Katharine F. Richmond
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T. Cole

THE

VOYAGE OF LIFE;

SUGGESTED BY

COLE'S CELEBRATED ALLEGORICAL PAINTINGS.

BY

J. B. WATERBURY, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF "ADVICE TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN," "CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUNG MEN," ETC.

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PREFACE.

Among the most beautiful specimens of allegorical painting is the series of pictures by the late Mr. Cole, entitled "*The Voyage of Life.*" They are four in number, and constitute together an impressive moral lesson, which speaks through the eye to the heart. Many have gazed upon them with delight. When they were first opened by a number of artists in one of our cities, the impression on their minds, it is said, was so deep, that, for a while, not a word was spoken. The effect was too great even for commendation.

Mr. Cole had the faculty not only of copying nature, — an art in which he stood almost unrivalled, — but of combining with the finest touches of the pencil high moral associations. His Voyage of Life will probably stand as a permanent memorial of his genius.

In this pictorial voyage, Mr. Cole has chosen a fanciful combination, unlike anything by which nautical life is usually characterized. It is not a ship, but a fairy shallop. It is not the ocean, but a river. He has gone to the fountain-head, and there launched his light craft, and carried her forward, with her precious freight, until that river disembogues into the great ocean of the future.

Upon this series of beautiful allegorical paintings this little book founds its lessons of moral wisdom. It is designed, as the title imports, to furnish the voyager with the requisite outfit. It is hoped that all who may give their attention to its pages — especially those who have recently embarked on this uncertain sea — will be the better prepared to encounter the vicissitudes of the voyage, and be more likely in the end to arrive at the haven of eternal rest.

CONTENTS.

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE EMBARCATION.

In the first picture in the series, the eye is at once arrested by the air of freshness and beauty that pervades it. All is mild as the first rays of morning light. Everything is appropriate to the dawn of existence, the embarcation of human destiny. The spring-time of nature's gladness and variety seems here pictured. The skies are soft, the buds are opening, the leaflet is shooting, the very atmosphere seems redolent of sweets. From a grotto in the foreground where light and shade are intermingled, where hope and fancy might playfully conjecture a thousand hidden images of beauty, there issues a stream, taking its way amid overhanging shrub-

bery, meandering and circling between its banks of enamelled green, reminding us of one of the rivers which took its rise in the original Paradise. On the bosom of this placid stream, and not far from the grotto, you see a curious and fanciful boat, light and graceful as if constructed for some fairy form, unlike any water-vehicle that was ever built. It is neither the fleet-winged yacht nor the gorgeous gondola. It seems to be woven out of osiers and flowers, and moves like a thing of life, without sail or oar, to its dark or its glorious destination.

Here see the artist's power. How unique, how frail, yet how beautiful! It has no sail; it goes with the stream, and *needs* none. It has no oars; an invisible hand guides and moves it. In this boat, surrounded by flowers, sits an infant in the fulness of health, whose sweet smile gives token of a pleasure which the play of its new-born faculties has inspired. You see on its face not the slightest indication of fear. Its little eyes are dazzled by the flowers in which it sits imbedded, and its ear is soothed by

the melodies of the bird and the murmur of the stream; and you cannot help sympathizing in its infantile joy.

But, as you gaze, you are ready to exclaim, Who is this that has charge of the helpless though delighted being? The artist has anticipated your anxiety, and invites your attention to a bright form that stands near the object of your solicitude. It is the Guardian Angel. Its shadowy outline of beauty agrees well with the idea of spiritual beings. It watches, with an eye of pure benevolence, over its lovely charge. It starts with it in the beginning of its being. Commissioned from above to attend upon the young voyager, and true to its trust, it hovers near, and observes, with a heaven-inspired solicitude, the events as they occur. Seeing this angel in the boat, you feel relieved. Personified in this angel is a benignant and ever-watchful providence.

Such is an outline of the first picture in the series, denominated Childhood. If in this painting there be room for criticism, I leave it to be

occupied by those who have more artistical skill than myself. My business is with the *moral* of the painting.

INFANCY.

The object of the artist seems to be to portray in colors the most beautiful the dawn of life, the first embarcation on the perilous voyage of existence. Of course, he must begin with *infancy*. He must take humanity in the bud; for all begin life *here*. The greatest intellects, the most renowned statesmen and warriors, the most eloquent and the most gifted of mortals,— those whose names shine brightest on the scroll of fame, — all have had their beginning in the weakness of infancy. The bad as well as the good, the miscreant, the felon, the murderer, were once prattling infants, and smiled as sweetly, and played as innocently, as the most virtuous and holy. *They*, too, may have been born in Pleasure's grotto, and sported on the flowery banks of her beautiful river. Their first embarcation may have been auspicious, delightful, even full

of promise. But how different their career! How unlike their destiny! Will not the reader sympathize with these reflections?

Who has not been struck with the fact that the greatest minds were once shrouded in an infantile body? Has it not seemed almost miraculous, that out of such frail materials Providence, by the force of circumstances, should produce such genius, such mental power, such all-commanding influence? What is this, but a proof of man's immortality? How can we resist the conviction that a mind so kindred to higher intelligences, passing so soon from infantile weakness to great intellectual power, must have in it the seeds of immortality? And how melancholy has been the reflection that, from a childhood so apparently innocent, so susceptible of good impressions, there should come the dark-minded plotter of sin, the besotted drunkard, the felon, the murderer! How differently is the voyage of life made by mortals! — with what different results, ending in disgrace or in glory!

Why has the artist, in his beautifully pictured allegory, sent a mere infant afloat on the treacherous stream, to be wafted whithersoever the current may carry it? The reason must have been, as we conceive, to show its dependence on an overruling providence. Each child, as it starts on the voyage of life, is in the hands of God. He ordained all the circumstances of its first and feeble existence. His hand kept alive the spark of vitality, which at the birth seemed barely to glimmer, as if a cold breath of air almost might have extinguished it. He it is who makes every bright object of nature so attractive to the young eye, and causes an exhilaration and playfulness to spring from the very motion of its expanding muscles. But for his guardian care, that frail creature, even under a parent's watchful eye, could not reach the period of youth. How many,—yea, what a large majority of the human race,—only enter upon the voyage; just launch, as it were, on the river, and then sink into its cold bosom! The fairy shallop is stranded on the flowery bank of its head-

waters. How many have I seen coffined at this early age! How many soft eyelids have been closed forever over their once beautiful orbs; and the marble brow, so still to the sight, so cold to the touch, has told me that the voyage was ended almost as soon as it began! Around the form and on the coffin-lid have been disposed sweet buds and flowers, striking emblems of the beauty and the frailty of that once animated but now lifeless clay.

But who shall mourn for such voyagers? The *parental* heart is allowed that privilege. Religion, in this concession, pays her tribute to nature, and sanctifies the sorrow by making it the source of good to the sufferer. But I might address even the mother, and say, "Thy regret and sorrow are reasonable only because natural. Thy loved one has been wrecked in the neighborhood of heaven. It had not got far from its origin,—the hand of God. The stream, set in motion by its Maker, had not borne it out of sight of the celestial shores. An eye that could penetrate the future may have seen in the distance the

dark form of the tempter; or the sad images of grief may have been seen waiting to haunt its soul. The river might soon have darkened into a stormy flood; and its maturity have been exposed to *worse* than adversity — to vice and endless ruin. From all these perils and trials has God sheltered it? Has he cut short its earthly career at the outset of existence, that it may spread its pinions in the atmosphere of heaven? Has he transferred it to the river of life that proceedeth out of his throne, where no temptations, no dark forms of sin, can ever invade its bliss or its purity? Is this so? Then dry thy tears; or, if they still *must* flow, let them express thy gratitude as well as thy grief, thy resignation as well as thy sorrow."

But the allegory had in view the *continuance* of life. It presents us with the child as seated in the flowery-decked barge, and gliding on to where the stream will increase and the dangers will thicken. In this view, the interest is even greater than where the voyage ends in infancy. If God has taken our little ones, we have no fur-

ther care of them. We know they are safe. What they are to be is no anxiety of ours. Faith and hope have taught us that the celestial state has no moral dangers; and that, when claimed by Heaven, the cares and responsibilities of the earthly parent towards them are ended.

But the living, growing child, still under our eye, in our arms, dependent upon us, looking to us, living on our smile, forming its taste, its moral character even, under every influence which, consciously or unconsciously, we are throwing around it,— this child, so related, is a trust too awful to be conceived.

See the mother bending over it in calm delight as it sleeps, and imprinting a soft kiss on its brow; or, as it wakes and smiles, giving it the answering smile of love, pressing it to her bosom, silently musing over it in a sort of dreamy pleasure; full of fears, if it betray uneasiness or pain, and agitated if the pulse beat rapidly, or the breath grow quick and hot! Wonderful is the love that beats in a mother's heart! It is a provision, a security for helpless infancy, which a

gracious Providence has furnished; an instinct the most effective, an antagonist the most powerful, against the natural selfishness of the human heart.

It is the mother's hand that spreads flowers around the young voyager,— makes its couch so soft, its moments run so cheerful,— that puts before its eye the brightest pictures to attract and to please. In its life is *her* life. It is her second self,— more loved *than* herself. This is nature.

But a reflecting parent will not rest in this instinctive love; nor suppose, because, under its influence, the physical wants of the child are attended to, that her duty and her enjoyment there must end. The reflecting parent, especially the *Christian* mother, will think of what is to be. She will rise above the mere instincts into the higher region of duty. She will look on her child, not as a part of her being only, but as an individual existence, in whose destiny for both worlds she is to feel an interest, and to wield an influence.

Such a parent looks into the cradle, and says to herself: "There is an immortal spirit in embryo. It is a young voyager, just starting on the stream of life, unconscious of its capabilities, and unapprized of its destiny. Its animal nature is now in full play; and the exercise of its functions in eating, sleeping, smiling, seeing, hearing, moving, gives it delight. The mind has yet scarcely dawned. The soul is in a twilight existence. But how soon will the thought begin to stir, the will to develop, and the desire to be expressed! How soon will the animal be in conflict with the spiritual nature! How soon will be heard the '*will*' and the '*won't*,' the 'yes' and the 'no,' the '*must*' and the '*shall*'! Ere long the passions will cry out for indulgence, and the conscience will whisper its rebukes, and the sense of right and wrong engrave itself on the responsible soul!"

What is this child to be? what is the man to be, who is born, as it were, out of this child? In a limited, though very important sense, "the child *is* father to the man." Who does not see

a shadow of the future manhood in the child? And, retrospectively, who cannot trace in the man the faint lineaments which dawned in early childhood?

Standing, then, at the head-waters of life's eventful flow,—at the placid streamlet that glides between green and flowery banks,—the parent is to survey the frail voyager at the outset; and, to adopt a nautical phrase, to see that it has a good "offing." Whatever can be done, in that period of its existence,—whatever can contribute to make the passage safe and successful, to guard against ultimate shipwreck,—must, under God, be faithfully done.

EDUCATION SHOULD BEGIN IN INFANCY.

Until the principle be more generally admitted and acted upon that education should begin in infancy, we shall have, I fear, many examples of voyagers who reach an early or an inglorious end. But, in so infantile a period, what can be done, save to develop its bodily powers, and secure to it a good share of health and vigor?

What have we to do for it, but to satisfy its cravings after food, to give it rest, and to amuse it with a variety of sights and sounds? And all this can be done by proxy. This is the nurse's vocation. Alas, when mothers so reason! With such views, it is to be feared that the young adventurer will have but a poor outfit for the voyage of life. If it were a mere animal, a pet dog, the mother could scarcely do less. If its soul came not with its body, but was infused afterwards, there might be some reason for such a course. But, even then, its physical frame, so intimately associated with mind and spirit, and exerting so much influence over them, ought not to be committed to irresponsible hands. The mother who bore it should ordinarily feed it, through the channels which both nature and affection have indicated; and her hands should have a large share in administering to its daily wants. The earliest sympathies of the child should be drawn around the mother. The ligature which nature has supplied between them should not be broken by the interposition of a

third person; who, though she be officially faithful, can never supply the mother's place, and towards whom every affection that flows from the child is so much moral power taken from its natural guardian. The rich may have less *care* in this respect; but the poor mother has a higher and more lasting recompense.

But the child, even at its birth, has a soul. It is a spark of immortality, at least; a spark that must grow to a flame, and burst forth in the responsible doings of after-life. From the first, it should be treated under this impression: "I am dealing with a young immortal. I am educating passions which are to influence the intellect and the moral powers. My smile, my frown, my 'yes' and my 'no,' are acting *directly* on the senses, but *indirectly* on the soul. If I yield to its importunate and angry cries, fearing that such violent ebullitions may injure its health, what am I doing, but augmenting a power of selfishness, a tyranny of the will, that, in after-life, may set my commands at defiance? If its capricious appetite refuse wholesome food, and

hanker after dainties, and I yield to its clamors, supplying it to its heart's content, what is this, but training a young sensualist, who, by and by, may be an habitual inmate of the drinking-saloon or the tavern? If I accustom it to endless variety in its toys and its amusements, allowing it to destroy the old and to call for new ones which, after a little satiety, it devotes to a similar destruction, how certainly am I laying the foundation for spendthrift habits, and a restless, dissatisfied temper!"

"Keep the child still, at any rate," is the motto with some. Please it, even if you have to surrender your wardrobe to rending, your furniture to scathing, and your fancy-work to demolition.

Some parents would rather hear, one would think, the crash of a looking-glass, than the uneasy moan of a child. "Keep it still; please it, at any rate," is their maxim. How cruel is such kindness! How selfishly cruel such policy! That child has a mind, a soul, which, by these means, you are training to a desperate

encounter with its conscience, its duty and its God. You are nursing the scorpion self-will, which, after it has flung its poison into others,— yea, not seldom into the very veins that nursed it,— will turn upon itself, and become, in the end, its own destroyer.

But it is thought that the child is too young to know the right from the wrong. It is taken for granted that the babe is, as yet, ignorant of its victories; and that what is done, in the way of indulgence, at so early a period, can have no influence on its subsequent life. Fatal mistake! The mother has been heard to declare, with a sorrowing tone, that she knew not why it was that her children were so selfish, so hard to control, so stubborn! She had done everything possible for their good,— had denied herself to gratify them. And it was all true. But she had miscalculated in her estimation of human nature. The children may have required a somewhat different treatment. They may have needed more control, more authority, even when authority could be felt only in the restraint

of muscle and in the limitation of sensual desire. Their will should have been bowed so early as any will, in opposition to the parent, was manifested. Alas! the whole training of some is to give force to the natural selfishness of the heart! In after-life,— further on in the voyage,— such training gives us the mean character, as the miser; the reckless character, as the spendthrift; the cruel character, as the extortioner; the ambitious character, who sacrifices everything to his own dominion, and the sensualist, who degrades his nature to the level of the brute.

Infant training is a subject on which the physician and the moralist should unite their influence, to convince negligent parents of their duty and responsibility. To have obedient children, moral children, healthy children, those who "shall praise us in the gates,"— especially to have children who shall fear God and keep his commandments,— we must begin to train them, by the divine help, from their very infancy. Be it ours to watch the opening mind, the developing dispositions, the first buddings of

selfishness, the earliest opposition of the will; and to plant our authority and influence — always kindly put forth — at the fountain-head of existence.

Our children have natures that need a corrective more prompt, more constant, more persevering, than we are apt to imagine. Yet, with all our efforts, even where such efforts are well directed and faithfully applied, we are to depend on a higher power to give success. He who gave us these little ones, who launched them on the stream of life by our side, who has them entirely in his control, He alone can give them the dispositions and tendencies which shall reward our toils, and realize our parental longings. Recognizing this dependence, let us consecrate our children to God, imploring his aid in their education, and seeking his grace to shape their character to piety and virtue!

The Christian will say, "These children are not mine; they are God's. I am but their earthly and responsible guardian; and now, O, for some angel to be sent to my child, like that

beauteous form which I see in yonder frail bark, to keep an eye of solicitude fixed on that young, unconscious voyager! O, for such an one, to be his constant guide through the dangers and perils which await him,—to allure him ever towards that light in yonder heavens, dimly shining over the great estuary which opens from time to immortality!"

CHAPTER II.

YOUTH.

