

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT IN ITS
SPONTANEITY AND ITS LIBERTY.

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1846

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF

HAMILTON COLLEGE,

JULY 22, 1846.

CLINTON, N. Y.

BY REV. LAURENS P. HICKOK, D. D.;

Prof. ~~President~~ of Auburn Theological Seminary.

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R. W. ROBERTS, PRINTER, 58 GENESEE STREET.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

HAMILTON COLLEGE, *Sept.* 16, 1846.

REV. DR. HICKOK,

SIR:—The PHENIX SOCIETY of HAMILTON COLLEGE, through the undersigned, their Committee, return thanks for the able and interesting ADDRESS, you delivered before them at their last ANNIVERSARY, and request a copy of the same for publication.

With the highest esteem,

Yours, &c.,

L. TENNEY, }
E. CLARK, } COMMITTEE.
R. P. KEYES, }

AUBURN, *Sept.* 18, 1846.

Messrs. TENNEY, CLARK & KEYES, Committee, &c.

I comply with your request to be furnished with a copy of my ADDRESS for publication, in the same spirit with which I prepared and delivered it, and if the subject of "intellectual development and discipline," shall in either way become more extensively studied, my end will have been thereby attained.

Yours respectfully,

L. P. HICKOK.

ADDRESS.



The plant grows. It is the development of a germ from within, not an aggregation of elements put together from the outside. The majestic oak has not been built up by accumulating materials one upon another, but an *inner force* diffusing itself throughout, has expanded it to its maturity. The tree is a whole, having its root, stock and branches in an organized unity.

This inner force is the *life*, which as one agency works in and through every part. It assimilates to its own incorporation every element which it receives, and evermore circumscribes its working within that original form which is given to it, and which it is its sole task to expand to its maturity. Mechanical agencies work *on* their materials, and put them together in juxtaposition; vital agencies work *in* their elementary parts, and unite them in one living body. In all mechanical operations the product takes on the form determined for it by adventitious circumstances; but in all vital action, the form that must be evolved is already prescribed in the rudiments of the primitive germ. Thus heaps of gravel or shifting hills of sand take on such shapes as may be given to them, by the waves of the ocean or the winds of the desert; and lofty mountain ranges lift their bare rocks and bleak summits to the sky, in such outlines as the upheaving of volcanic action from beneath or the abrasion of the warring elements from above has determined. But every vegetable or animal form, has its archetype within its own being, and in its maturity is the sponta-

neous product of an inner working after its own primitive law of development.

Now this law of vital action may be taken as an *analogy* of that inner mental force, by which there is secured a complete intellectual development. My general design is to follow up this analogy, to the attainment of some principles and the application of some maxims, which can not safely be overlooked in either the training of other minds or the discipline of our own. There are *two points of view* from which this intellectual development is to be contemplated. A mind already ripened to maturity, and whose faculties have attained great compass, elasticity and vigor, has reached this state through the energizing of an inner force, perseveringly at work for the consummation of its own end in the production of such an expanded capacity. And now, *one* point of view is, to contemplate this inner force as carrying on its work of mental development, through an entirely *spontaneous* agency; and in this view of its spontaneity, we shall find a strict analogy between the laws of vital and of intellectual development. Here we shall find our *principles*; and an exposition, of the controlling authority which these must hold over all the process of mental culture, is one end which I have proposed to myself in this investigation.

But *another* point of view discloses a very striking peculiarity. This inner mental force is very much subjected to our *voluntary* control. In this point of liberty, the analogy between vital and mental growth wholly fails. Here we shall attain our *maxims*; the application of which to all mental discipline, I have proposed as another end in this discussion.

While, then, we are to look at the growth of mind in its *spontaneity* for our principles, and at this growth in its *liberty* for our maxims; let it, also, be farther premised, that the results which we now seek to attain respect rather the *intellectual* than the *moral* character of the man; and

we are then prepared to proceed directly with our investigation.

