thoughts suggested that those he is dealing with hardly know which thoughts are his and which are theirs, and adopt often as the suggestions of their own minds what have been really the adroit promptings of his.

But apart from these great occasions of diplomacy, a talent for conversation has an extraordinary value for the common, every day uses of life. Let one who has this gift enter into a social circle anywhere. How every one's face brightens at his entrance. How soon he sets all the little wheels in motion, encouraging the timid, calling out unostentatiously the resources of the reserved and shy, subsidizing the facile, and making everybody glad and happy.

To converse well is not to engross the conversation. It is not to do all the talking. It is not necessarily to talk with very great brilliancy. A man may talk with such surpassing power and splendor as to awe the rest of the company into silence, or excite their envy, and so produce a chill where his aim should be to produce warmth and sunshine. He should seek the art of making others feel quite at home with him, so that no matter how great may be his attainments or reputation, or how small may be theirs, they find it insensibly just as natural and pleasant talking to him, as hearing him talk. The talent for conversation, indeed, more almost

than anything else in life, requires infinite tact and discretion. It requires one to have most varied knowledge, and to have it at instant and absolute disposal, so that he can use just as much, or just as little, as the occasion demands. It requires the ability to pass instantly and with ease from the playful to the serious, from books to men, from the mere phrases of courtesy to the expressions of sentiment and passion. The mere possession of knowledge does not make a good talker. The most learned men are often the very dullest in society. Their learning is of no more use in ordinary conversation, than is the antiquated lumber stowed away in your grandmother's garret. Yet these men of learning are the very ones who of all men in the community have it most in their power to redeem conversation from its too common insipidity. Those antique pieces of furniture, if only cleared a little of the dust and cobwebs, and brought down from their hiding-places into the light of day, might add a sober dignity to the ordinary uses of life. It needs, however, a nice sense of propriety to be able in general conversation to use one's special professional knowledge so as not to be offensive or pedantic,—so as to avoid the appearance of lecturing. Yet the thing may be done. Every one has some special point on which he is better informed than any one else in the company. The skilful converser is one who can both use his own special knowledge, and can subsidize equally the several specialties of his com-

panions, to the common pleasure of all, who can do this without constraint, without apparent effort, and in such a manner that every one else in the company thinks himself acting quite spontaneously.

Excuse my dwelling a little on this point. There is among our best educated men, I am sorry to say, a large amount of *vis inertiae* in regard to this matter of conversation. Very many such persons are disposed to rely for their success and their position in society solely upon their professional skill and industry. General conversation is a bore to them. They have never duly considered the advantages it might bring them. They are disposed to leave all that to those more ambitious of social distinction. When they are in company, they speak indeed if appealed to, or if it comes entirely in their way to do so, but they feel no responsibility for keeping conversation afloat. Allow me to say, gentlemen, this is all wrong. Independently of all considerations of interest and policy, there is a clear duty in this matter. Every man who mingles in the society of his fellows, is bound to contribute his quota to the common entertainment, just as much as in a joint excursion of any kind he would be bound to pay his share of the reckoning. Educated men, beyond all others, should settle it as a clear duty to learn how to talk well in company. Conversation is an art. But it is an art which can be acquired, and depend upon it, no acquisition gives a surer or more ample return for the amount of effort needed.

VII. Deem it not below the dignity of the occasion, that I urge upon you *the duty of cultivating good manners*. Young men often make a serious mistake on this point. They think, if they only have the substance, the form is of little moment. If they acquire learning and professional skill, that is all they need. They can work their way through by main force. It is a mistake. A man *may* have such extraordinary force of character and talents as to compel the path of promotion to open before him. But promotion so gained, is gained at entirely too great a sacrifice. It is gained in spite of a very heavy drawback. The same amount of intellectual force, combined with suitable manners and address, would have accomplished three times the result. A surgeon may remove a limb with the dull heavy cleaver of the butcher. But he would hardly be thought to be wise in preferring such an instrument to the keen, well-tempered blade suited to his profession. By the use of a sort of brute force, you may undoubtedly make a certain amount of impression. But if you would cut deeply, or use your force wisely, look well to your manner. Its power in human affairs is almost unbounded. Who that has ever been brought into contact with a highly educated English Quaker, such for instance as the late JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY, but has felt the controlling sway of beautiful manners? It was difficult in the presence of that man to say what it was that affected you so powerfully. Other men have had a smile equally