THE panorama shifts, and we behold the second phase of human life. There is but a step, and that a very short one, between childhood and youth. How quickly is it taken! The mother is changing its garments every month, and yet nature almost outstrips her ingenuity. The infant habiliments are soon shredded off, and the youth asks for something more manly to cover his expanding form. But yesterday his little limbs were tottering in their first efforts at locomotion; now he is bounding like the roe. He is out of the lap and out of the arms; and his eye is growing bright, almost wild, with the stirring impulses of youthful ambition.

The mother begins to mingle somewhat of anxiety in her look of affection. The father lays his hand on the head of his boy, and says,

"Beware, my son, of the dangers which beset thy path."

Look now at the picture before us! The whole scene has expanded into broader proportions. The river is wider, swifter, yet how beautiful! The trees are loftier; and from the cultivated hills,— cultivated even to the river's brink, — rise in the back-ground stupendous mountains, burying their summits in the richly-tinted clouds. There is a warmth and animation in the atmosphere partaking of the glow of the tropics and the bracing vigor of the colder regions. Every feature of the landscape is alive and bright; as if nature, in her prime, or rather in her youth, were accommodating herself to the passionate ardor of the voyager, who, having seized the helm, is steering his own way amid a wilderness of sweets.

The angel, it would seem, has left the beautiful boy alone in the boat; but she is standing near, and watching him with apparent solicitude, as, reckless of danger, he ploughs his course onward, with his eye fixed on those cloud-capped

towers which fire his ambition. The shallop's prow is towards the point of danger, but has not actually reached it. There is a curve in the stream not far hence, where the current runs more impetuously, and seems to descend in foaming rapids; but, as yet, all this is prospective and hidden. The young aspirant stands up in all the glow of youthful anticipation, glancing his eye towards that air-built and cloudy dome, which appears like a dim vision of grandeur high up in the heavens.

SELF-CONFIDENCE.

The first thought that suggests itself is, the apparent self-reliance of the young voyager. The angel has left the boat; and on that youthful brow there sits an air of proud independence, as if confident that he can steer the frail vessel without the help of others.

How true a picture of human nature! One of the first efforts of boyhood is to stand alone, to cut loose from the moorings of authority and dependence, and to set up for himself. He

wants not the parental eye to watch over *him*, nor the parental hand to steady his footsteps. "Let me go alone; let me do the thing myself. Why cannot I take care of myself? Must I always be a child, a baby?"

Timidly and slowly does the parent yield to this reasoning, and to these importunities. His experience of life leads him to fear for his beloved child, when out of the reach of his eye and his admonition. The father knows well the rough and turbid character of the stream; the rocks and snags that underlie it, upon which the inexperienced voyager is in danger of making shipwreck; and he lets go the young hand reluctantly, and with many an anxious foreboding.

Self-reliance is a fine trait of character, when under due control; when modified by a proper sense of dependence upon divine aid, and by a proper appreciation of the difficulties and dangers to be encountered.

No parent — no judicious parent certainly — would wish to keep his son in leading-strings, when the time for self-government and energetic

action had arrived. Every boy must, sooner or later, be put upon his own resources. In the great struggle of life, he must take his chance, so to speak, with the rest. He should be made to feel that he has got to cut his own way through the world; and that personal energy — the resolution to *do*, the indomitable purpose to succeed — has no small influence in insuring success, and in placing an individual in a position of respectability.

But the tendency is to get rid prematurely of parental authority and supervision; to stand alone, and to move alone; to set up for himself at too early a period,— at a period when, more than at any other during life, the youth needs, for his safe guidance, the counsels of a parent or guardian. The misfortune, however, is that, in his self-confidence, he entertains no fears and perceives no dangers. He wants no angel in the boat with *him*. He had rather be guided by his *own* eye than turn for aid to the ever-watchful guardian that hovers near him. Presumptuous youth! Thou knowest not thy weakness, nor

the perils that surround thee. Alas! it may be thou wilt know them both too late for effectual succor!

How astonishing it is, and what a proof it is of the perversity of our nature, that a youth in his teens should deem *his* judgment equal, if not superior, to that of his parent; that he should wish to seize the helm, and direct his own course, when he has so little experience of the ways of life, and so little knowledge of human nature! Let him reflect a moment. Who is most likely to know the direction and the dangers of a certain voyage,— to understand the needful outfit,— he who has *made* that voyage, who has actually passed over the given course, or he who is just about to launch upon the treacherous flood? The parent has himself been young; has stood in the very position where his child now stands; has experienced the impulses and the aspirations, the hopes and the disappointments, of youth. He has, too, in sad remembrance, his own follies, the results of his own self-confidence; and he is prepared to point out the breakers

on which his inexperience had well-nigh driven him.

Besides, what motive, what possible motive, can the parent have for opposing his child's wishes, save that of disinterested love? It is in his heart to gratify his child in every reasonable desire; and it is only when, in the light of his own past experience, he sees him likely to make a wrong choice, to steer in a wrong direction, that he can bring himself to take a stand in opposition to his wishes. Think of this, dear youth, and defer to parental experience, rather than insist upon having thy own way, or to plunge forward merely to gratify thy own *too* obstinate will!

DOMESTIC TRAINING.

In the domestic training of children and youth, there has been a gradual but very perceptible change from the system which was in vogue fifty years ago. There is more lenity, more liberty, and more indulgence, on the part of the parent;

more insubordination, more self-confidence and more restlessness, on the part of the child.

Children are brought forward earlier now,—they get into clothes sooner. The swaddling-bands are off sooner; and the mimic boy tottles in pants, or struts in a tight jacket, at an age when, according to former usage, he would have worn a smock and been rocked in a cradle. We see little mimic men and women about our streets, led by nurses, who display them in their ambitious finery, for the admiration of some, and the disgust of others. If, in putting the young limbs under this constraint, there be any demurring on the part of the child, he is coaxed into compliance by the declaration, "Charley must be a little *man* now." And this Charley is trained to think himself a man, when as yet he has scarcely attained the stature of boyhood! What wonder, then, if the little pet should take it into his head that, being dressed like a man, and urged to emulate manhood, he should assume the characteristics and enjoy the privileges of that enviable state! "Why should I not," says

he, "do as men do, and go where I see men go?"

A child's reasoning is not worth much, I admit; but, if the proud or capricious or indulgent parent furnishes him the premises, the upstart boy cannot be very much blamed for reaching so natural a conclusion. Children are not only put earlier into fashionable gear, but they are more petted and indulged, than formerly. They *sit* at the table, whereas it was once the custom to *stand*. They talk, when once it would have been expected they should keep silence. They are not only admitted to the company of older persons, but their opinions are given, and their voices heard, sometimes even above their seniors. The old adage, that "a child should be seen and not heard," has long since become obsolete.

Much more deference is paid to a child's wishes than formerly. Many a reader will recollect that, less than fifty years ago, it was not a very common thing to hear a parent consult the child as to what he would like best. The parent,

knowing what he *ought* to like best, decided the matter for him.

It was not, "James, would you like such or such a garment?" but the garment — a suitable one, of course — was made for him, and James was glad to put it on and wear it. It was not said, "My dear, if this kind of food is not agreeable, you shall have something that you do like;" but the food was set before the child, and, if he were at all dainty, he might wait until his appetite returned. James was not consulted as to what *school* he would like to attend. One was selected, and the boy was told to go and do his best.

How different, in general, is the case now! The writer, inquiring of a friend what he intended to do with his son, was answered by the father as follows: "Augustus has a mind to mercantile life; and, as I hold that a boy's taste and preferences should be consulted in such matters, I think I shall put him in a store. I should like very much to give him a liberal education; but he dislikes the idea of going to col-

lege; so I suppose I shall have to make a merchant of him. — Is it not so, Gussey?" Gussey smiled assent, of course; and so Gussey had the ordering of his own destiny. Is it surprising that he turned out a vagabond?

Another father, whom I could name, said to John and William, even when they scarcely knew what a college meant, "My sons, you are to study hard, and get ready for college." This was understood, and no other thought entered the brain of John or William. They were accustomed to respect their father's opinion, and to bow to his authority. Cheerfully, therefore, did they go to work to fulfil his wishes. As might have been expected, they became useful characters, and bore down to posterity the name of their honored father, who chose so well for them when they were incapable of choosing for themselves.

Whether the change in domestic training which has gradually come about — so different from what used to be, so much more lenient, deferring so much more to the child's opinions

and wishes — is, on the whole, preferable to the more rigid discipline of a past age, is a question not, perhaps, easy to be answered. Undoubtedly the extremes are to be dreaded and avoided. But, if the writer were to express an opinion on the subject, it would be that we are more in danger, at the present time, from indulgence and premature culture, than we are from a too stern and rigid discipline.

Everything in the institutions of our country, in the progress of society, in the open field of adventure, tends to foster a daring and self-reliant course. If the writer may be excused for quoting from himself, he would say, in this connection, "*Independence* is a word which exerts a magical influence on every class of our citizens. It is interwoven with our national history, and is the watch-word under all circumstances of public peril. Is it to be wondered at, then, that the youth of our country should early imbibe a dislike to all kinds of restraint, even to that which both God and nature have imposed? And is it not true, that in this country, more than in any

other of equal standing, the young are prematurely released from the watchful care and wholesome authority of the parent? If these suggestions are well founded, then is there need of great vigilance on the part of parents, in order to counteract a tendency in our social and civil condition unfavorable to domestic government. The child, too, should remember that he may gain his liberty too soon for his own good. The price of this premature independence may be, not simply the sighs and sorrows of a parent's heart, but the disappointment of his own expectations, and even the ultimate ruin of his own soul. He may have the satisfaction of anticipating, by a few years, his release from parental restraint; but, like the unfledged bird, which has ventured too soon from the warm nest, and, finding its wings incompetent for a self-sustained flight, sinks neglected to the earth, or dies beneath the peltings of the storm, — so, ere long, may he bitterly repent his presumption, and sigh for a return to privileges

which, through his own folly, he has forever forfeited."*

The truth is that now-a-days our youth are impatient of boyhood. They long to be men as soon as possible. They would dress like men; and not unfrequently are they found copying the vices and vulgarities of men.

Such being the tendencies of things, it cannot be doubted that more should be done to repress such preposterous yearnings, and, if possible, convince the young aspirant that boys should be boys, knowing their place, and cheerfully submitting to parental guidance.

It is, moreover, for their *happiness*, as well as their usefulness, that they should abide their time. In what period of life is there crowded more real enjoyment? Never do I look upon the fine, healthy glow of youth, but I feel that I am contemplating the rarest specimen of physical happiness that God has presented to my view. I cannot but feel a conscious regret, that I knew not, when passing that halcyon period,

* Sermon, in the National Preacher, on Filial Duty.

as now I feel I ought to have known, the day, so to speak, of my visitation. Everything then that met the eye was beautiful. The choristers of the wood sang as never they have sung since. The air never went with such vital impulse to the lungs. The blood coursed gently or rushed wildly along its channels; and the nerves, as they were visited by the soothing influences of nature, made Æolian music for the soul. Food was relished, for the appetite was keen; it nourished, for the digestion was unimpaired. Sleep was a sweet oblivion, rarely broken in upon but by images of earthly beauty. Can the youth afford to forego this happy, buoyant period of existence? Should he wish it at an end? But how absurd, by warring against nature, to think of cheating time! How absurd for a youth to think that he is fit for the occupations and the strife of mature life, whilst yet his muscle has not hardened, nor the beard grown upon his chin! When the proper time comes, who will object to his putting out upon the tide, and taking his chance with others?

But self-reliance comes too soon, when a mere boy asks to be cut loose from the obligations of filial obedience and deference to the parent's judgment, that he may set up for himself on nothing but an imaginary capital; or, like the prodigal in Scripture, to go out laden with a portion which his inexperience and his vices are sure, ere long, to dissipate and extinguish.

In these remarks, let not the writer be understood as laying down rules for all cases, and all temperaments. Some of the young, naturally diffident, with too *little* self-reliance, leaning, perhaps, too much on parental support, may need an exactly reverse treatment. It may be necessary to lead them out of that shy background into which they are disposed to retreat, to encourage them to take the helm and steer the boat themselves. The views which have been presented bear, we apprehend, upon the age generally, and apply to a majority of those who may be termed "the RISING generation."

AMBITION.

To return to the picture. What is meant by that cloud-capped tower that seems to be hung on some airy nothing? The youth fixes his eye upon it, regardless of the dangers that intervene. His soul is full of lofty aspirations. He has heard of those who have steered for this temple, and reached it; and he dimly descries their names in golden letters on its massive columns. "Why may not my name be there also?" he exclaims. "Why may *I* not be associated with the great ones who have preceded me?"

Impelled by such feelings, he pushes forward on the stream, where a thousand equally anxious and ardent spirits are struggling in the same direction.

There is, indeed, something apparently noble, something that compels our admiration, in this struggle after fame; especially where it fires the youthful bosom, and nerves him to efforts and sacrifices which an ordinary or feebler impulse could not have called forth. A young Napoleon, for example, dreaming of greatness even in his

boyhood, shaping all his studies with a view to its acquirement, mounting every step that seemed to lead to it, rushing into every perilous position that looked in the direction of it,— how can we fail to be interested in such an one, or to sympathize in the daring flights of such a mind?

What he thus early coveted, he at length obtained. The shadow which he pursued, he at a very early period in life overtook. And did he not find it a shadow? On the highest pinnacle of the aërial temple he sat, and, looking down from this lofty, almost inapproachable height, he discovered the emptiness of this world's honors, and the uncertainty of all its hopes and promises.

Well, then, has the artist placed the temple of fame in the clouds, and given it a sort of shadowy outline, operating strongly on the imagination by its half-concealed though majestic proportions.

Fame is a powerful but bewildering incentive; ambition, a deep-seated but thoroughly selfish impulse. He who struggles in this race thinks

only, or principally, of *himself*. The glory of God is out of sight. The good of his fellow-men, if it do not fall in with his own aims,— especially if it stand in the way of their accomplishment,— will be disregarded, or coldly sacrificed.

Yet oftentimes, mingling with ambition and the desire for fame, will be traits of character which go far to make us think ambition a venial principle, and to extort, if not justify, the wish that he who is so deserving of elevation may succeed in the object of his desires.

There is, indeed, a fame that comes unsought, which follows rather than allures, where the individual aimed higher even than the cloud-capped temple, and found himself quite unexpectedly in the possession of honors of which he had never dreamed, and to which he had never aspired. The highest earthly immortality, we know, has been reached by many who never sought it, but who aimed only to serve God and their fellow-men.

But fame, as ordinarily understood, leads its

votaries into a rough, vexatious, and often fatal path.

"HENRY KIRKE WHITE."

That youthful poet and eminent scholar, Henry Kirke White, toiled hard for fame. His ambition was, that his name might not be forgotten; that among the claimants for earthly honors he might be recognized, and his genius acknowledged. It was this that made him mournfully inquire,

"Fifty years hence, and who will hear of Henry?"

Under this impulse, he sacrificed health, and even life. He trimmed the midnight lamp with a hand tremulous and bony, and scanned the classic page with an eye almost drowsy in death. Having received, according to his aims, the highest honors of the university, he exclaimed, respecting these laurels, which he had so hardly won, and which, as the sequel proved, he was so soon to relinquish,

"What are ye now,
But thorns about my bleeding brow?"

In sacrificing health to fame, however, Henry Kirke White saw his error in time to reach that higher, purer motive, which combines with feelings of regret and sorrow the hopes and aspirations of the Christian.

"HENRY MARTYN."

Another Henry toiled in the same path of greatness, but with an eye more steadily fixed on a higher prize. Martyn, the sainted missionary, stood relatively in the grade of university honors where Kirke White had stood. But a higher impulse than earthly ambition had taken possession of him. "I hear," said he, "the voice of suffering humanity calling from the dark places of the earth for relief. What but the gospel can afford it? I hear, at the same time, the voice of my risen Saviour, saying, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature!' Shall I stay at home, and enjoy the learned leisure of a fellowship? Shall I compose eloquent sermons, and preach them in crowded cathedrals? Or, shall I lay my honors

at the feet of Jesus, and consecrate my being to the enlightenment of pagan nations ? "

The question was soon settled ; and Martyn's name and memory are embalmed in the hearts of thousands, turned " from darkness to light " by the force of his example, and the labors of his short but consecrated life.