The mind, as truly as the plant, has a *spontaneous* growth. The rudiments of the future man are already in the infant germ, and the most brilliant genius or profound talent can only be a development of an already existing potentiality. An opening bud and an expanding flower are objects of deeply interesting contemplation, as the work goes on from day to day; but how much more intense the interest, while we watch the process of mental growth from the first dawnings of infantile consciousness upwards to the full maturity of manly thought and purpose! The inner conditions give the controlling law to the entire process; so that, knowing the law, we may beforehand know that some things may, and some other things may not, be brought out of the young mind. On this ground alone is it, that education can ever become a science. To educate, is to educe from mind, that which inherently though incipiently belongs to mind; and all attempted mental culture and discipline, in the ignorance or a neglect of these laws, is mere empiricism.

In tracing out the analogies of *spontaneous* development, we may make an exposition of this as our *first* principle—*that no external culture can be effectual, except as the inner agency is awakened into action.*

External appliances are but *occasions* for the action of the inner vital energy. The inherent vitality is the efficient in the germination and growth of the plant, the sunshine and the shower are but the conditions. Heat and moisture and the most congenial soil are utterly ineffectual, when the seed or the root is without life. And where the living germ is set in a fruitful place, it is by its own quickening force within, that it is made to put forth, “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” No culture can make the dead stock grow, nor bring out fruit from dry branches. The work goes on

within the plant, or it avails nothing how much is done on the outside. The inner agency may require conditions for putting forth its efficiency, but conditions result in no development of the germ, except through the vital energizing of the quickening spirit within.

*Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpora miscet.*

It is ever thus, also, with the development of the intellect. The efficiency of the mind's growth is a force from within itself. All external influences are but occasions more or less favorable for the activity of this inner causation. No matter how propitious the surrounding conditions, if this internal working is not going on, the mind can not grow; and no matter how inauspicious the outward circumstances, if this inner mental energy be aroused the mind will grow, and every faculty come out in all the ripeness and richness of a matured development. In every generation, there may be witnessed many a mind, that has been placed in the midst of the most congenial conditions and kindest influences; that has met the happiest opportunities for lifting itself up to greatness; possessed advantages which others would have seized and improved with avidity and success; but which, because the slumbering energy of its own stupid spirit was not aroused, has remained torpid and imbecile, a dwarfed and stunted intellect, unconscious of the smothered fires and suppressed forces within, and incompetent to stand alone amid the jostling movements of the world without. Academic advantages and College privileges are invaluable to a young man, as affording the most favorable conditions for intellectual growth; but the genial warmth, and softening dew of heaven, are not more useless upon the barren heath, than are all these kindly influences upon the dormant faculties of the dunce, who will not wake and can not think.

It is often said, that the circumstances make the man. The correct form of expressing the meaning here intended is this, the circumstances give the man occasion for making himself. No circumstances can avail any thing, except as the inner kindling of genius shall seize upon them and intrepidly use them for its purpose. The period of our revolution was a time which emphatically "tried men's souls," and forced them to stand amid scenes of deep excitement and weighty responsibilities. It was the occasion for a development of such mighty minds as Adams, Franklin, Jay, and Washington. A noble band of heroes with warm hearts and clear heads and iron will were brought to act in concert, from different parts of their distressed country, and who exhibited an earnestness, wisdom, fortitude, and hardihood beyond all ordinary example. But such were not all the minds on whom these influences rested. There was many a weak and stupid soul during all the spirit-stirring days of that great conflict. No mind that did not make those scenes an occasion for arousing up its inner energies, and calling into action all its hidden forces, was made at all either the greater or the better thereby. Then, as ever, minds grew great and strong from the inner working of their own native powers, and it was this ceaseless inner action alone which sent such mighty men to move upon that field of the world's history. Nor, though such stimulating occasions do not occur, is the mind doomed to littleness and weakness. The vital energy sleeps within, and needs only to be aroused, and it may make its own occasions, and create its own conditions, for expanding every faculty to its broadest comprehension. No depressing circumstances of obscurity, or poverty, or delayed opportunity, need to hold it in its embryo state; let the strugglings of the inner life begin, and its growth is sure. Let its pent up energies press till they find their fitting time to strike, and like the hidden lightnings of the

cloud, it will one day make itself to be seen, and heard, and felt.

Igneus est ollis vigor, et cœlestis origo
Seminibus.