benignant, a voice equally melodious, a gait and motion equally graceful, a goodness of heart, a sweetness of disposition, a gentleness and openness of speech equally inspiring confidence. It was somehow the infinite delicacy with which, whatever there is to charm in voice or word or look or gesture, was in him so finely tempered together that you felt as if mingling with a being of a superior nature, and yet felt quite as much at your ease as if talking with those of common clay. It was real Christian goodness of heart speaking out through the whole man. The very hem of his garment seemed to speak. To analyze the manner of such a man and detect its hidden mystery, is like attempting to analyze a delicate perfume. The most ethereal of its occult essences are sure to escape you. You only know in such a case that there is true Christian charity at the bottom, that there is varied knowledge and intellectual power, and that every adventitious advantage of person and dress is used to give to whatever is said or done its very highest and happiest effect. Such a manner is the fruit of long-continued and most assiduous cultivation. It is indeed to some extent a gift of nature. But it depends still more upon culture and art. It does not lose its power with the loss of youth; on the contrary, it often increases with years. Men and women in extreme old age have been known to possess a sweet attractive grace, an actual power of fascination, which the young could by no means equal.

That which I recommend to you, is not to be won from the dancing master or the tailor. No one can be insensible to the claims of graceful posture, movement, and costume. But the charm of manner of which I have been speaking, lies deeper than these. It is no outside varnish. It springs from real goodness of heart, from a life hid with Christ in God. It is Christian charity clothing itself spontaneously in fitting external expression. It gives beauty to the plainest face, it teaches winning words and ways to the most ignorant. There lives at this moment, in the town of New Hartford, Connecticut, in a small unpainted house by the roadside, some two miles from the village, a poor woman by the name of CHLOE LANKTON, bedridden with an incurable disease. For twenty-seven years she has lain in that humble apartment, unable to rise, or to be removed, the subject of continual bodily pain, and at times of such excruciating pain as to make her continued life almost a continued miracle. Her father, her mother, her four sisters have successively died before her eyes and been carried out to their long home. She has been for many years left alone in the world, with no means of support but that which occasional and unsolicited charity has sent her, and with no stated companionship but that of a common hired domestic. Yet the grace of God has so wrought in the heart of that lone woman, that her very face is said to beam with angelic sweetness, and all who go to see

her come away charmed, as if they had been to visit the abode of a princess. Young people for miles around visit her, not in the spirit of compassion, but for the pleasure they find in her companionship. The very children troop to her abode to show her all their latest treasures, and no new dress, or doll, or knife, or kite is thought quite complete, till it has had the approval of their dearest confidant and friend. What has given this lone invalid such power to captivate and charm both old and young? Nothing but the spirit of the living God, working in her a heavenly sweetness of character, that finds a natural expression in all lovely and beautiful ways.

If then you would have truly good manners, in their very highest type, seek first of all goodness and purity of heart. Be filled with a kind and loving spirit. Drink largely of that charity which doth not behave itself unseemly, and which seeketh not her own, which suffereth long and is kind. Good manners are only the natural expression of unselfish benevolence. If this be wanting, they are a cheat and a sham. But having this, you will not count the slightest article of dress, the most inconsiderable movement of the limbs or the person, the most trifling word on the most ordinary occasion, as beneath your care and study, if thereby you can add in any degree to the happiness of any human being.

One thing more and I have done. Every American schoolboy, it is said, expects at some time to be President. The aspiration which I commend to you, is humbler in its aim. In the nature of the case, few can win that dazzling prize. One attainment, however, is within the reach of every one of you. You may all have a spirit of pure and lofty patriotism. This, then, young gentlemen, is my last suggestion to-day. Be truly loyal to the dear land which gave you birth and nurture. Cultivate a nice sense of personal honor, which shall keep you unsullied even among the corruptions of party politics. Aim in all public affairs to do right, rather than to gain place or power. As HENRY CLAY once said, on a memorable occasion, when pressed to desist from a certain course, lest it should endanger his election, so you too may proudly say, should the alternative ever be placed before you, "GENTLEMEN, I HAD RATHER BE RIGHT, THAN BE PRESIDENT!"