THE CONTRAST.

Napoleon and Henry Martyn ! Behold in one the soldier of ambition, and in the other the soldier of the cross ! The one sacrifices myriads to obtain imperial honors ; the other sacrifices his own life to place the crown immortal upon ransomed pagans. Napoleon lives in the praises of his countrymen, in the glory of France, in the pleasing consciousness of his own power. These are his aliment, as they were his impulse. When these are gone, all is gone. But Martyn's life is found in God, and in the service of God ; sources which never can fail, a fountain of felicity which never can run dry.

Who would not prefer to follow the footsteps

of the youthful missionary over burning plains, and through benighted cities, with the lamp of life and salvation in his hand, than to mingle in the stormy career of the conqueror, with the wheels of his chariot dripping in gore, and his ears saluted alternately with the praises and the maledictions of mankind?

THE TRUE AMBITION.

There is a loftier structure, let me say to the youthful aspirant embarking on the rough waters of strife, than the one faintly imaged in yonder clouds. There is a temple of God, adorned with moral beauty and grandeur, such as pearls and gems and rainbow tints can but faintly symbolize. Let thy ambition fix on this bright abode! Be all thy energies enlisted in reaching it! There is a field of enterprise, too, here below, where the highest intellect may find scope, and the purest benevolence be exercised. It is found in turning men to righteousness. They who labor successfully in this field shall not only have a calm satisfaction in the work,

but shall shine at last "as the stars for ever and ever."

Withdraw thy eye, then, from that cloud-capped tower; or, rather, lift it far higher, to the New Jerusalem, clothed in the sunlight of heaven, with its white-robed inhabitants, its scenery of undying loveliness; — rise to this altitude of glory, and say,

"The golden palace of my God
Towering above the clouds I see;
Beyond, the cherubs' bright abode,
Higher than angels' thoughts can be.
How can I in those courts appear
Without a wedding garment on?
Conduct me, thou Life-giver, there;
Conduct me to thy glorious throne,
And clothe me with thy robes of light,
And lead me through sin's darksome night,
My Saviour and my God!"

CHAPTER III.

PERILS OF YOUTH.

One thing strikes the beholder, as he gazes on the principal figure, with eye intent on the shadowy dome, namely, an apparent disregard of the perils to which he is exposed in so frail a bark, and on a stream so rough and rock-indented. The light shallop rushes on with ever-accelerating speed, the waters growing more dark and turbid, and the skies in the distance putting on portentous shapes and colors.

In this the artist has depicted the recklessness of youth, unapprized of what is before him; or, if not entirely ignorant, at least strong in his self-reliance, confident that he will be able to sustain any shock which may be made upon him.

How true a picture is this of the young voyager on the actual stream of life! With what a bold and self-confident hand he seizes

the helm, and takes his chance on the perilous flood!

Whilst we would not wish to cast a single shadow over the bright prospect which a sanguine and youthful imagination may have sketched, nor conclude that, because many have made shipwreck, all that come after them will inevitably do the same, still must we be allowed to suggest, as the artist himself has done, that it would be well for this inexperienced navigator to observe the perils which are before him, and so to direct his course as, if possible, to avoid them.

The two great impulses by which young men are ordinarily swayed, are the love of pleasure and the love of gain. The latter, with *young* men, resolves itself into the former, as means to an end; but the *former* — the love of pleasure, the mere selfish desire of enjoyment — is the more powerful, more constantly operative, and almost universally prevalent. "Who will show us any good?" is the earliest, the most continued, and the most clamorous inquiry.

THE PLEASURIST AND IDLER.

That fairy-like vessel, with the winged hours sculptured on its sides, gliding between banks of flowers, and under skies of Italian softness, is but an emblematical representation of the dreamy idleness and self-indulgence which characterize too many just entering upon manhood.

Easy enough it is to float upon the tide of circumstances, to dream of greatness without making any efforts to attain to it; to indulge in revery and sloth; to lie down in the boat and go to sleep, not caring what may happen to it, or whither it may drive.

Some young men are just of this character, *pleasurists*, *idlers*. They are the sons ordinarily of rich men. Some defect, far back in their education, has occurred. Something went wrong at the beginning of the voyage, and has gone wrong ever since. How much, latterly, a knowledge of their father's wealth has had to do in forming their character to this supine and indolent type, we cannot say; but doubtless it has exerted its influence. But there they are,

the living drones in a world where every energy should be tasked, and every moment employed.

They live on fare which their fathers' hands, and not *theirs*, have earned; and sleep on beds which their fathers' sweat and toil have purchased. They go in and out, choosing their own hours, regardless of the order established in the family; and with as independent a swagger as if the whole premises were theirs, and all its conveniences were arranged for their special benefit. They have no particular respect for their parents; and no affection, or next to none, for any member of the household. Every thought of theirs seems to be concentrated upon themselves. The care that presses heaviest is, how they shall get rid of time, or what new variety of pleasure they shall pursue.

Their dress is scrupulously fashionable; but who pays the tailor's bill? Their manners, partaking of a haughty but languidly sensual air, leave one in doubt whether in their constitution there be more of the animal called the sloth or of the bird known as the peacock

Miserable excrescences these, on the face of society! How little hope is there that they will ever be reclaimed to industry, to virtue, to usefulness!

Everybody seems to despise them; that is, everybody whose opinion is worth quoting. "What is the fellow about?" says one; "he seems to know nothing, to do nothing, to *be* nothing." "Why is he not brought up to some useful occupation? what can his father intend to make of him?" The rough artisan brushes by him with a scornful glance, wondering why *he* must labor for his bread, and this walking nonentity, this statue of silk and broadcloth, parade the streets in idleness!

All are at work,—the merchant, the mechanic, the professional man, all are at it, toiling for an honest livelihood, contributing their portion to the healthful stock of labor,—whilst this idler saunters about and looks on, as if he had neither part nor lot in the matter.

But what shall be done, in his case? The only answer we can think of, after expostulation

and counsel have been tried in vain, is to cut off his supplies. Give him to understand that he is, at least, to earn his own clothing. In fact, according to the Bible, he ought to earn his food, as well as his clothing; "for he that will not work," says that high authority, "shall not eat." The community has no room for such idlers.

Let every young man do something; something that will tend to his own support, or to the general weal. Be he ever so rich in prospect, he is never rich enough to be an idler. If he were an English lord, with an inheritance of millions, he should cultivate habits of industry; he should do something to develop his own energies, and strive also to benefit his fellow-men.

Herein, I think, the artist, whose beautiful picture is suggestive of these remarks, has failed; or, rather, I should say, has not been able to include in the second picture certain moral dangers to which the young are especially exposed. He presents the youth to us as absorbed wholly in the idea of *fame*. But, where one

thinks of fame, there are thousands who care only for pleasure and relaxation.

TEMPTATIONS TO VICE.

Indolence we have described as the besetting sin of some. The reader may not, perhaps, recognize the portrait which we have drawn as a likeness of himself. He may not have become such a useless drone. Nevertheless, he may find that his greatest obstruction in the path of improvement is a habit of indolence. What is difficult, what will cost labor, what will task his utmost efforts, he may not love to encounter. And yet, all the good, and the wise, and the successful, have thus toiled, in order to reach the elevation on which they stand.

But many are vicious who cannot be called idlers. They plead for sensual indulgence, under the idea of necessary relaxation from severe toil. "We must play, as well as work," say they; "we cannot be always at it."

Who would deny the reasonableness of this plea? And, if the relaxation were sought in

things right and innocent, who would object? Nature herself demands that amusement and relaxation should be intermingled with labor. But, to resort to vicious haunts, to mix with the idle and the dissolute, and call such pleasures needful relaxation, is to abuse both our health and our reason.

How many moral dangers beset the young man's way! Along the stream down which he carelessly glides, and on either bank of it, is many a cove or inlet, into which the young voyager is invited, where he may moor his bark, indulge a drowsy hour, and take his fill of pleasure. Siren voices are heard, so alluring, so enchanting, that he cannot resist the temptation to pause and listen to their melody. The beauties of Eden could scarcely have been more tempting in appearance than are some of the bowers of pleasure into which he is drawn. But, like that Eden, there is concealed there a dark, designing spirit, who, in proffering the sweets, whispers, "Ye shall not surely die."

SALOONS.

Our cities are full of amusements addressed to the passions and sinful propensities of the young. A gorgeous scene will be got up, in order to strike the eye, or to awaken the curiosity. Artistic decorations the most beautiful will solicit the attention. The daughters of music will be enlisted, and strains of the sweetest melody will be made to float out from the interior of splendidly furnished apartments. All this, attracting the eye and saluting the ear, will seem to say, "Come in and share in the gayety and gladness of the scene." O, how many out-signals are hung around the porches of vice, intended to strike the eye of the young man, and to allure his feet into the haunts of infamy and of death!

"What do these lights mean?" said an ingenuous youth to his parent, as they came unexpectedly upon a brilliant display of lamps and gaslight. The father heaved a sigh, thinking that possibly his own dear son might one day know, from sad experience, what they meant. "They

mean, my dear boy, that within that open door, where you see young men passing in and out, are scenes of idleness and dissipation, such as blast the character, undermine the health, and endanger the soul. Conviviality is *there* the great attraction. *There* the inebriating cup is mixed, and presented under its most seductive forms. Drinking, and smoking, and even gambling, are practised. Rapidly in this school of vice are young men graduated, until, after a short career, they are found outcasts from all decent society; and they are very apt to end their days as vagabonds in the streets, or as felons in the cells of a prison. Steer clear of those gorgeous lights! Behind them are the rocks and the quicksands on which many an unsuspecting youth has been stranded. They are the temples of Bacchus, where mirth and wine are sought and enjoyed, but where character is sacrificed, and all virtuous sentiment extinguished. He who enters into them *may* think that he treads on enchanted ground; but the spell-bound victim must pay for his fascination

in regrets that are unavailing, and in a remorse like that of the undying worm."

Other dangers lie along the stream of life threatening the frail vessel, and exposing the young voyager to moral shipwreck.

ANIMAL PASSIONS.

His animal passions, developing in the now matured body with a force that seems almost irresistible, tempt the youth sometimes to play the brute, and lose sight of the rational and immortal nature.

Secret vice is sometimes resorted to, and lays the foundation for more open and flagitious wickedness, whilst it leads directly to imbecility of body and of mind. How many have made shipwreck here! To quote the language of one, whose long experience and high standing in the medical profession authorizes him to speak with emphasis on this subject,—"The deleterious, the sometimes appalling consequences of this vice, upon the health, the constitution, the mind itself, are some of the common matters of medical ob-

servation. The victims of it should know what these consequences are; for to be acquainted with the tremendous evils it entails may assist them in the work of resistance." "The bodily powers become completely prostrated; the memory and the whole mind partake in the ruin, and idiocy or insanity in their most intractable forms close the train of evils." *

Of this class of vices, who does not know that indulgence strengthens desire; and that one step in this fearful direction is apt to be succeeded by another, until that threshold is reached from which, as from the house of the dead, there seems to be almost no hope of return! This whirlpool lies hard by the gorgeous saloon and the brilliantly lighted theatre. These latter are as the rapids tending to THAT, as the awful cataract.

In the voyage of life, who could undertake to say how many of the young have been lost in one or the other of these passages to death? If their

* Dr. Ware on the "Relation of the Sexes."

history, gathered from theatres, saloons and brothels, could be presented, in all its moral deformity, with all the premature and remorseful deaths, all the broken hearts of parents, and the deep mortification of relatives and friends, it would be such a revelation of vice and its fearful penalties as would startle, and even horrify, the community.

But these things are not known. A veil is thrown over these dark porticoes of ruin. The cry of the lost is smothered, lest it should alarm those who are in the same downward course. One by one, the bloated corpses are carried out, and with great secrecy consigned to ignoble graves.

What multitudes are at this moment on this dark flood, or tending towards it,— multitudes of young men, who have talents that might adorn their country's annals, and energies which, if properly developed and directed, might place them high in the esteem of their fellow-men; but who, alas! like Esau, are bartering and

sacrificing this noble birth-right for what is no better than "a mess of pottage"!

If any such shall chance to read these pages, let me say to thee that life is too solemn a trust to be thus sacrificed to sensual and selfish pursuits. Be a man, then, and despise these grovelling pleasures! Have decision, and say to the tempter, coming in what guise he may, "No, I am pledged to a virtuous life. I will not even touch the fatal cup, nor take one step towards the dark pathway of vice. I will walk with the wise; I will not be a companion of fools." Above all, conscious of thy own weakness to resist temptation, ask help of God, trust in the protection of God; for be assured that, if "in all our ways we acknowledge him, he will direct our paths."

INNOCENT PLEASURES.

Proscribing, as in duty bound, those pleasures which allure only to deceive and to destroy, such as are found in indolence, intemperance, and sensual indulgence, let me not be understood as

objecting to those which are innocent and healthful.

The *manly sports* which develop the muscles, — naturally so much relished and practised by the young, — which promote a social rivalry, innocent, though exciting, are open to all, and may be enjoyed by all.

Society, as where the sexes meet and mingle under such restraint as modesty would impose, and with such motives as virtue would sanction, — the evening party, the excursion, the domiciliary visit, — has in it not only a safe but a salutary enjoyment.

Institutions of a *literary* or *artistical character*, as libraries and cabinets of natural curiosities, may also be resorted to for amusement and relaxation, as well as for instruction.

Other sources of pleasant recreation, such as music and painting, the study of natural history, tours in foreign countries or in one's own country, each or all, may be more or less a means of pleasurable relaxation, according to the taste, the

pecuniary ability, and the opportunities which Providence may have furnished.

If young men have low and beastly propensities, they will not be very likely to appreciate these more refined sources of enjoyment. Some will be brutes, in spite of all you can do for them. "Like brutes they live, like brutes they die."

But the majority of young men are not such; they need not be such. And our aim is not only to call their attention to the dangers which everywhere surround them, and so put them upon their guard, but also to persuade them to choose those purer pleasures which improve the mind, preserve the health, and which leave no sting behind.

If such pleasures be resorted to, and such a course as we have recommended be pursued, we may confidently predict that the stream of life will flow smoothly, and that a virtuous youth will be merged into a dignified and useful manhood. The body will expand into strong and symmetrical proportions; the mind will be furnished with well-digested knowledge, and the

heart will be kept in a great measure from the dark and polluting images of vice.

Such a course may not only lead to respectability and influence, but may even be crowned by the higher blessings of true piety. Morality, we know, is not religion; yet not seldom is it the proximate road to it. It leads into its neighborhood. It places one in closer connection with its institutions, and gives promise that a candid attention, at least, will be given to its claims.

The stream of time ever sets in the direction of eternity. The light shallop which floats upon it, and in which so precious a cargo is embarked, should point its prow in the direction of that harbor where no storms or tempests can ever come. Then, with this "haven of rest" in view, should a sudden blast from the wings of death fall upon thee, that kind angel who started with thee at the outset of the voyage will appear, and furnish thee with a safe escort over the dark and dismal flood.