It is a most miserable, though not a very uncommon delusion, to assume that greatness may often be fortuitous, and that maturity and vigor of intellect may be reached at a leap, when the critical exigency shall demand the prompt action. This delusion may become the more confirmed, by some instances of great talent in spite of the neglect of early advantages; or, sudden flashes of great and brilliant success, while much time is passed in indolence or devoted to pleasure. But these uncommon cases are not exceptions to our principle. No expanded intellectual development has ever occurred, without the strong workings of the hidden force within. If the process has been long deferred, the later action must be proportionally the more energetic. The growth can not be but as the work goes on within; and it is only when you are conscious of the effervescence of this inner spirit, waking vivid imaginings, deep thoughts, and high aspirations, warming the soul in the glow and fervor of its own enthusiasm, that you have any sure warrant that the mind is then in its process of expansion. Whether more or less rapid, the development only then goes on when the forces are struggling from within. Demosthenes' eloquence, Cæsar's rapid conquests, Buonaparte's terrible victories, and Canning's keen political sagacity, are all illustrations of astonishing intellectual developments under the working of an inherent energy, invincible and perpetual.

A second principle is—that no cultivation can bring out of the germ any other, or any more, than that which is con-naturally within it.

External culture may occasion wide modifications in the intensity and direction of the inner living energy, but

when this is aroused to its greatest force, it can carry the work onwards only within its own organization. It can give expansion to that distinct and orderly rudimental being alone, within which it has been made to take up its lodging-place. This inner vitality creates nothing; substitutes nothing in the place of that which already is; it can only make that, in which it is, to grow. When the seed has fallen into the earth, and the genial influences of the spring have supplied the conditions for the germinating power to act, that awakened activity must exhaust itself in the development of that which it finds already within its own body. In the grain of wheat, it pushes out to maturity the rudimental forms already there—the slender leaf, the jointed cylindrical stalk, and the serrated bearded ear: in the pea, its succulent stem, papilionaceous flower, and pendant pods: in the pine cone, the tall taper shaft, and at its top the spreading tufted branches. Change the locality and the soil for these seeds as we may, vary the methods of culture as we please, if still the vital force exerts itself at all, it must subject itself in its action to the law which its own germinal forms impose upon it. The energy may be made more intense in one portion of the organization, and diminished or withdrawn from another portion, and thereby the proportions in actual development may be indefinitely modified; but that which is can still only have been the growth of that which was. On which side soever of the pine trunk the vital sap shall be urged, it will still be the pine branch with its acuminate leaves, and not the palm with its broad foliage, that is developed. The acorn has not within it the form of the hawthorn, nor can any method of culture bring that form out of it. It has not within it the type of any animal, and no incubation can fetch a feathered fowl from it, nor can the warm sands in which it may fall hatch it into an ostrich or a tortoise. If there be any development it must take on the form of the oak, inasmuch as that form only is given

within it. Thus with the seed, the egg, and the embryo, they must evolve themselves after the primeval type of their own inner being. The law is in the germ, and the vital force can not transcend it. It can expand that which is, but by no means can it go back and originate a new, nor go out and work in another, organization.

Thus, also, with the development of the intellect. It is the product of a causation necessarily circumscribing itself, and exhausting all its energizing within its own organism. What it finds there it may expand to its maturity, but it can originate no new faculty, nor make any change in the constitutional capacities of the rudimental being. It is competent, thus, to teach the parrot to talk, the falcon to strike and bring back its prey, the dog to watch, carry and fetch, &c., inasmuch as there is a native susceptibility to instruction in these animated beings, and to these particular results. An inner power may be excited by which such developments may be secured. But there are intellectual processes to which no animal can attain. No animal can make itself the object of its own reflection, and thus teach itself by thinking without the experience of the senses—can construct within its own subjective being the diagrams of geometry, and use the intuitions of pure mathematics—can apprehend the maxims of morality, and govern its actions by the Decalogue. There are no native rudimental faculties for such attainments, and therefore no cultivation can secure such a development. But in the human mind, all those faculties which are essential to humanity, and without which the being would be something other than man, exist in the constitutional elements of his earliest being. The germ of the human intellect is originally something other, and something more, than the *anima* of the brute; hence, the development of the human transcends all that is possible in the animal.