Take with thee, on thy brief voyage, young adventurer, the anchor which is "sure and stead-

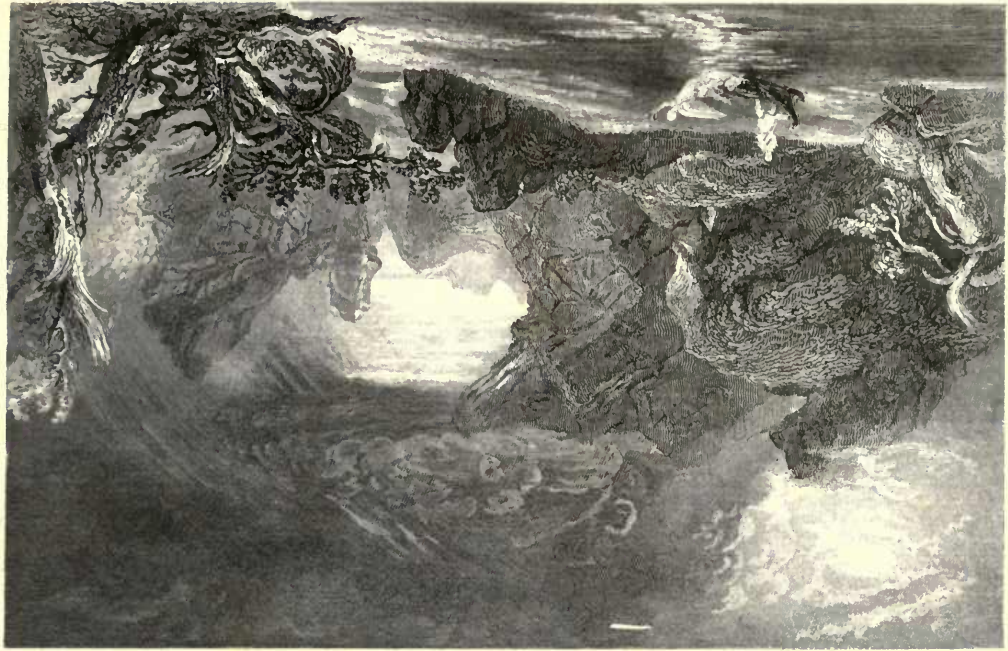
fast;" the chart which maps out the dangers; the proffered pilot, who promises to guide by his counsel all such as commit themselves to his care; and then, if thy voyage be ended ere manhood is attained, it will leave no regrets for its early termination, whilst before thee will be the prospect of a glorious immortality.

CHAPTER IV.

MANHOOD.

As from childhood to youth, so from youth to manhood, the step is quickly taken. But it is sailing, if we may so say, out of smooth into troubled waters. This the artist, in his third pictorial representation, has given us to understand.

To quote his own language, as descriptive of the scene,—"Storm and cloud enshroud a rugged and dreary landscape. Bare impending precipices rise in the lurid light. The swollen stream rushes furiously down a dark ravine, whirling and foaming in its dark career, and speeding towards the ocean, which is dimly seen through the mist and falling rain. The boat is there plunging amid the turbulent waters. The voyager is now a man of middle age. The helm of the boat is gone, and he looks imploringly



towards heaven, as if heaven's aid alone could save him from the perils that surround him. The guardian spirit calmly sits in the clouds, watching with an air of solicitude the affrighted voyager. Demon forms are hovering in the air.

"Trouble is characteristic of the period of manhood. In childhood there is no cankering care, in youth no despairing thought. It is only when experience has taught us the realities of the world that we lift from our eyes the golden veil of early life, that we find deep and abiding sorrow. And, in the picture, the gloomy, eclipse-like tone, the conflicting elements, the trees riven by the tempest, are the allegory; and the ocean, dimly seen, figures the end of life to which the voyager is now approaching. The demon forms are suicide, intemperance and murder, which are the temptations that beset men in their direst troubles. The upward and imploring look of the voyager shows his dependence on a superior power, and that faith saves him from a destruction which seems inevitable."

This representation, it must be confessed, wears an aspect of gloom and despondency. The shades are quite as dark as the reality will justify. That manhood is thus, in many instances, characterized by care, anxiety, peril and temptation, is readily admitted. Perhaps, in a majority of cases, the picture gives but a just reflection of the struggles and dangers which ordinarily are to be encountered. But there *are* cases, we hope not a few, where a richer sunlight might have been shed upon the scene; a calmer surface might have been exhibited, and a sky not so darkened and deformed by those hideous figures have been made to hang over it. Is not manhood sometimes marked even by an uninterrupted flow of prosperity?

But the artist, after all, has taken life as it *is*, as in most cases it is realized; wherein the struggle and the effort are attended with uncertainty, and cares and apprehensions outweigh the hours of comparative ease and tranquillity.

That the stream roughens in middle life no one can deny; that the skies are, at times,

lowering, even fearfully portentous, all must admit; that difficulties are to be met and overcome, that dangers are to be encountered, requiring skill and forethought, in order to their avoidance, is clear to all who have passed into the activities and responsibilities of manhood.

EARLY MANHOOD.

Who can forget that hour when the idea first took possession of him, "I am a *man*. I am no more a boy. I must now think for myself, and act for myself, and must take upon me the responsibility which such thought and action involve. Life is before me, not as a lake with mirror-like surface, calm and bright, reflecting only pictured clouds and overshadowing verdure, where I may listlessly float, and please myself with the mystic sounds which echo along its shores. No! but as a turbid and swollen tide, on which I have launched, with whirlpools and eddies and rapids all around me, requiring a vigilant eye, a strong arm, and a cool judgment, in order to steer my course safely and prosperously."

Who can forget when care and anxiety began to press upon the heart, and the question as to ultimate success in life would too often recur, with no possibility of a satisfactory answer?

Nor is manhood, in general, a *solitary* struggle, having respect only to the happiness of a single bosom, or to the required supplies of a single individual. Were this the case, the trials would be less painful, whilst the motives to exertion would be far less influential. Providence has so ordered it — wisely, no doubt — that manhood should shoulder the responsibilities of the domestic state, should live and labor and struggle for the good of those who naturally look to him for support and comfort. This gives life its charm, as well as its motive. It rouses and sustains energies which otherwise had never been put forth, and makes success doubly grateful, as being shared by a circle of endeared and dependent relatives.

Shall we not sympathize in the struggles of manhood? It is the period when human life is at its zenith; when the stoutest hearts are beat-

ing, the sturdiest arms are bared, and the noblest achievements are projected and accomplished. Our streets are filled with manhood. So are our work-shops and our stores. In every business scene, every scene where strength of muscle and strength of mind are required, where the anvil is to be smitten or the anchor to be weighed, where the perplexities of trade are to be solved or the professional duty discharged, there is manhood, putting forth its might in a thousand useful occupations.

The young are in their training places and the old are in their easy-chairs, or resting by the way-side. But mark that tide of mortals that sets along the busy street! You will say, in view of it, that life is sustained in all its strength — in all its great interests — by *manhood.* Let us sympathize with it. Let us encourage it. Let us cheer it on in the great and arduous struggle. Let us also survey its trials, its temptations, its perils, and inquire what are the best means of sustaining and guiding its energies to a successful issue.

CHOICE OF BUSINESS.

A very important inquiry in the business of life, which every man should institute, is, whether his occupation, present or prospective, be *lawful and honorable.*

Something, of course, must be done for a livelihood. Some business or profession must be selected and prosecuted, in order to support a family, or to reach a condition of competency or affluence. The choice is sometimes involuntary; but more generally the individual is led to it by his own taste and preference, or by its supposed availableness in accumulating wealth. In whatever way it may have been chosen, a question of practical morality ought to be settled respecting it, namely, whether it be *lawful* and *honorable.*

There are certain occupations so palpably bad, so visibly wrong and of wrong tendency, that no man who covets peace of conscience, or who has a regard for his reputation, would be found engaged therein.

There are some kinds of business, which, by common consent of all the good, are regarded as

unlawful, and therefore dishonorable. No wealth which could be accumulated, though vast as that of Crœsus, could varnish a character into respectability who should at this day be engaged in the slave-trade.

The same may be said, to a considerable extent, of wealth accumulated in the manufacture or sale of ardent spirits. The evils are so great, moral, physical, social, economical,— every way so great,— they are so palpable, so direct, they fall in such disgusting notoriety under our every-day observation, that a business which thrives by these woes and vices, by such infamy, degradation and ruin, is, if we may make a comparison between two such odious occupations, of worse tendency even than the slave-trade. No wealth that comes from such a source, it seems to me, can have on it anything but the signature of God's deep displeasure. No man should select such an occupation; or, finding himself in it, no man should continue therein any longer than it will take him to wind up his affairs, and, at any sacrifice, betake himself to something that is law-

ful and honorable. He should not leave upon his posterity the stigma that their bread was taken from the mouths of orphans, rendered such by a father's cold-hearted avarice, or that their grandeur was purchased by the death-groans of the impoverished and the inebriate.

Other occupations might be named, if not so palpably wrong, yet of wrong tendency, involving a sacrifice of moral principle bordering on dishonesty, pandering to vice, or profaning the Sabbath, all of which should be avoided, whatever may be the gains, or whatever apology for their continuance necessity even might bring forward.

A business, of whatever kind, which weakens moral principle, which must be driven at the expense of conscience, or to the injury of others,—such a business should not be chosen, or, having been chosen, should, as soon as possible, be abandoned.

The stream of life is rough enough, at best; the trials of the spirit are hard enough to bear, even when experienced in the prosecution of a

calling that is honorable; but rougher still will be the tide with him who, in defiance of conscience, and under the withering scorn and pity and contempt of the humane and virtuous, undertakes to make his bread out of the sorrows of others, or to enrich himself by rendering others poor and degraded. Such an one, look which way he will, must see the evidences of his infamy in the wretchedness of those whom his avarice has beggared, and in the ostracism, so to speak, by which he silently passes out of the circle of the virtuous and the good.

"That man is a distiller." "He is a rum-seller." "He is a gambler." Are not these terms now-a-days daggers to any man's reputation? Who can maintain his manhood whilst they are hurled at him? Who can look a virtuous community in the face with such epithets scornfully cast in his teeth?

It is of vast importance, therefore, to have a calling which may be prosecuted with a clear conscience, and with the approbation of the

good; a calling whose success shall administer to the general weal.

HIGH AIMS.

Having selected a lawful occupation, the aim should be to make the most of it, to excel in it, to make it subsidiary to all the good of which it is capable. "Every man," said one, "owes something to his own profession." He should strive to make it more honorable by his having been in it. He should oblige men to say "that such a business has really become of vast importance in the hands of such a man." If he is a shoe-black, he should try to put *his* polish ahead of all the rest of the world. If he is a mechanic, his work should come out as perfect as it is possible to make it. His name and reputation should be stamped in the perfection of his wares. Is he a merchant? No man's industry should be greater, no man's honor brighter, than *his*. His intelligence should keep pace with the times; and his increasing riches, placing him at length among the princes of the land, should be

liberally applied in the augmentation of human happiness, the promotion of the arts, and the spread of the gospel.

The professional man, teacher, lawyer, physician, or minister, owes something respectively to his profession. It should be the better for his having been *in* it. It should command more respect in consequence of his industry, his talents, and his success. He must strive to *fill* it. His reputation must reflect back upon it, so that it may be said by those who come after him that the profession was greatly indebted to him for efforts which he put forth while living, and for works which have followed him after death. Whatever is done in one's calling should be *well* done, done in the best manner; that is, as perfectly as the individual can do it, according to his ability. With such aims, few will fail in the occupation or profession which he may have chosen.

COMPETITORS.

In this stirring strife of men, there is much rivalry. There are many competitors who eye

each other with an interest which common sympathies and pursuits necessarily beget. Side by side is the struggle going on, and each is vying with all the rest in a contest of skill, where success is doubtful, and where failure is not infrequent. How hard, under these circumstances, to maintain always right feelings towards those who are our rivals in trade, in the arts or in professional life! And yet the world is wide enough for all. The stream is broad enough for each one to steer his own vessel without jostling against that of his neighbor, or coming so near even as to take the wind out of his sails.

In this wide field of business competition, every one should be allowed free scope and full liberty to outrun all the rest, provided it be done honestly and honorably. No man should be blamed for doing his best, if, in so doing, he take no undue advantage of his neighbor, or use no unlawful expedients to advance his own interests.

Comparisons will necessarily be made as to the skill, or industry, or tact, or workmanship, of

those who belong to the same craft; and as to the texture or value of goods sold by those of the same trade; and as to the learning, eloquence or industry, of men pursuing similar professions. The public, being interested in all this matter, will, of course, take the liberty of making such comparisons, and of choosing according to their own judgment, and with a view to their own interests, those to serve them who will serve them the best or the cheapest.

Now, as all cannot stand *first*,—as, in the nature of things, and according to a law which Providence has fixed, some must rise in skill, tact, talent and workmanship, above others,—it is of vast importance to cultivate a right spirit in this necessary and endless competition, involving every grade of excellence, every variety of talent, and every measure of success. The prosperous should not become proud, nor should the unfortunate be envious or desponding. It should be the aim of all to learn that almost impossible lesson, of "looking every man not simply on the things of himself, but on those of another;" that is, of

wishing well to his neighbor, in all his interests, even when one's own affairs may not be in the most prosperous condition. This is a hard lesson, we admit, in a world where selfishness is naturally so strong, and its provocations so powerful and numerous. But it is a point of practical benevolence at which all should aim.

Often do we hear it said that "competition is a good thing." And so it is: good in many respects; good often for those who strive in the race, developing skill and energy which otherwise, perhaps, would have been latent or unemployed; good for the public, who reap thus a benefit which isolated efforts could not, or would not, afford; good as to the general weal, multiplying inventions and facilities which add to the comfort and convenience of life. But not always is it good in its effect upon the competitor. Malice, envy and detraction, are too apt to be engendered in this struggle for preëminence. Artifices not the most honorable will sometimes be resorted to, in order to get an advantage of one's neighbor, to supplant him in the patronage which he has

obtained, or to wrest from him the honors which a life of labor and mental toil should have secured to him. Endless are the legal conflicts which such conduct has led to; and inveterate is the hate which such selfish aims and efforts have produced. Such things roughen and render turbid the stream of life, making it a boisterous passage-way to a dark and self-reproachful end.

What if my neighbor makes a better piece of mechanism than I can make, or weaves a finer fabric, or builds a swifter steamer or sail-vessel,— should I regret it? Should I envy him an advantage which talent, skill or industry, has given him? Considering the general good, I ought even to be glad at his success. And suppose that, by original genius, or intense application, one should rise above me in a capacity to serve the public as a teacher, a lawyer, a physician, or a minister,— elevating others as he elevates himself, serving his generation whilst reaping for himself a harvest of fame or of money,— should I look darkly on his rising influence? Much less should I seek to dim his reputation by detraction

or reproachful insinuations? His success should only stimulate me to a noble competition in the race of honor, industry and benevolence.

"Live and let live," is an old and homely maxim. But there is a great deal of meaning in it. All cannot be *first*. There must be kings and queens, peers and nobles, in all professions and pursuits. Some are such by nature, and some by effort and by circumstances. The highest standard is open to all, though reached only by a few. All have their chance; and none should complain that a grade in life or a measure of success is assigned him far below his merits, whilst others have been unduly exalted to honor and to opulence. These things will be so; and Providence has much to do in their ordering. In the jostlings of life, some will seem to get uppermost who should have occupied a medium or perhaps the lowest position; whilst others will, for a time, be depressed, whose talents or virtues should have given them a more prominent station. But time and experience are very apt to rectify this temporary derangement

of things. In the end, and after a time, each one ordinarily reaches the level which, by a just appreciation of his talents and character, would naturally have been assigned to him. A spurious reputation will, after a time, run itself out. All the puffing and bolstering which can be applied to sustain it will not succeed. It may rise to a temporary notoriety, but it will go out like a rocket, and sometimes almost as suddenly; whilst real worth, if for a time obscure or unappreciated, will steal gradually upon the notice, and in the end fix itself firmly in the esteem of all the good and the virtuous.

To make the voyage of life pleasant, we must cultivate that benevolence which rejoices in the success of others, even though that success should cast a shadow upon our own prosperity. Such is the gospel rule. Is it an impossible reach of moral virtue? Happy the bosom of him who can say, "I desire the success of a rival. In his prosperity I can rejoice, and in his misfortunes I can feel for him a generous sympathy."

Many of the rough passages of life in early

manhood are from the conflicts of selfishness, or from unkind suspicions among rivals. But adopt the principle recommended; act up to the precept of "doing unto others as ye would that they should do unto you," carry this out fully into practical life, and it would spread over society the aspect of Paradise. It would calm the turbulent waters of strife, and make the passage over them more beauteous than the triumphal regatta of Egypt's far-famed queen, with her sails swelled by aromatic airs, and her golden barge reflected in the calm waters of the Nile.

HELP AND SYMPATHY.

"No man liveth to himself," is one of the maxims of Christianity. This implies a sympathy with others, and a disposition to lend a helping hand in their troubles and afflictions.

In this eventful voyage on which we are all embarked, there are vicissitudes as numerous as are found amid the conflicting winds and tides and currents of the ocean. Some will have a favoring gale at the same time that others are

becalmed; and one will feel the storm from which another will be sheltered. Now you will discover one with sails all bent, and moving by prosperous winds directly to the port of destination. Richly freighted, and without an accident, he will enter the harbor. Again you will see nothing but storms, and disasters, and shipwreck.

So is it in this great and perilous voyage of life. Hence the prosperous should be ready to sympathize with and aid the unfortunate.

How strange it would seem, if, when a signal of distress were seen flying, or the booming gun, giving token of disaster and shipwreck, were heard over the stormy deep, the tight and well-appointed ship ploughing the waves hard by should give no heed to such signals! How unfeeling, how inhuman even, would this be considered! It is expected, in such circumstances, that help will promptly be rendered. And should it be otherwise when the signals of distress are on the land, instead of the sea? What renders the obligation greater to aid the unfortunate in the one case, rather than in the

other? True it is, that, on the ocean, life is often in more imminent peril, and the aid which is extended may save from an immediate and awful destruction. In this respect it is admitted that the relief seems more imperatively demanded. But how often, in the vicissitudes of life, over which man has no control, comes there a wave of misfortune, that extinguishes the hopes of years, and sweeps away entirely the means of support on which a circle of cherished hearts were wont to depend! Shall no generous mind be found to sympathize, no ready hand be extended to aid, no effort be made to cheer and encourage the depressed and care-stricken man? Too often, alas! in such circumstances, do the prosperous sail by, without casting even an eye of pity on the shipwrecked sufferer.

At such a time, one word of kindness, one look of sympathy, and especially, where it can be bestowed, the substantial help and succor so much needed, would be worth a thousand demonstrations of interest in ordinary or prosperous circumstances. Pass not, then, by, like the

priest in Scripture, with cold, averted eye; nor like the Levite, only giving a look of pity and a significant shake of the head; but, like the good Samaritan, go and bind up his wounds, and provide for his temporary sustenance, and start him afresh on his journey. What has befallen *him* may ere long befall thee. The storm that has overtaken and prostrated him may not have been of sufficient breadth to take in thy fair domain; but the time *may* come when the green bay-tree of thy own prosperity may bow before the tempest, and the sympathy which thou art now extending to others be required and repaid under circumstances quite as disastrous and hopeless.

Beautiful is the sight when the prosperous are seen aiding the unfortunate! It is so in unison with that religion which casts its sheltering arms around the despairing soul; which gives not only to the unfortunate, but to the unworthy; which delights to seek and to save the lost,—that religion whose spirit was embodied and set forth in the life and example of Him who sought not his own

glory, lived not for his own ease, labored not for his own advancement, but who went about doing good, sympathizing with the sufferer, and claiming as his beneficiaries the outcast and the unfortunate. From his lips it was that the precept fell, "as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them;" and, acting in the spirit of this precept, he set an example of benevolence and self-sacrifice which none can equal, but which all are bound to admire and to emulate.

CHAPTER V.

TRIALS — HOW TO BE MET.

THE sympathy of others is needful, and their help in adversity timely; but the less reliance that is placed thereon, the better. Manhood, in its struggles with adversity, has got to fall back upon Providence, and upon its own indomitable resolution.

In this rough and stormy passage, too much forethought cannot be exercised, in view of possible disasters; nor too much patience, and fortitude, and firm adherence to principle, when they are actually encountered. "To look on the bright side," as some will counsel, is not always possible, unless there be strong faith in God; and sometimes, even where such faith exists, the bright side is hid by the opaque shadow of actual and pressing affliction.

These trials are various and numerous, and lie

upon us, with but slight intermission, until the end is reached. The best-concerted schemes will sometimes miscarry. The hand of diligence will not always insure riches, and the greatest precautions will not avail in securing what industry and skill have accumulated. Mutability and uncertainty are written upon every earthly possession and prospect.

How many, at the outset of life, are all hope, animation and eager expectation! Every sail is unfurled, and every streamer dancing gayly in the breeze. The skies seem to smile over them, and the sea to present a placid or but slightly rippled surface. But no more can we expect this to last, in the career of human experience, than we can expect the ocean to be always calm, and its winds always propitious.

Rightly, as we conceive, has the artist represented the period of manhood as marked by perils, and overshadowed for the most part with clouds. See that frail bark, with its helm gone, rushing towards the rapids, whilst the anxious voyager, clasping his hands as if in supplication,

looks eagerly for help from above. Everything in the picture wears a sombre hue. The overhanging cliffs, the descending flood, the shattered vessel, the dim ocean stretching away in the distance, the lurid clouds revealing shadowy and frightful forms, all bespeak a dangerous crisis, in which the faith, the patience and the fortitude of manhood, are to be put to a severe test.

What is here allegorically pictured we may see every day realized, in the blasted hopes and shipwrecked prospects of early manhood. One will be disappointed in his expectations of domestic happiness. The bright visions of youth give, in general, too deep a coloring to connubial bliss; and the anticipations of a domestic paradise have not only never been realized, but, with some, have ended in trials the most unexpected and insupportable.

Another will find his schemes of earthly advancement thwarted, and the prize on which he had set his eye forever eluding his grasp. At a time when he expected to be rich, he will

find himself poor; and in circumstances where he counted upon friends, he will see himself isolated and deserted. With some it is a struggle even for existence; and this struggle has to be made often with but little sympathy, and with no substantial succor.

Did the trial affect but *one*,— did it reach not beyond the individual man,— it would be comparatively easy to be borne. But, in general, it is rendered the more poignant as abridging the happiness of a beloved and dependent circle, who had been nurtured, perhaps, in affluence, and accustomed to all the comforts and luxuries which affluence supplies. To say to these dear ones, "I have not the ability to sustain you; your wants can no longer be supplied; your bread even is henceforth to be 'the bread of affliction,'" is a trial which the stoutest and manliest heart cannot contemplate but with dismay. Yet how many have to look this trial in the face! The prospect drives them almost to madness. Ah, yes! those shapes of horrid import, which the artist has made dimly to glare from the clouds,—

the one brandishing a dagger, and the other extending the inebriating cup,— are introduced as suggestions which come from the spirit of darkness to man under his deepest woes.

DESPAIR AND SELF-DESTRUCTION.

The painter has in this sketch but followed the great dramatist, who, in a well-known passage, long ago, depicted the temptation to suicide which the apparently insupportable trials of life suggest.

" For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes ;
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin ? Who would fardels bear,
To groan and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death, —
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, — puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of? "

But where is our manhood, if the trials of life, however severe, force us to so cowardly a device,

— to so horrible a crime? Who will struggle for our loved ones, if their natural guardian or protector, by so desperate a plunge, has abandoned them? How ungenerous, mean, selfish, to rush out of the world, in order to get rid of responsibilities which none but ourselves can feel, and which, mayhap, no one else will be ready to assume! Where is our fortitude, our courage, if, in this day of our calamity, we retreat behind the curtain of death, and leave our dependent ones, less able than ourselves to breast the storm?

"Suicide," says an eminent writer on morals, "has been called magnanimity; — but what is magnanimity? A patient endurance of evil to effect a proposed good; and when, considering the strange mutability of human affairs, are we to consider this endurance as useless, or when should hope terminate but with life? To linger out year after year, unbroken in spirit, unchanged in purpose, is doubtless a less imposing destiny than public and pompous suicide; but, if to be, is more commendable than to seem to be;

if we love the virtue better than the name, then is it true magnanimity to extract wisdom from misery and doctrine from shame, to call day and night upon God, to keep the mind's eye sternly riveted on its object, through failure and through suffering, through evil report and through good report, and to make the bed of death the only grave of human hope."*

That dark suggestion, intimated first, perhaps, in the wish to die, and then taking a still more criminal shape, flitting before the mind under its gloomy cogitations,— that dreadful thought, at once resist. Drive it hence, as one of the suggestions of hell! Stand up calm and resolute amid thy shipwrecked hopes, and, directing thy eye upward, like the man in the boat, call for help upon God. "He is a present help in every time of trouble." All is not lost where hope remains. The darkest night has its succeeding dawn. The wildest storm cannot rage forever, and despair sometimes borders close upon salva-

* Sydney Smith.

tion. Show thy manhood, in meeting and conquering these difficulties! Show thy patience and perseverance and energy under them! The trial may be salutary, and thy character may need brightening amid these very furnace-fires.

What a noble example is presented of suffering patience in the character and conduct of an Old Testament patriarch! Whoever had greater reason to give up than Job, to curse God and die, as even the wife of his bosom advised him to do? But no; he scorned the impious thought. He would suffer God's will. He would wait patiently until his change came. He committed himself unto God, and resolved to trust in him, though he should slay him. There was a noble and courageous determination in him to suffer, because the evil, as well as the good, came from the hand of God. To commit suicide was, in Job's estimation, to rush upon the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler. Away, then, with the horrible suggestion, and breast thyself, O afflicted man, to the billows, and, with God's help, struggle for the rock of safety!

INTEMPERANCE.

But some, who would shudder at the thought of self-destruction, adopt, nevertheless, means of relief in trouble as certainly suicidal as if they were to thrust a poniard into their vitals.

See ye that hand just emerging from the cloud over the stream; and that fiend-like face that accompanies it, looking toward the voyager, and seeming to invite him to partake? That is the personification of intemperance, and that cup in his hand is the inebriating cup.

How many, when the storm gathers, and the stream roughens, and things look dark around them, are tempted by this vision, and seize the fatal cup, in the hope of, at least, a temporary oblivion of their cares!

It is told of an Indian navigating his canoe near the rapids of Niagara, that, finding his efforts unavailing to reach the shore, and supposing his fate inevitable, he took his liquor-flask and drank it off, and then, lying down in the bottom of the boat, was carried over the falls,

and seen no more. How often have we heard also of mariners, when their vessel seemed about to break up, and every energy was required to keep her afloat, and thus save the precious lives intrusted to their care, suddenly seized with a panic, and, rushing to the lockers, drink themselves into stupidity, that they might not be conscious of their impending destruction.

The same reckless, atheistic principle will sometimes seize upon a husband or father, in view of disasters and trials which have befallen him; and he will fly to this dreadful opiate to drown the sorrows of his mind, and render him for the time unconscious of his and their misery. Shame on the man who will thus destroy what is left of hope to himself and his family! It is worse than suicidal. It is a death-blow to his own soul, and an entailed disgrace, which will fix on those who, when spoken of, will be spoken of as the wife and children, the brothers and sisters, of a drunkard. And is it not cowardly, succumbing to vice at a time when the most heroic virtues are called for?

Say to misfortune, then, "Thou shalt rather drive me to madness than to inebriation. I will die a virtuous man, and leave to my posterity a name which they shall not blush to own." It will be no disgrace to them that their husband or father was unfortunate, was poor; but it will be an indelible stigma, if with his poverty must be associated one of the most beastly and destructive of vices.

In thy troubles, brooding over them until they wear a shape of dark and despairing magnitude, should the demon whisper to thee of the inebriating cup, say *No!* Think of all the awful consequences, and say "No,— never!"

Satan tempted the holiest, in an hour of weakness, abstinence and loneliness. And he takes occasion, in like manner, when troubles arise, to tempt men,— weak men,— to despair, suicide and inebriation. And, O, how many have thus gone down to an endless despair, and left behind them "the memory of the wicked that shall rot!"

If any who read these pages, thus situated, are thus tempted, let the warning note be heard

in time to rescue from a shipwreck which takes with it body and soul, — that sweeps into the same vortex the hopes and the reputation of those whom he is bound to love and to cherish, and who in general are willing to take the same lot with himself, and uncomplainingly submit to the same privations. For their sakes, as well as for his own, let him eschew all such relief as these temptations would suggest.

NONE NEED DESPAIR.

There is no need of absolute despair in the worst of situations, in circumstances the darkest and most disheartening. There is a possibility that "something may turn up," a possibility which has been as a day-star to many an unfortunate. There are pithy sayings, transmitted by human experience, which serve as life-buoys in the flood of human trials; such as "Hope on, hope ever," "The darkest time is just before the day," "Never give up." To these maxims, derived from human experience, may be added those which are more than human, — which are divine;

such as, "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "None of them that trust in him shall be desolate." "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." "Light is sown for the righteous." "Take no thought (anxious thought) for the morrow: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." "Give us this day our daily bread," is a prayer which all the dependent creatures of God have a right to offer; and which, if offered in sincerity and faith, will be heard and answered.

There is not on earth a more noble sight than a man, amidst overwhelming trials, resolving to bear meekly and submissively the ills of life, accompanied with the purpose to try every expedient which may lawfully be used to rise above them. This is being the man. It is manhood in its sublimest attitude. "To do faithfully," says an eccentric but popular writer,* "whatsoever thing, in your actual situation, then and now,

* Carlyle.

you find expressly or tacitly laid down to your charge; that is, stand to your post; stand in it like a true soldier. Silently devour the many chagrins of it,— all situations have many,— and see you aim not to quit it, without doing all that is your duty."

The man who thus acts — who aims, amid severe trials, to work out his temporal salvation — will be likely to find a favoring Providence ready to work with him and to work for him. Such an one will also have the sympathy of all generous hearts; and, cold as the world is said to be, he will be very apt to find an occasional hand extended to help him in his struggles.

PROSPERITY.

But the supposition all along has been that manhood is the period only of disaster and of trial; and founded on this supposition have been the counsels which, under such trials, seemed needful and appropriate. But is there not a season of prosperity; and are there not dangers and perils peculiar to such a state, if not as palpable

or as readily acknowledged, yet as real, and sometimes as fatal, as in adversity? I am aware of the practical scepticism that exists on this subject. I also understand how little apprehension is felt by the votaries of the world in regard to the moral dangers of earthly prosperity. "Be it so," says the eager devotee of wealth or fame; "admit that there are some such dangers; yet who would not be willing to run the risk, if he might only be one of fortune's favorites? Give me my wishes in this respect, and I am ready to incur the hazard and to take the responsibility."

Foolish and inconsiderate declaration! Thou knowest not what thou sayest. Thy selfish heart, thirsting for riches or reputation among men, and bent on their attainment, as containing, in thy estimation, all that man can wish, sees not the evils which lurk in the path that leads to them, nor the perils to which, when obtained, their possessor is exposed? Blind, or rather dazzled to blindness, by that one object, the golden prize, thou seest not the temptations

which beset the man who is determined to seize upon it. In the *pursuit*, dishonesty, criminal worldliness, neglect of the soul; in the *possession*, avarice, pride, sensuality. The "deceitfulness of riches" is a scriptural expression which experience interprets and verifies. These *are* deceitful. Their power to make happy is mere pretension. They may add to one's happiness who has other and higher elements of felicity; but, when they are sought as the principal means of happiness, they are sure to "pierce their possessors through with many sorrows."

DISHONESTY.

Riches tempt to dishonesty. If they can be gotten honestly, well; but if not, and if the opportunity offer to reach the prize by tortuous and dishonest ways, he whose sole aim is wealth will be very apt—so powerful is the sway of this one desire—to barter his character, his integrity, his soul, for *gold*. In such a case, must it not prove as "a canker that shall eat his flesh as it were fire"?

AVARICE.

Worldly prosperity, the increase of riches, is often accompanied by avarice, and operates, in many cases, to foster it. We have known men liberal when poor, or comparatively poor, and penurious and close as they became affluent. Their donations to charitable objects grew proportionably small as their means to bestow grew abundant. How is this? Simply on the principle that a naturally selfish heart contracts more and more in the process of accumulation. Practical benevolence, giving to, and doing for others,— this is the only antagonism to our naturally selfish inclinations.

A miser is, by common consent, a mean character; and who will argue that he is happy? Yet how many, in the pursuit of wealth, where wealth is the all-absorbing object, approach this sordid grade of existence, having the moral traits without the outward discomfort and squalid condition of the miser!

The character which I have in view is no un-

common one. It is exemplified, and some may see it exemplified, in their own conduct, whenever generosity is appealed to, or charity solicits aid.

You will see a man selfishly extravagant in the outlay which he makes on his house, or his table, or his equipage, or his dress; but who never has it in his power to assist the unfortunate, to help on the great work of charity, or to do his part with others in some generous plan for the public weal. A decent regard to his reputation may induce him to give a mere pittance; but even that is bestowed so ungraciously, and with so many professions of poverty or bad luck or misfortune, that it is as much a matter of self-denial in the applicant to ask it of him, as it evidently is for him to bestow it.