But, while all that is *essential* to humanity must be an original inheritance of all minds, yet may there be peculiar

and specific constitutional attributes which do not at all belong to some minds. It is not essential to the common humanity that every man should be a wit, or a mimic, or a satirist, or even a poet. Some men may, perhaps, be all these, and to some other men all these may, perhaps, be impossibilities. In the native germ of some minds there may be, and in others there may not be, the rudiments for such specific development. The ancient *dictum* expresses a truth for every age—*poeta nascitur, non fit*. In many other cases, the original germs may have the same elementary attributes, and yet some admit of a much farther development, and thus give their characteristic in a higher degree, than others. It is not competent to all minds that, by any culture, they should become distinguished mathematicians; nor could all mathematicians become great statesmen, orators, or philosophers; nor could all such again become eminent in painting and sculpture. In many of these particulars, there may be a native susceptibility which in its cultivation admits of some development, but which is still small even in its maturity, and no excitement of the inner action can carry out its growth any farther. Differences of native endowment will thus secure distinct characteristics and degrees of attainment among men, which no modifications of external cultivation can preclude. They could not be made to grow alike, though the inner force in each were quickened alike, inasmuch as the original rudiments were themselves unlike.

While, therefore, it is the business of all education, whether that of self-culture and discipline or that of instructing others, to bring out in mature development every opening faculty, and to this end is every favoring external influence to be employed which may be an occasion of stimulating the agency within; yet is it wholly absurd and vain to expect from the development of any mind something other, and something more, than the

native germ originally possessed. When the inner force has been thoroughly aroused, and is directed in the best manner, and is perpetuated in its action with quenchless ardor and tireless vigor, then is the man making the most of himself, and securing the most complete and comprehensive development of which his intellectual nature is capable. When thus brought out in its maturity, his comparative mental capacity is then the righteous measure of his real worth and rank among other intelligences. And when an instructor of youth has so arranged his system of education, and adapted his plan of discipline, and applied his stimulants, as the most effectually to arouse and the most favorably to direct the working of this internal energy of the intellect, he has then filled his whole province, and is faithfully fulfilling his whole duty, and most successfully completing his work. If the minds on which he works should many of them still prove to be rude and dull, stunted and feebly developed, the reason for this is to be sought either in the delinquencies of the pupil or the parsimony of nature. Where the real mother wit is wanting, no teaching can supply the deficiency. It would exceed the tyranny of even Egyptian taskmasters, to require the Faculty in our Colleges to render "the full tale" of clear, strong, and long-headed men to the world, when those heads had been given into their hand utterly empty. We must, perforce, be content with bringing out and maturing just what and how much of native talent the original intellectual germ contains.

A third principle is—that no healthy growth can be secured by forced processes and factitious appliances.

By an artificial supply of heat and moisture, it is easy to force an unnatural and sickly growth in defiance of an uncongenial locality or an improper season. Tropical plants may thus be made to develop themselves in our northern climate, and any seeds to germinate and grow in the winter. But these productions of the hot-house

can never come to their maturity, and ripen and perfect their fruit where they are, nor bide the sharp changes and rough blasts of an out-door exposure. The needful conditions of light, and air, and temperature, are not supplied in their full and free proportions, and though the plant unfolds, yet is its stock weak, its branches stunted, and its fruit insipid.

Nor can any factitious applications of that which still belongs to, and is borrowed from, something else be of any benefit. To the plant or the animal, all is a foreign substance which is not vitalized and assimilated to itself through its own proper action. The scion inserted from another stock attains no incorporation into its new stem, except as the one vital action from the root enters it and diffuses itself throughout. The limbs of one animal can not be enlarged and strengthened by the food digested in the stomach, and the blood which flows in the veins of another.

The analogy, in both these particulars, applied to the intellect, will expose the emptiness, if it can not cure the arrogance of many high pretensions in mental cultivation. There are empirics in education as well as in medicine; and the quackery which meddles with mind is quite as mischievous as that which tampers with the health of the body. Specific rules, and assumed astonishing inventions and improvements, in the art of teaching different branches of science, become nearly as plenty, and about as thoroughly puffed, as patent nostrums, while local "institutes" and itinerating lecturers rival in numbers our modern medical theorists and travelling pill-venders. In process of time it may perhaps be hoped that both these evils shall cure themselves. When it shall be but a little more fully seen, that those wonderful improvements in the healing art only increase the numbers of the sick and the dying, and these boasted new-lights in education rapidly multiply all kinds of noisy, conceited, shallow pretenders,

the community will become heartily tired of them both, and buy wisdom from a most annoying experience. Where mere dreams and empty speculations are made to take the place of established laws of mental development, and the most crude and superficial theories are made to supplant old and long proved systems of thorough mental discipline, it can not be long before the worthlessness of the product will effectually convince the world of either the folly or the knavery of the manufacturer.

No machinery for artificially forcing knowledge into mind, or for heaping accomplishments upon mind, can subserve any good purpose. Precocious developments are usually unhealthy, and ordinarily soon blighted; and all ambitious attempts to bring the young mind to an early maturity, and make the child to exhibit the characteristics and attainments of an adult, by the process of a precise training and constrained imitation and affected speech, is merely a mechanical torturing of nature, and about as successful as would be the application of presses and pulleys to the young shoot, for forcing it in a season to the tall oak, the growth of a century. Inventions for teaching languages, and grammar, and elocution, and the art of composition in both prose and poetry, by a few arbitrary rules, and in the process of a half a dozen lectures, constitute another species of modern literary charlatanry; and which would be quite equaled in propriety and utility by hanging artificial flowers and fruits amid the green leaves of a barren fig-tree. All attempts of one mind to transfer to itself the attainments of another, and superinduce upon itself the erudition of the other by merely adopting his conclusions, and learning to repeat his sentiments by rote, and which is no very uncommon method of seeming to be a very wise and learned man, are yet alike vain and foolish. A man may take his almanac, just as the printer gives it to him, without the capacity to correct any error made by the press, or even to determine

whether there is any error. He simply transfers to himself the copy just as it is. The most superficial observation detects the deceitful pretension, and despises the silly affectation. Grapes may hang upon thorns, and figs be stuck upon thistles, but no man will be deluded into the belief that they ever grew there. So, again, the man may try to be learned by rules, and technical terms, and phrases which embody abstract principles; and thus make his memory the go-cart to carry round artificial examples and prescribed formulas, which are to be practically but mechanically applied to the cases that come up in his experience, and all to be determined by the arbitrary standard; instead of relying upon a mind properly disciplined and developed, which flashes out the light of its own sound judgment upon its pathway in every critical emergency.

All these merely factitious and mechanical processes for training the intellect, overlook wholly the very nature and law of mental development. They exclude utterly the universal fact that no mind really grows except in its own action. They seek to make the mind take on its increase from without, and not to expand from its own energy within. Its attainments are to be already packed up by other hands and laid on it, rather than the products of its own teeming vitality, and which it may at all times use free and gracefully as the body may its members. Many such a burdened and overlaid mind is found in all communities. Garrulous, pedantic, and conceited, such a man obtrudes his counsel and opinion on all occasions, and wastes his words and wisdom with unsparing prodigality, conscious that there is enough more in the place from whence so much has already come. His mind is a mere receptacle, and by tapping it at any time, there runs out just what has been put in. Its whole use is to hold the content until it is needed, and then pour out the quantum sufficit. Science is a mere bundle of facts and

formulas, which may be transferred and distributed from one mind to another, as the merchant supplies his customers.

Now, a clear and correct view of the process of mental development to its maturity, so far as it is a *spontaneous* growth through the action of an inner force, will correct the above unphilosophical and hurtful methods of instruction. Let every mind attain the thorough conviction, that it must itself work if it would grow; and let no confidence be placed in any boasted schemes of education or self-discipline which dispense at all with this controlling law of intellectual expansion. No benefit ever did nor ever will accrue, by attempting such a work without, or against nature.