Now, such a man cannot know the meaning, cannot comprehend the meaning, of that declaration, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The happiness of him "who considereth the poor" is a species of felicity to which such a bosom is, and ever must be, a stranger.

If such be the effect of riches,— if the heart

must be paralyzed by them, robbed of all its generous sympathies, reduced to adamant,— is it not a perilous pursuit; one that promises a good whose attainment must often be attended with evils which more than counterbalance a thousand times that good?

It behooves the prosperous, then, to take hostages of fortune, to make friends with "the mammon of unrighteousness," to do battle with their selfishness. Whatever be the suggestions of avarice, they should nevertheless turn their ear to the call of charity, and compel themselves, —if it can be done on no more generous principle, —actually compel themselves to a course of benevolent action. What is done at first by constraint may ultimately be done as a pleasure. They may find a sweet after-thought, even in their *extorted* charity, which may lead them to repeat the deed, until, at length, is formed a habit of generous bestowment.

Some are, indeed, liberal by nature, and need no such exhortation; but most men who have toiled to accumulate wealth, in giving to chari-

table objects, are obliged to do a sort of violence to the selfishness which has for a long time intrenched itself in the heart.

EXTRAVAGANCE.

Another evil into which prosperity sometimes leads a man is *extravagance*.

Under the first flush of success in business, or not unfrequently even in anticipation of such success, some will launch forth in a style of grandeur unwarranted by their prospects, and, in the eyes of all discreet persons, ominous of their fall. With other men's money they will build, and furnish, and dash, until a crisis comes, such as in mercantile life is not uncommon, when lo! this vision of grandeur vanishes, like a dream of the night.

Such is a brief history of many who start on the voyage of life with more pride than discretion, with more sail than ballast; and the voyage with them is both short and disastrous.

Beware, then, reader, of the rock on which so many have made shipwreck! Spread not too

much canvas at first. The tendency of the times is to start on the top wave,— to crowd all sail, regardless of consequences. A scale of living such as would insure comfort and convenience,—such as, half a century ago, would even have been deemed stylish,—is now too plain, too almost vulgar, to satisfy the ambitious aspirant, who foolishly associates outward show with respectability.

There is a vast disproportion, in many cases, between the scale of household expenditure and the actual income. Among the influences which tend to make shipwreck of early manhood, this of extravagant living is not the least frequent. And hence we say to all those who are about to set up in life,— and we address ourselves to young householders, *women* as well as men,— be sure that your scale of expenditure be carefully graduated to your actual income. Away with that foolish pride, that seeks to emulate the more opulent neighbor, or to vie with one who may himself be steering in a direct course towards the whirlpool of bankruptcy! Be satis-

fied to move discreetly, and even slowly, in the matter of household luxury. When the time comes for enlargement,—when, by the blessing of Providence on well-applied industry, you are able to live on a scale even of grandeur,—who will object? Who has a right to object, provided you see fit to adopt such a course?

In our view, everything should be symmetrical and well proportioned. The rich man naturally, and, for aught we can see, very properly, adopts a scale of household expenditure proportioned to his vast income. He lives, it may be, in a palace; and he expends money in a thousand ways, which go to sustain the humbler classes in the prosecution of the industrial and decorative arts. Thus, while ministering to his own taste, he is aiding in the support of others; a benefactor to society *unconsciously*, even while selfishly surrounding himself with temporal grandeur.

But, if, emulating this show and glitter, one should seek to put on the tinsel at the expense of others,—to build, and furnish, and decorate, when, as yet, there was no real foundation for

the outlay,—how soon would his fair fabric be likely to give way, whilst he himself, in the hands of the sheriff, would become an object of pity to some, and of scorn and contempt to others! More than half the misery which occurs in our business circles is traceable to extravagance in some form. It comes from the effort of men to *seem* to be what they really are not. On this reef how many in middle life have made shipwreck of their earthly hopes!

THE GREATEST DANGER.

Prosperity, even when *real*, is not without its dangers. Few can bear it. The greatest danger lies in the moral state of the heart, as affected by it. Pride, and self-confidence, and conscious independence, are results which push the soul out of the circle of influences so necessary to its salvation. Worldly prosperity has many times proved the way to everlasting ruin, rendering the soul obtuse to all gospel influences, shutting against it the door of hope, or making it as difficult of entrance almost as for "a camel to go

through a needle's eye." What a startling inquiry was that which our Saviour makes, indicating the danger of worldly prosperity, especially as it relates to the possession of riches, "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Yes; and that other, if possible, still more startling query, "what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The shipwreck of fortune, what is it to the loss eternally of the soul? Says a writer* already quoted, and one who will not be accused of cant, discoursing on the moral insensibility which worldly prosperity is apt to engender, "Those who are sheltered from the various perils of poverty begin to forget the precarious tenure of worldly enjoyments, and to build sumptuously on the sand. They put their trust, as the Psalmist says, in chariots and horses, and dream they shall live forever in those palaces which are but the out-houses of the grave. There are very few men, in fact,

* Sydney Smith.

who are capable of withstanding the constant effect of artificial distinctions. It is difficult to live upon a throne, and to think of a tomb. It is difficult to be clothed in splendor, and to remember we are dust. It is difficult for the rich and the prosperous to keep their hearts as a burning coal upon the altar, and to humble themselves before God as they rise before men. In the mean time, while pride gathers in the heart, the angel is ever writing in the book, and wrath is ever mantling in the cup. Complain not, in the season of woe, that you are parched with thirst! ask not for water, as Dives asked! you have a warning which he never had. There stand the ever-memorable words, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," to break down the stateliness of man, and dissipate the pageantry of the earth. Thus it is that the few words of God can make the purple of the world appear less beautiful than the mean garments of a beggar, and, striking terror into the hearts of rulers, turn the banners of dominion

to the ensigns of death, and make them shudder at the sceptre which they wield. To-day you are clothed in linen and fare sumptuously; in a few and evil years, they shall hew you out a tomb of marble whiter than snow, and the cunning artifice of the workman shall grave upon it weeping angels, and make a delicate image of one fleeing up to heaven, as if it were there; and shall relate in golden letters the long story of your honors and your birth,—thou fool!! He that dieth by the road-side for the lack of a morsel of bread, God loveth him as well as he loveth thee; and at the gates of heaven, and from the blessed angels, thou shalt learn that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven."

MANHOOD A PERIOD OF GREAT INFLUENCE.

Human life culminates at forty or forty-five. Henceforward it moves as on a sort of table-land until sixty or sixty-five, and then ordinarily declines.

The period of greatest personal influence is usually assigned to manhood, embracing a space somewhat indeterminate between youth and old age.

Those in the field will not yield to the prurient demands of youth. Influence is of slow growth, and young men must take their turn. Time will soon make room for them, when, after a brief struggle, they also must give place to others.

It is astonishing how small a portion of existence is available for the stirring events of life. The preparation season is long, extending from infancy to manhood, a period of over twenty years. Few are actually introduced to the great arena before twenty; and even then personal influence, for a long time, is but gradually augmenting and acquiring breadth. How soon after it has reached its zenith does it begin to decline! They who struggled side by side for fame, power, or riches, are obliged in a wonderfully short space of time to give place to other and succeeding competitors. "He has seen his

best days," is a declaration that sometimes startles the man who had supposed himself still in the vigor of manhood.

Such being the case,— human influence being thus of slow growth and of short duration,— what is to be done for the generation in which we live, for those who are with us or who are to come after us, must be done with energy and despatch.

How impressive, in this view, is the admonition of one who took a careful survey of life's duties and responsibilities! — "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might."

The stream on which we are embarked, commencing in the slow and placid current that flows around the cradle-scenes of existence, and then, gathering force, sparkles and leaps along in the juvenile period of buoyant hope and wild delight, at length deepens into the strong current of manhood, and rushes onward with almost terrific rapidity, until at last it spreads away into a darkening estuary, and a still more distant ocean, emblematical of that subsiding and hazy term of

life, when the weakness of age is setting towards the misty and awful future.

How the picture speaks to our hopes and to our fears! How the rushing tide of existence warns us to steer for the haven of peace and safety! How the impetuous flood bids us do what we have got to do with our might!

If any man is dreaming of a time when he will construct some novel and important piece of mechanism, or when he will write some valuable treatise, or lay the foundation for some charitable institution, as a perennial source of good to body or mind, let him understand that time and death and advancing age all cry out, "Be at it; do it at once, and without delay!"

The season for efficient action comes late, runs off rapidly, and is gone. Whilst we are planning and anticipating, resolving and purposing, lo! the knell of time rings out our destiny; and we go into decrepitude or death, ere the half of life's projected plans are even begun.

If such a fatality attend us as it respects our earthly hopes and wishes, what shall we say of

the multitudes who live on the purpose of repentance,— are always intending to find time to set their house in order, and get ready for their departure,— who resolve and re-resolve that at no distant day religion shall claim their serious and undivided attention; but who, alas! find themselves surprised into the awful reality, on the brink of death, in its very last article and agony, without the least preparation for its solemn issues? What shall be said of such?

CHAPTER VI.

OLD AGE.

WHAT marks the period of old age, or where is the boundary between it and manhood? Who can define the exact point where it begins? So gradually does the stream set towards this state of weakness and incapacity, that few are observant of its approach; and many deny its existence, even when to others the indications are clear and unmistakable. The first gray hair is plucked out without exciting any surprise, but, ere long, the process of eradication is given up in despair; for nature outruns the effort, and the head is seen blossoming all over like the almond-tree. The first wrinkle that streaks the forehead, or which time plants at the angle of the eye, is scarcely noticed; but how soon does that old hour-glass bearer multiply these furrows, and steal the crimson from that cheek! It is in vain

to attempt to cheat ourselves into the idea of perpetuity. The eye will not see as clearly as once it did; and the effort to coax the hair over the naked brow, or to conceal its baldness by a wig, will neither deceive ourselves or others into the belief that we are as young as once we were.

Nevertheless, there is a vast difference among men as to the time when physical strength and beauty — if the term beauty may be applied to men — begin to decline. Some appear quite old at fifty, and some look hale and vigorous at sixty. Some ripen soon, and soon decay; others gather slowly, and hold on long. Sickness, care, intense study, anxiety long continued, and excessive bodily labor, have their effect in imprinting the tokens of decay on the physical man. By these wearing and wasting influences, a comparatively young man will sometimes look old; and, exempted from them, an old man will sometimes wear almost the aspect of youth.

A few years, however, will suffice to set the question at rest, to stamp the body with a sig-

nature which all will recognize, and to point the index-finger in a direction which all understand.

THE LAST PICTURE.

Behold that venerable figure seated in the stern of the fairy-vessel, looking upward, and catching with his dim eye those glorious forms which stream along that bright avenue to which the guardian angel points!

To adopt the artist's own language, "Portentous clouds are brooding over a vast and midnight ocean. A few barren rocks are seen through the gloom,— the last shores of the world. These form the mouth of the river, and the boat, shattered by storms, its figures of the hours broken and drooping, is seen gliding over the deep waters. Directed by the guardian spirit who thus far has accompanied him unseen, the voyager, now an old man, looks upward to an opening in the clouds, from whence a glorious light bursts forth, and angels are seen descending the cloudy steps, as if to welcome him to the haven of immortal life.

"The stream of life has now reached the ocean to which all life is tending. The world to old age is destitute of interest. There is no longer any green thing upon it. The broken and drooping figures of the boat show that time is nearly ended. The chains of corporeal existence are falling away, and already the mind has glimpses of immortal life. The angelic being, of whose presence until now the voyager has been unconscious, is revealed to him; and, with a countenance beaming with joy, shows to his wondering gaze scenes such as mortals have never yet seen."

There is a pathetic tone, a touching sublimity, in this scene, which makes us look upon it with seriousness and self-application, as if we saw in it a type of our own hastening end. The lights and shades are here put in strong contrast. Death and immortality are brought into close proximity. That dark estuary, and that still darker ocean, stretching to a shoreless distance, emblematical of eternity; those rocks, reflecting on their serried brow the light that gleams over

them, and gilds them as with a departing ray; the boat shorn of its original splendor, its winged hours almost torn from its sides, its prow battered, and the hour-glass gone from it; the old man of hoary head and beard, no longer standing but sitting,— these all proclaim that the end is drawing nigh.

But, lo! the clouds have opened, and a light from the third heavens is streaming down and resting on the darkness below. In this terraced way to glory may be seen troops of angels bright, — messengers of love and mercy, — throwing themselves forward on their wings, as if eager to execute the commission assigned to them. The guardian angel reäppearing, and directing the eye of the voyager to these bright companions, — all these show that, as the "earthly house of man's tabernacle" is dissolving, there is reserved for him, if a *Christian*, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

But, dismissing the picture, or only keeping it in view as the guide of our thoughts, we will indulge in some reflections on the condition of

the old man, his joys, his trials and his prospects, which, we hope, may be profitable to the reader, whatever be his age. If *old*, he will be likely now to sympathize with them; and if young, he may be sure that, ere long, should life be not abruptly terminated, he, too, will feel and acknowledge their application.

OLD AGE — ITS JOYS AND TRIALS.

Old age has both its joys and its trials. If the battle of life has been fought and won,— if success has crowned the efforts of manhood, and a worldly competency be enjoyed,— who can doubt that a high degree of satisfaction may be felt, even in advanced life? We have seen old men apparently happy even under the pressure of bodily pains and infirmities; the wrinkled brow relaxing into a smile, and the eye lighted up with a benevolent joy.

Old men seem to live over their lives in their descendants. When their own joys are failing, they fill their cup out of the spring which bubbles up in their track. They seem to forget

their infirmities in the participated relish which is shared by those of their kindred who surround them.

The aged father lives in the life of a favorite son. If the boy ripens into promising manhood, and that manhood be characterized by honor and success, the father is reconciled to personal inattention or public neglect, whilst he calmly enjoys the growing reputation of his child.

The affections, also, are strongly developed towards the little ones of a third generation. They are *his* as much and as truly as were his own children. With less responsibility in their training, less care and anxiety respecting them, there is scarcely less affection towards them. Indeed, sometimes it would seem as if there was a somewhat *more* tender and indulgent love than under the sterner circumstances which modify the merely parental relation. The grandsire, with his children's children, looking confidingly into his face, clambering on his knee, offering their assistance to his tottering steps, amusing him with their gambols, interesting him in their

juvenile sports, and thus almost compelling him to be young again, is surely not an object of pity, but of congratulation. The setting sun is not more bright and serene often than is he. A more radiant picture can hardly be set in the frame of human observation than one which places the old man in the midst of his descendants; having discharged his duty faithfully to them, and won their respect and love, whilst severally and collectively they are vying with each other in offices of kindness towards him, — an old Anchises, as it were, with Æneas and his family, ready even to hazard their own lives, in order to preserve that of their beloved sire,— what could be more beautiful, and where can happiness be found, if not amid such a group?

But there is a higher source of enjoyment even than this. The old man may have within his breast the anchor of hope, and in his eye the crown of everlasting life. He may have all the matured graces of the Christian, rendering him as "a shock of corn, fully ripe in its season." Having sailed through stormy seas, he may have

reached the opening port of a calm and cloudless immortality. His hoary head may be encircled with a crown of righteousness, to be rewarded, ere long, with the crown of glory which fadeth not away.

Beautiful is the sight of age wedded to religion, supporting itself on her arm, comforted by her consolations, cheered by her hopes of glory! To see the pilgrim thus, leaning on a staff which no vicissitudes of earth can break, and travelling in a road which grows more fragrant as the sun is setting and the dews are falling, the night gathering and the stars coming forth,— how, in view of him, can we feel any other sentiment than that of cheerfulness! How can we use any language towards him, but that of congratulation!

Aged Christian! travel on, with a smile on thy brow, towards thy home in the skies! Mourn not that thy path on earth is growing dark, if the light above thee and within thee is deepening! Sigh not because earthly bliss is less enjoyed, if thy relish for divine things is but

increasing! Indulge not a thought of regret, that you must soon say to earth farewell, provided you are drawing nearer, and still nearer, to your eternal home!

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PICTURE.