And now, if minds grew like trees altogether spontaneously, we should here have finished our work by exhausting the subject. But the *analogy*, exact thus far, wholly ceases beyond this. The inner efficiency of plants and animals in their development is wholly necessitated by its conditions. As within law, its working is orderly, progressively, perpetually, wherever the conditions are given; but, as under necessity it must keep its determined pathway, with no capability to swerve from the laws imposed upon it. Hence, trees and animals grow and die, under fixed laws and particular conditions determined for them, and with no responsibility to either the law or the condition. But in the growth of mind this analogy does not hold. In its *spontaneity*, the law necessitates that, like the plant, all its unfoldings must be effected through the agency of an inner force, and that this inner force can push to maturity those rudiments only which are already given; but altogether beyond this, mind has within itself the high prerogative of a *voluntary control* over the action and the direction of this inner energy. It may for itself determine, amid all the conditions of its being, whether the living power within shall lie smothered and suppressed,

or whether it shall be aroused and pour itself through every intellectual faculty. It possesses a *liberty*, whereby it is competent for itself to decide, whether it shall take the laws of spontaneity into identity with its own being, and spread itself forth in any or all the prescribed forms which those laws shall give to it; or, whether it shall lie, like the seed beneath the frosts of winter, torpid and inert as the clods which cover it. There is, therefore, in every mind, that which makes the manner of its being awful; throwing upon itself the responsibility of both *whether* it shall grow, and, under the laws of spontaneity, *how* it shall grow.

That lay, more than historic, is prophetic,
Wherein, of the budding and the opening
Of a human spirit, thou shalt dare to tell
What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable; and what within the mind,
By vital breathings secret as the soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words!—
Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears,
Of tides obedient to an inner force,
And currents self-determined.

This additional fact, of a *liberty* in intellectual development, makes it necessary that we pursue this subject some farther, though the time demands that we progress more rapidly. The spontaneity of the process has furnished us with some FIRST PRINCIPLES in mental cultivation, the liberty of this process will now supply some A PRIORI MAXIMS in the same field. These maxims are, at least, quite as important as the principles.

The *first* maxim, under this consideration of liberty, is—*that every mind is responsible for the full development of its intellectual germ.*

Responsibility reaches to the full extent of the liberty. Where simple spontaneity only is, there no obligation can be imposed. The condition being supplied, the agency

goes out in its blindness without an alternative. But, by how much the mind is competent to affect itself in the freedom of its agency, by so much is it the subject of inalienable responsibility. It has no capacity to put the rudiments of originally new faculties within itself; nor, to give those which it already possesses, any farther growth and broader development than their full maturity. If creative energy, out of itself, were exerted to superinduce new endowments upon original rudiments, the mind may be said to have a capacity to receive more; but this is simply the capacity of a void, and would be only saying, that where Omnipotence has created some rudimental faculties, there is room for the same creative energy to go farther, if he please, and create more. Such a capacity confers no responsibility. The determination, whether Omnipotence shall create new faculties in any mind, is nothing for which that mind can be made accountable.

But, for the kindling up the inner energy, and diffusing its vivifying force through the entire organism of its own being, and thus forcing out every elementary faculty to complete maturity, so far as the conditions and the time may be supplied, for this every mind is responsible, because all this comes within its liberty. If one talent be "hid in the earth," the slothful servant must be called to account for it. The entire mental germ is a trust committed; the end to be attained is its full development; this can be secured in no way except through its own inner working, and this is within the sphere of its liberty; there must, therefore, be responsibility in this stewardship. The end of its being is attained only in its growing. That seed, which, when cast into the earth, does not germinate, might as well have been a pebble. The end for which it exists as a seed is not attained. And so also that intellect, by how much it fails of being developed to its perfect stature, might as well have been a clod. Mind,

immortal mind, is worthless, if it will not grow ; and as it grows only in its own action, every obligation presses upon it, that it keep the inner work going on, until it has become completely ripened.

A second maxim is—*that every mind is under the obligation to secure a symmetrical development.*

Monsters are not of nature's make, but the product in some way of an obstruction or perversion of nature. The seed has within itself the rudiments for the well-formed and complete plant, and if in the process of development the plant become stunted, or distorted and misshapen, there must be some external interference, deranging the spontaneous law of its inner action.