But the picture of a happy old age is not, perhaps, a very common one. Hence the experience of mankind has assigned to that period more trials than joys. How often do we hear one and another express the wish that he "may not live to be old," which hope or wish, if sincere,—we many times doubt its sincerity,—goes to show that, in the general estimation, it is an undesirable condition of existence. Why is the wish of an earlier exit out of the world expressed, unless it be that old age is looked upon as a misfortune, a dreaded remnant of life, useful for nothing, and a burden to surviving friends?

We have, indeed, seen instances of longevity, where the evils were so many and the good so little, that one might be pardoned for deprecat-

ing, under similar circumstances, a prolonged existence.

An old man, for example, in abject poverty and dependence, with none to provide for him and none to pity him, depending on the coarse and cold and official charity which the public may have provided, is an object simply of commiseration. Such a close of life's wearisome voyage is surely to be deprecated. Who would not pray, "From such evils, O Lord, deliver us!"

An old man, who has the misfortune to have ungrateful children, undutiful as children, and, when arrived at manhood, hard-hearted and without natural affection, seeing these children indifferent to his welfare, practising towards him marked neglect, wishing him out of the way, wishing him dead, supplying his wants with a niggardly stint, and looking on him from day to day as a mere incumbrance,—such an old man goes heavily and heart-broken towards the grave. Who could be blamed for wishing to escape the tender mercies of such parricidal hands?

One who has led a life of vicious indulgence,—

whose passions survive often after the ability to gratify them is gone,—an old, worn-out sensualist, whose beastly propensities are still visible amid the wreck of his physical powers,—bloated in countenance, tottering in gait, breaking forth occasionally with some coarse or obscene allusion,—a carcass almost, it would seem, without a soul,—such an one is a horrible excrescence, awaiting only the stroke of an apoplexy or palsy, or possibly delirium tremens, to send him to a doom for which, even if eternal, his character and his crimes have fitted him. "In fact," says Sydney Smith, "the old age which has raised all this terror is the old age of sin; it is the spectacle of young and ungoverned passions in a perishing body; of a man giving up the world by his trembling limbs, giving it up by his wasting strength, and clinging to it with all the appetites of his heart; a man marked deeply by time, and with thoughts busied about the mortal pleasures of sin: to such a man old age is, indeed, terrible; for it is a mark of the coming vengeance of God; the pains and evils of the body are to

him signs that his eternal punishment is near at hand, that he is standing in the threshold to the place of torment. I am not endeavoring to prove that this old age is not terrible. It is, indeed, the greatest of human terrors; and, though the three-score and ten years may first pass away, yet the knowledge that it must come at last shoots across the horizon of life, and mingles the terror of God with the early pleasures of youth."

It is in view of such cases,— including, perhaps, some where the individual was merely burdensome, without being degraded or despised, — that the wish for an earlier death has been uttered. But those who thus speak, who so recklessly express their wishes, can have no just appreciation of the relations which man sustains to the present and the future world.

God has appointed the lot of man, numbered his days, set the bounds of his earthly habitation. It ill becomes any of his creatures to wish either to overleap that boundary, or to anticipate it by an early death. "Our times," including the end of our time on earth, are all "in his hand."

His wisdom has appointed them, and his power will see that they are fulfilled. Should his purpose be that I shall reach three-score and ten, or should he give me strength to see even four-score years, it would ill become me to complain, because I might foresee some possible evils to which my longevity would expose me. Resignation to the divine will is as much a duty when the continuance as when the termination of life is concerned. If it be a calamity to die in early manhood,— as will generally be conceded,— and an equal or greater calamity to drag out an existence until eighty or ninety, why should we not be as submissive in the one case as in the other? In neither is it our right to complain. Taking one view of human life, we might say, with Job, "I would not live alway;" but, with the same patient patriarch, we should add, "all the days of my *appointed* time will I wait until my change come."

OTHER REASONS WHY OLD AGE IS DREADED.

Neglect is one reason why old age is dreaded.

We all shrink from this, as implying uselessness and decay. The old are particularly sensitive to neglect, as they are peculiarly exposed to it. The young sympathize with the young. Those in middle life are so absorbed in the daily conflict, that they can scarcely pause, even if inclined, to give the expected recognition and the respectful attention which are due to the aged. The offices of life, the business of life, its plans and projects, are, for the most part, divided among the young and the middle-aged. Between *such*, intercourse is not only natural, but even necessary. They are so related, so dependent upon each other, as to require a very frequent intercommunication. But the old man is turned aside. He has worked out his day, and by common consent he has his discharge. Hence one must go out of the way to meet him, and to pay him those respectful attentions which his age and his standing demand.

To guard against this neglect, the Scriptures have enjoined on the young special and profound respect towards the aged. "Thou shalt rise up

before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God,—I am the Lord." In this, as in all the other enactments of the divine word, we discover a wisdom as happy in its bearings on the individual as it is useful in its influence on the state; and blessed will that period be, if it ever should arrive, when shall be felt and expressed by the young generally a respect for honorable old age!

But let not the aged complain because they are set aside,—as in the arrangements of active life they are very apt to be,—let them not complain at this. They have had their day and their turn; and, as wave follows wave, others are now coming into their places, exercising their functions, doing their work, and of right reaping their rewards. They cannot be always young and strong and attractive. They cannot have the same efficiency in old age as they had in their ripened manhood. So God and nature have ordained. As they look at those who seem to be crowding them aside, and occupying their posts of influence, let them calmly and contentedly

give place. These who are now their juniors, so ardent, so athletic and so aspiring, will, in a few years, have themselves to quit, and go into the same paths of stillness and obscurity.

You have been accustomed, perhaps, to shine in conversation; to draw around you a circle of admirers; to catch the eye of the passer-by, as presenting a form of manly beauty; to be hailed, perhaps, as the centre of influence and attraction. All this, however, must go and be given up, as the indices of advancing age and infirmity creep over the mind and body. Others must jostle you aside in these respects, and you must be content to totter on towards the end with less and less attention from the world. Is it hard? No; not if things be rightly viewed; not, especially, if in time you have seen the vanity of so foolish an ambition, the emptiness of so meagre a portion, the dryness of so broken a cistern! If you have found a staff to lean upon, such as religion gives, you may bid defiance to all these changes, mortifications and disappointments, and travel on to the last earthly limit with a calm

and steady pace, and with a countenance lighted up from above. Do you fear the decay of your powers, and the consequent diminution of your usefulness? Does that idea, "My joys are gone," haunt you? If your aim has been to please the flesh, and that only, you may well be grieved as the senses grow dull, and the power of gratification becomes less and less; or, if the smiles of human favor have been all the sunlight that has warmed your heart, you may well mourn when it is withdrawn. Miserable old man, if these sources of good *alone* have been open to thee! What is left, when these are gone? —and gone they will be, when old age has come.

But this very decay of the physical powers is to the Christian a signal of ultimate and complete victory. Nature, in this, comes to the aid of grace, or rather works in unison with it; and he who had struggled hard and successfully against the flesh in early life has in old age a still easier victory, when that flesh has lost much of its polluting power.

And now that the world, of its own accord, is withdrawing from him, offering its prizes to others rather than to him, how much easier will it be for him, calling faith to his aid, to overcome the world!

The Christian can bid the world adieu in feeling long before he is separated from it by the actual stroke of death. His growing incapacity for sensual enjoyment renders his relish for that which is spiritual all the keener. No sigh need he send back after a world which has proved, by its allurements, its cares and its temptations, his greatest hindrance in the path to heaven. Why, with the port in view,— the haven of rest which he has so long desired,— should he wish to put back upon the stormy deep, and take his chance again amid its vicissitudes and its perils? *Let* the world neglect him,— all the better for him! He is left thus at greater leisure to set his house in order, and to prepare for his exit to a better world. He gets into a more tranquil current, which sets strongly towards the opening vista,— so beautifully pic-

tured in the scene before us,— where the light is breaking forth, and the angels are coming into view, and all the calm scenery of heaven is unfolding, with no more rapids to dread, no more storms to encounter, but one pure and beaming vision of blessedness rising on the enraptured soul, and indemnifying it, a thousand times over, for the loss of all things earthly.

USELESSNESS.

Terrible is the idea of outliving his usefulness, to an energetic, stirring man, who finds his felicity in action,— especially in those acts and labors which have a direct tendency to advance the cause of science, or promote the welfare of mankind. This to him is worse than neglect, as being, in fact, the cause of it. But let us dwell on this point a little.

It is not denied that for one to outlive his usefulness must be a sore trial. At the bare thought of it, the benevolent and sensitive heart recoils. But there are many thoughts connected with this apprehension which it may not be amiss

for the writer to utter, nor unprofitable for the reader seriously to consider.

The first thought that I would suggest is, that old age is a condition of existence ordered by Providence in respect to a certain number of his creatures. Should it be our lot, it is not for us to complain either at the appointment or at the circumstances which may attend it. We are bound to put our trust in God, and to believe, that, having guided us by his counsel, and sustained us by his providence, he will not, "when we are old and gray-headed, forsake us."

But what right have any to suppose that, if continued to old age, they will necessarily become useless? Leave that where it ought to be left, in the hands of God, saying, "My times are in thy hand, and so is my condition, and so is my destiny; and, O Lord, *thy* will, not mine, be done."

THE OLD MAN'S LAST HIS BEST DAYS.

But again, it is possible that a man may be as useful in old age as he ever was when young, or in middle life.

Some waste their youth in mere pleasure. They live only to themselves. They play the part of a profane Esau, and sell their great birthright for a sensual dish. Of what use are such to society? Some carry their vicious habits even into manhood. All they care for, even then, is to aggrandize or to gratify self. Avarice may lead them to struggle in the race of fortune, or ambition may induce them to truckle to popular prejudices; and in these pursuits they are obliged to seem to be useful by an outlay of energy necessary to accomplish their sordid ends. Indirectly, and without aiming at it, they may thus subserve somewhat the good of society. But, where the aim and motive are so supremely selfish, they can hardly be ranked as benefactors to mankind.

But, supposing that in the latter period of life, seeing the vanity and wickedness of their course, such persons are, by God's grace, brought to repentance; and that, instead of seeking, as heretofore, only to please and aggrandize self, they adopt a new principle of action, and begin to do

all things for the glory of God,— who will deny that their *last* days may prove to be their *best* days? They may, indeed, have to mourn,— as, if their repentance be sincere, undoubtedly they will,— that so much of life has been wasted in vain pursuits, and that so small a remnant is left in which to redeem the time; yet surely they will be grateful, that even in old age, at the eleventh hour even, they may be engaged as laborers in the vineyard of the Lord.

And some Christians, who talk much of usefulness, may possibly be mistaken as to the period when it will become most apparent. Can they say, amid the cares and strife of this world, from which even they are not excused, that when thus toiling, and giving only the interstices of time directly to the cause of religion, they are really more useful than when, in the evening of life, with less of earth's burdens pressing upon them, they are shedding a mild and hallowed light around them, using their undivided influence in promoting the spiritual welfare of others, and employing much of their uninterrupted leisure in

dressing their own souls for heaven; can they certainly affirm that they were more useful in the earlier than they can be in the later period of their Christian labors and experience? But this also we must leave with God.

Talk of an old man as being useless! It is absurd. It need not be. In many cases — may we not say in *most?* — it *is* not. With some, as we have been assured, it is the period of their greatest usefulness, as well as happiness. By prior neglect, by personal vices, by indolence and indulgence in earlier life, we may, indeed, make it a sorrowful portion of existence; but is it necessarily so? The experience of thousands will testify to the contrary.

A VIRTUOUS AND HONORABLE OLD AGE.

Again; how much influence can a man exert, enjoying a virtuous and honorable old age, by the associations connected with his name and his labors! His countenance is a book, worn, it is true, by the action of time, yet legible, in which we may read the history of the past. If he is

not able now to wield any great direct influence, by reason of increasing infirmities, why should he despond, when, by a life of industry in some honorable calling, by past efforts successfully exerted for the benefit of others, he has left an example, which is all the more influential on account of his continued presence among men? He is a pillar, even in his loneliness, marking not only the progress of time, but the improvements of the age to which, by his own well-applied energies, he may have more or less contributed.

THE OLD MERCHANT.

"Do you see that old man," says one, "so respectable in his appearance, with hair so white and countenance so bland, to whom, as he passes along the busy mart, so many give the token of respectful homage?—Well, that man has been one of our first merchants. He was always an upright and honorable man. His reputation for honesty was as great as his skill in business was successful. He was the model merchant. His

opinions are now quoted, and his upright example is felt, throughout a wide circle of business men."

THE ARTISAN.

Do you see that other old man?—He was a most industrious man. Up early in the morning working cheerfully at his trade, hammering out a living,—yea, at length a fortune,—and setting an example of economy as well as industry; living within his means, and laying up something for the winter of life, he is now, in his advancing age, an object of interest and respect to his descendants and to the community.

THE MAN OF SCIENCE.

And that one,—do you notice him?—whose head is blanched by time, but whose eye is still bright with the fire of intelligence, who bears in his massive features the lines of thought and the seal of true dignity,—is he not sublime even in his decline? That is a man who has toiled over the midnight lamp, and has raised a proud column in

the temple of science. All consent to honor him. He cannot do what he once could. Age has put its paralyzing hand upon him; but nothing can deprive him of the satisfaction of having done something for his race, nor of the homage and respect which a grateful public will always pay to genius or high intellect, even when its radiance has been dimmed by time.

THE STATESMAN.

The venerable statesman passes before us. His steps are slow and feeble, for the keepers of the house have begun to tremble. He speaks; but his voice, once so clear and ringing like a trumpet, is tremulous and weak. Yet, at the sound of that voice, every eye is fixed, every ear attentive. All countenances wear an expression of deep interest and respect. That man is venerated now, as aforetime he was feared and admired. The young men look upon him as a Nestor in experience and in wisdom. They take knowledge of him as one of the great lights of the age. They mark his career, and say, Let *me* be

as he has been; let me serve my country as *he* has. He towers among men as the aged oak among the humbler trees of the forest. His influence and usefulness are by no means gone with age. They run back over a long period, and connect his venerable form with stirring scenes of patriotic interest, in which the wisdom of his counsels or the thunders of his eloquence contributed to the welfare of the state, or saved it from serious detriment. Is it sad to grow old under such circumstances? Is usefulness gone, while such associations are clustering around the living though comparatively broken pillar of the state?

THE MINISTER.

Rising in the sacred desk, an aged servant of God appears before you, with head silvered o'er, with a countenance calm, even majestic, and he speaks in tones affectionate, and seemingly prophetic. He opens the Sacred Book, and unfolds the truth in language plain, and by illustrations the most simple. He seems intent only on the good of his hearers. All show and parade with

him have long since been dismissed; and now, as he nears his home, he is anxious mainly to feed the flock of Christ. "Who is that venerable man?" is the inquiry. He seems to have reached almost the end of his earthly journey. How benignant his countenance, how affectionate his address, how deep his experience! Such is an involuntary testimony to the moral worth and long-continued labors of one who has spent his manhood in the sublime work of preaching the everlasting gospel. But he has almost done his work, and sometimes the fear will haunt him that his usefulness is at an end. At an end! No; not so long as his example gives proof of the power and purity of the gospel. He will be useful while there is a Christian to relish his counsels, a young convert to be instructed by his experience, or a candidate for the ministry to study his life and labors. His very countenance will preach, even after his voice has become silent. Such a man's usefulness cannot end. Age cannot destroy it; — may we not go so far as to say that even death itself cannot?

There are those, we are aware, who are incapable of appreciating the rich fruit which such a man bears; who are accustomed to call him dull, because, forsooth, he flourishes not his arms, nor thunders with his voice, nor deals in bombastic language, nor "seeks to court a grin when he should woo a soul;" there are such weak-minded hearers, such unspiritual souls, ever thirsting for dramatic entertainment, rather than the pure water of life. But let the aged pastor, for his consolation, remember that others,— those who love the truth for the truth's sake, who want to be fed rather than amused,— that all such delight to sit at his feet, and learn from his experience and his teaching the way to heaven. They can and do appreciate his worth. One sermon drawn from his deep experience, and his familiarity with divine truth, is to them better, far better, than the beautiful essay, baptized with a little of the waters of the sanctuary, — just enough, or scarcely enough, to give it the name of a sermon.

The old minister has his trials, we know; but has he not also his consolations and his reward?