The intellectual germ is also in its original being capable of an orderly, well-balanced, symmetrical development. It is doubtless true, that each mind has that within its earliest rudimental being, which discriminates it from all other minds, but yet each, in its maturity, may be made a complete and consistent whole, if not perverted in its process of growth. How much unavoidable conditions, and unconsciousness of what the man might make of himself, may excuse a faulty development, we will not here attempt to decide ; but inasmuch as the arousing and directing of the mental energy is within the man's control, and that occasions also for the discipline of any faculty may be made by the man himself, it follows that every mind must assume for itself the chief responsibility for the form and qualities which it takes on in its growth. Circumstances sometimes seem to favor the development of some one faculty more than others, and a redundancy of the mental force energizes in this direction, while the requisite action is thereby diverted from others. The mind, in this way, often acquires peculiarities and idiosyncrasies which are wholly factitious, and always very undesirable. Not seldom is the distortion found to

be quite uncomfortable to others, and greatly detrimental to the man himself.

But such a mind is itself to blame, for permitting that it should thus have become unbalanced and one-sided. The perverse inclination, tending inordinately in one direction, should have been counteracted, and the inner power made to diffuse itself more equably. Other faculties should have been brought out in their vigor, and if any important rudiments had seemed to be naturally more feeble, the cherishing influence should have been made especially to spend itself upon that which was lacking. Each mind is bound to make itself its own object of watchful observation while it is growing, and subject itself to the correcting hand of its own workmanship. It should skillfully turn itself, and temper the inner force by which its expansion is carried on wisely, as the glass-blower does his vessel, that it may while pliant and yielding assume the required shape, and be perfected in capacity and symmetry.

There is a strong liability, often in the young and growing intellect, because the employment of some favorite faculty is more gratifying, to keep that in constant exercise; the result of which must, of course, be that this favored faculty has become overgrown, and others have been dwarfed; and that mind must henceforth limp on through life, because its faculties, like "the legs of the lame are not equal." The man is "the architect of his own fortune," not only; and moreover is the author of his own moral character, not merely; but he should be made to feel that it is his own agency which shapes his intellectual proportions. Every man, in reference to his growth intellectually, is a self-made man, and if he has made himself one-sided and monstrously misshapen, it is directly his own fault. Others may have their share of blame in applying the wrong stimulants, and surrounding him by ill-judged conditions, but his is the blame of yield-

ing to the conditions, and permitting occasions to shape his intellectual development in undirected spontaneity, without awakening in his liberty, and taking the direction of this so momentous a process. The lily may grow in beauty and glorious array, beyond the splendor of Solomon's royal robes, without toil; but, nor Solomon's, nor any mortal's wisdom, and sound, strong, self-balanced judgment will be attained, without great self-exertion and careful self-discipline. The man, by careful study and watchful discipline may so control his intellectual growth, that at its maturity every mental effort shall be free and joyous, as the limbs of childhood in their sports; or, he may so leave the whole process to perverting influences, that all confidence in his mental capacity for special emergencies, shall like the proverb, be as "a broken tooth, or a foot out of joint."

A third maxim is—that personal retribution is inevitable.

"Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

No sooner, by some external violence, does any obliquity take place in the tender stem of the growing plant, than the flowing sap rushes on through the distortion, and the inner vital force conforms to the direction, and the deformity is perpetuated. Henceforth the stock grows out of shape. But, while the tree may thus become the subject of deformity, and necessarily exhibit through all its after life, the violence which it received in the greenness of its youth; yet will the tree be spared the deep mortification and shame, which originates in a consciousness, that the perpetuated deformity is the consequence of its own action.

But there is no such escape for the human mind. The consequences of all youthful delinquencies and obliquities inhere through all its future growth, and become thereby permanent defects, as in the case of the tree; and then, moreover, there is the constant conviction of its own

neglect, or direct agency, in entailing this perpetual deformity upon itself. The results of such obliquity, in every case, are not mere traces upon the sand which may be readily and completely erased by after-action, but they henceforth grow into its very being, and oblige the inner energy, ever after, to work in and through the modifications thus induced and perpetuated. And such permanent modification of the intellectual growth, for good or evil, stands out as a constant memento of the mind's own wise or wicked direction of its inner action. If the development has resulted in mature intellectual strength and beauty, the spirit rejoices not merely in its own actual worth, but in the superadded blessedness of a modest self-approbation, that this is the product of its own sacrifice and watchful care; but if it has only ripened into deformity, or been blasted in imbecility, there is not merely the mortification of inherent weakness and worthlessness, but the deeper anguish of remorse in the consciousness that this has been self-inflicted. From whence can come the curse so bitter, as to live the blighted monument of one's own shame! to bear about, in the deformity of our own being, the remembrance of our early folly! and feel the testimony, in a perpetual incompetency, that we have ourselves secured for us the necessity that the good should rebuke us, and that the wicked should despise us,—on the other hand, I can conceive of no superior blessedness to that which must await the perpetual experience of the immortal mind in its developed greatness and goodness, working on in the freeness and the fullness of its strength, giving to its Maker the glory and the grace of its high endowments, while it is permitted to be the eternal witness of the light and happiness which spring up constant along its onward pathway.

Let it ever be held in remembrance, that every moment the mind is growing into that shape, which its own direc-

tion of the inner force is securing for it; and that this is a growth which can never turn backward, to change the development of the passing hour, but constantly goes forward to perpetuate and confirm in the future the openings and shapings of the present. Every mind must first fashion its own features, and then wear them forever.

A full and clear sense of personal responsibility for our intellectual growth, and the deep conviction that our own minds must eternally bear within themselves the retributive results of the manner in which they permit themselves to be developed, would throw a sacred dignity and awe around all that belongs to the conditions and the direction of the inner working force, exceedingly proper and salutary for every young and forming intellect.

Suns shine unseen, and thunders roll unheard,
By minds quite conscious of their high descent,
Their present province and their future prize.

GENTLEMEN, MEMBERS OF THE LITERARY SOCIETIES
HERE PRESENT.

These principles and maxims have a direct application to your highest interests in precisely your present position. With you it is now the spring-time of your being. Every thing within is germinating quick and fresh, and you stand in companionship with budding and blossoming intellectual nature all around you. Every thing favors mental development. It is the time for growing, not by the forcing process of confined artificial warmth and vapor in the green-house, but in the free air, and amid the open sunshine and showers of heaven. A wise and well-proved course of cultivation is here applied, and it is rationally expected, that the few years' residence within these Halls, and under these propitious influences, shall send you forth to the advanced stage of professional preparation, and thence to the labors and responsibilities of active life,

with minds expanded, strengthened, disciplined, and ready to be ripened into full maturity in your first encounters with the stormy world.

Every field amid the wide activities of man, whether of professional, agricultural, mechanical, or mercantile pursuits, is becoming broader; opening higher interests; filling with more ardent, hardy, and determined competitors; and those minds, which are to succeed in the coming struggles and conflicts of the next generation, must be more vigorous, prompt, and persevering, than even the great men of the past and present age. The walks of literature and the paths of science branch off in more varied directions, and extend much farther, and are trod by a much greater throng, than in former centuries; and the demands of humanity and active Christian benevolence are louder and more extensive and urgent than ever before. The world never called for so much talent, earnestness, decision, and moral and intellectual strength, from any one of the past generations of her children, as she will ask from those who are to tread her surface contemporary with you. It may moreover be hoped, that the thousands of every past age, who have been enrolled in the armies and pressed into the navies of the nations, and whose grand end has been to learn the art and practice the work of human butchery the most successfully, may hereafter be permitted mainly to crowd the marts of trade and commerce, and the shops and fields of peaceful industry, and thereby invention shall be quickened and competition heightened to their greatest intensity. Every thing indicates that God is preparing a work for man to accomplish, which it will demand the highest and the choicest type of manhood to meet. Mind is to be combined with mind, and work amid and upon mind, and it can be the strong and sound mind only, which shall fulfill the mission of its age. The work of intellectual cultivation and general melioration of outward condition,

and the process of evangelizing and sanctifying the human race, are to go on together.

Yours, my young friends, is the privilege to live in such an era, and to you is now most kindly and profusely given the favoring opportunities for growing to a meetness to assume such high responsibilities. Give the mental germ its utmost expansion; and make it grow symmetrically; and then sacredly consecrate every faculty to the cause of Humanity, Religion, and Truth.

“He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,”
Who lives as reason, not as passion bids;
Who hears temptation sing, and yet turns not
Aside; sees sin bedeck her flowery bed,
And yet will not go up; feels at his heart
The sword unsheathed, yet will not sell the truth.

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