See him, even when no longer able to preach, — when infirmity has confined him to his study-chair, — is he useless even then? No, indeed! His life is a perpetual sermon, and all who are observant thereof are constantly listening to it. Men go to him for counsel. The aged drop in to get some useful hint. Upon all, "his words drop like the rain, and his speech distilleth as the dew." His very presence among men exerts a conservative influence; and his prayers, which cease only with death, are ascending continually for Zion, and for Zion's friends, — for his country, and for the world.

How sublime a picture, to see the patriarch of four-score moving towards the promised land, getting within sight of the Jordan, and occasionally ascending some Pisgah to catch a glimpse of the outspread glories of that paradise into which he is so soon to be admitted! Talk of such a man's being useless!

CHAPTER VII.

INCAPACITY FOR ENJOYMENT.

THIS is another object of dread, which makes certain persons wish not to reach an extreme old age. "I should rather die, literally," say they, "than to become entombed in the stillness and turpitude of second childhood. Why should we wish to live, when all life's enjoyments are gone, and all capacity even for enjoyment is extinct?" Is such language proper, even admitting the consequences anticipated? Are we not bound, I repeat, to submit to the divine decree? But the language is unjustifiable, assuming, as it does, that extreme old age is invariably bereft of all enjoyment. That there may be cases of this kind, we do not deny; but to take for granted that old age is without its enjoyment, is to talk like a mere sensualist, or a downright infidel.

It is true that, as the physical powers decline, that keen relish for sensual pleasure felt in earlier life is perceptibly blunted, and those passions die down which constitute the stamen of enjoyment to so many. It is these passions which give brilliancy and attractiveness to the scenes where fashion and frolic and animal excitement reign. They light up the ball-room, radiate around the shrine of beauty, and reflect lustre on the gorgeous festival. They make, in fact, the heaven which the worldly and the sensual desire. Of course, their decay is deprecated, and their extinction dreaded, by all such, as carrying away with it the possibility of that enjoyment which constituted their supreme, if not their only felicity. And it *is* a premonitory retribution, when the old man finds himself with desires which his physical weakness forbids him to gratify,—a sort of burning hell within him, like "the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched." That such an old age is to be deprecated, we frankly admit; and we say, moreover, that he who dreads it on such grounds, and

with such views, is not prepared to die, whatever be his period of life.

OLD AGE A SEASON OF CALM FELICITY.

But we take a very different view of old age from all this. We think it possible, by previous moral discipline, by study and by labor, to make it a season of calm felicity, in which pleasure, if less exciting, is not less exquisite; and we say that even in extreme old age we can conceive of enjoyments such as far exceed the boasted pleasures of the world.

We have alluded to domestic pleasures,— enjoyed by the old man often as keenly as by any; to the respect which is awarded to him,— itself no small satisfaction; to the pictured scenes of the past,— for the memory of the old loves to indulge in these reminiscences; above all, to *religion*, the anchor of hope that grows strong when everything else grows weak; — to all these we have referred as sources of happiness in advanced life; but the catalogue might be greatly enlarged. The old man loses not — certainly he *need* not

lose — his relish for intellectual pursuits and for works of taste, nor his admiration for all that is beautiful in the varied works of God.

Old men have been found engaged with all the ardor of youth in scientific pursuits, seeming to enjoy their intellectual labors more even than when young. The octogenarian has been found over his diagrams, at his experiments, and pursuing historical investigations, from the mere love of the employment, after all ambition had died out of the soul. The mind has flourished and enjoyed to the very last.

FRANKLIN.

Referring to the illustrious Franklin, Dr. Rush says of him, "He exhibited a striking instance of the influence of reading, writing and conversation, in prolonging a sound and active state of all the faculties of his mind. In his eighty-fourth year he discovered no one mark, in any of them, of the weakness or decay usually observed in the minds of persons at that advanced period of life."*

* Rush on the Mind.

MILTON, COWPER AND BURKE.

That immortal poem, "Paradise Lost," was written by the old and blind prince of epic poetry; and the "Task," no less immortal, if less great, was the work of one whose declining years, by this effort of his genius, were lighted up with a mild departing ray. Some of the most splendid works of the greatest of British statesmen,— Edmund Burke,— those in which the hues of his fancy rise, like the lights of the aurora, to an almost mysterious grandeur, were produced at an age bordering on seventy. Of Edmund Burke it was said, by one who was as great in the pulpit as Burke was in the forum,— the late Robert Hall,— and in terms as truthful as they are eloquent,—"His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every scene of the creation and every work of art."

Naturalists, too, have lost none of their ardor, by advancing age, in studying and classifying the wonderful works of God. To the very last

they have been seen, as the high priests of nature, offering their homage in her temples, though with trembling hands, and breathing out their life amid the half-finished works which they had projected.

These, I know, are peculiar cases. They are neither numerous nor of common occurrence; and it were well, perhaps, to take a grade of remark and reflection which may apply more generally.

A TASTE FOR READING.

May not a taste, then, for reading be cultivated, and kept up ordinarily to old age? May not the mind be trained to this habit, so that, when the strife and toil of middle life is over, the old man may have a sweet and refreshing source of pleasure still open to him? When others are too busy to converse with him, and time would otherwise hang heavily, here is a fund of entertainment and instruction, by which he can hold converse with the noblest intellects, the most

gifted geniuses, the most refined and acute critics.

History comes to him, and proposes, by way of recreation and amusement, to lead him back over the track of centuries, and to cause the panorama of life to pass before him, under all its former peculiarities, and its once exciting scenes.

Poetry, in its ten thousand lights and shadows, its day-dreams and its night-dreams, its gorgeous grandeur and its soft, soothing melodies, its sarcasm and its satire, its sententious and its swelling verse, its playful lyrics and its sublime epics, its enshrinement of the past and its prophecies respecting the future,—poetry, that so delighted his boyhood, soothed and cheered his midway course,—comes now, in the evening of life, and steals into the imagination, to re-light its darkening chambers, to re-touch the pictures over which time has passed his dusky fingers, and to re-kindle emotions which the wear and tear of this busy life had well-nigh extinguished.

We have known aged men who could relish such reading as keenly as in earlier life; and some have we known whose constant practice it was to interweave among the more solid works which they perused a portion of poetry, such as Cowper or Milton, Shakspeare or Young. We have even known aged men try their own hand at verse, and produce such melody in words, and such chasteness in thought, as might have been mistaken for the productions of better known and more celebrated bards. Surely no man who retains a taste for reading need fear the loneliness of age.

CONTEMPLATION OF NATURE.

May not an aged man also find pleasure in the works of nature,—in those beauties which everywhere court the eye, and convey through the eye, and ear, and touch, and smell, impressions of the divine goodness? May he not walk amid these silent companions, and receive their salutations, while his soul utters its responses in his awakened gratitude, and his undefined yet

pleasurable emotions? Is the flower not beautiful to the eye which is somewhat dim with years, or the song of bird not sweet because it falls on a somewhat less sensitive ear? Cannot the old man look on the sun and moon and stars, and say, "These are thy glorious works"? Is he shut out from nature's harmonies, or doomed to dwell *alone*, when so many consolatory voices from earth, air and sky, are addressing him?

How wrong, then, to assert that old age has not its blessings, its felicities! To assert that it is a period replete only with evils,— an intolerable waste, where burdens only are to be borne, and sighs only to be breathed,— where there is neither light, nor solace, nor hope,— a portion of human life simply to be dreaded,— worse, in the estimation of some, even than death itself! This is a wrong view, an atheistic view.

True it is, as we have already intimated, that, not revering the Creator in earlier days, casting away the opportunity for salvation in youth or

middle life, the last days must come to us under circumstances in which we shall say "we have no pleasure in them." But does this apply to the good man,—to him who has made preparation for old age, who has cultivated his mind and heart, and taken the staff which God has given him to lean upon? No, indeed. His *last* are often his best and brightest days. "An old disciple" is like a richly-freighted ship, coming from the land of spices and aromatics, whose long and perilous voyage may have given to her a somewhat battered and rusty aspect, but *within* lies the precious cargo. As she approaches the destined haven, who inquires about her external beauty,—whether her streamers be gay, her sides bright, or her sails without a rent? It is for something far more valuable that she is welcomed to port; and it is a proud day when this old and weather-beaten bark, after battling successfully the storms of the ocean, is moored safely in the harbor to which she was destined.

Is it not somewhat so with the aged Christian? Is he not stored with fruits from the better land,

and is he not bound for a harbor where storms and tempests never come? His outward man, by the lapse of years, may lose somewhat of its beauty, if by that word is meant the bright coloring of youth. He may not have the vigor and bearing of early manhood; but he has, under all that apparent dismantling of the outward man, a glorious accumulation of hopes and joys, of faith and love,— fruits of the spirit imported into the soul through years of experience and self-denial; and, as he nears the end, how, as in the picture before us, do the bending angels, eager to welcome so precious an arrival, come forth to pilot him into the peaceful haven of eternal rest!

A more sublime sight than an aged Christian, with the radiance of heaven upon his brow, and the world beneath his feet,—every earthly ligature loosened, having fought the good fight and kept the faith, and now only waiting in patience the coming of his Lord,— a more sublime moral spectacle is not to be found in the whole presentation of this world's sublimities.

THE LAST MESSENGER.

Death is the appointed messenger to call the aged pilgrim to his rest. "Go up to the mount and die there," was the word of God to Moses. Jacob leans upon the top of his staff, and gives his dying counsels to his sons. Simeon takes in his arms the long-expected consolation of Israel, and says, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." Sublime, indeed, is the spectacle of an aged disciple giving up the ghost. Death has but a feeble claim on such. It scarcely requires the action of death to break up the cell, and to give the long-imprisoned spirit its liberty.

THE OLD MAN'S BEST COMPANION.

This, we hesitate not to say, is the *Bible*. It is the only staff strong enough for him to lean upon. Sir Walter Scott, when old and infirm, suffering under a paralysis, and expecting, ere long, to give up his account, said, one day, to his son-in-law, then in attendance, "Hand me that

book!" Not understanding him at first, Lockhart said, "*What* book?" "There is but *one* book," replied this patriarch of literature. What a testimony to the value of the Scriptures to an old man hastening to the grave!

We have seen aged Christians contracting gradually their circle of reading, laying aside first one volume and then another which had been wont to occupy their attention, and concentrating their interest more and more upon the Bible. The daily study of this blessed book brought to them a soul-satisfying pleasure. As their days were fast numbering, and their sun sinking towards the horizon, they regarded every other book with a sort of jealous eye, as serving to supplant this best of books; or, with a growing indifference to scenes and subjects which constitute the material of earth's literature, and taking a deeper hold on the world to come, now so near, they found in the Bible those great and precious promises, that clear and well-defined road to heaven, that food so appropriate to the soul, and that firm support under

all its trials, which, in their circumstances, rendered it, as Scott remarked, "the *only* book."

BIBLE ADAPTED TO THE AGED.

The Scriptures are remarkable—among the many remarkable things which characterize them—for their adaptation to all classes of men, to men of all ages and conditions of life.

The child is here addressed in language which he can comprehend. Youth is warned of the vices and errors to which *he* is exposed, and earnestly counselled to choose the path of wisdom and piety. Manhood is addressed amid the toils and temptations of the world, and by a thousand arguments is urged to serve God rather than mammon. Nor is old age forgotten in the admonitions and the consolations of the Bible; but to living pictures of venerable piety and preëminent faith are added innumerable counsels calculated to throw a calm sunshine over the dying embers of existence.

The patriarchs of the Old Testament, living on, as they did, until the weight of years bent down

the body, and a life-long experience made wise the soul, stand out on the sacred page as striking examples of a sanctified old age. Their life, so holy, was a beautiful preparation to their death, so calm, so sublime.

ABRAHAM AND OTHER PATRIARCHS.

In Abraham, the migratory prince, the called of God, the God-befriended man,—with his faith, his self-denial, his courage, his noble independence, his death, so concisely told, yet evidently so triumphant,—in this holy old man we see what a mellow and attractive lustre may linger around the last days of a virtuous humanity.

Look also at Moses, the ex-prince of Egypt, robed in spirit with garments more lustrous than ever enfolded the limbs of the Pharaohs,—a high-souled man, with the learning of Egypt stored away in his capacious brain,—as ready, when Providence so ordered, to tend a flock in Horeb, as he was to wear the diadem in courtly halls; yea, even more so, for "he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of

Egypt;" willing for forty long years to remain in obscurity, and yet equally ready, at God's command and for God's glory, to become afterwards conspicuous;—look at this man, growing old amid scenes the most wonderful and the most trying, in which we know not whether more to admire the interpositions of God, or the almost superhuman wisdom and meekness of his servant; see him, too, resigning without a murmur all the expectations of an earthly rest, bowing his aged head to the verdict that makes his tomb to open at the very moment that his triumph was complete, that gives him only a distant glimpse of the long-hoped-for land, and then assigns him a resting-place amid the undiscovered clefts of Mount Nebo; see this venerable man, under all these circumstances, acting the saint as he had acted the sage, and leaving an example of meekness and of faith which throws over his end a lustre as bright as that which was shed over his earlier career!

Samuel, the judge; David, the prince, the warrior, and the poet; Daniel, the inflexible, the

wise, the holy,— men who lived amid stirring events, growing old in honor and virtue, and whose old age is instructive in proportion as their earlier history was eventful,— who lived the life of the righteous, and died their death,— such men are set before us, as the lights of a patriarchal age, to be studied, admired and imitated, by all who read the word of God.

With such moral portraits hung around the vestibule, and impanelled in the walls of that great temple of truth, how comforting to the aged to be permitted to enter and to gaze upon them! How much more satisfactory than to study the history of the proudest heroes and sages of Greece or Rome!

BIBLE PROMISES.

Then, again, the Bible is full of promises that respect a state of dependence. It supplies a staff on which the weary may lean. Some of these promises have special reference to old age; and all of them are full of consolation, such as that period of weakness and decline renders both

applicable and precious. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age." "And even to your old age I am He." "Now, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not!" "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season." But more comforting still are those passages which speak of the future, opening upon the aged eye visions of a bliss in which there is no alloy; of a state where there is no decay or dissolution, where nothing grows old, where no bright hue ever fades, no sigh is ever heaved, where the inhabitants never say "I am sick," and where God wipeth away all tears with his own hand!

A book that brings such things to view, coming into the hand when it is too feeble to grasp any earthly support; that discloses the light of heaven when to the eye all earthly grandeur is fading; that spreads heaven's sunshine around the path when a portentous darkness is stealing over it, and suspends over the very portals of the grave the bright garland of

immortality,— such a book cannot fail to interest the aged pilgrim, as he totters on towards the last sad scene that awaits all the children of mortality. Who can doubt that the Bible is the best companion of the old man? or who, that has studied it with eyes enlightened from above, can dread the hour when its revealed glories — now the objects of faith — shall, by death, become glorious realities, and be in actual possession, and that forever!

THE CLOSE.

We are drawing to a close. The stream of thought is tending to that great estuary which opens into the wide, wide ocean, the eternity which engulfs all living things.

The voyage, beginning in the flowery grotto of childhood, has reached, at length, the cold, dark scenery of old age. Seems it to be long? Ask the patriarch of eighty. "Few and evil," will he say, "have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage." In the retrospect, this voyage is but as a night-vision. Yet how many incidents are

crowded into it! How many influences combine to make it one of moral peril! O, how much are we indebted to that chart which gives us the way-marks, which points out the rocks and dangers, which casts a beacon glare over the whirlpool, and reveals to the eye of faith, in the dim distance, the haven of eternal rest!

Child of mortality, embarked on this eventful voyage, study this heaven-inscribed chart! With this in hand, and the guardian angel in attendance, thou mayest steer thy course in safety.

Man of the world, borne on in the world's rapid current, thou needest to consult this divine oracle, lest thou shouldst be swallowed in the vortex that opens before thee; and when thy sorrows and fears are upon thee, and the night sets in dark and dreary, so that thou knowest not what to do, then will this book of books give thee "an anchor sure and steadfast," and set on the brow of the gloomiest tempest the day-star of hope!

Aged pilgrim, bowed under the weight of

years, and nearing the outlet of existence,—that dark and dreaded passage-way to eternity, where so many have been wrecked, and which so few have passed in triumph,—keep thy eye steadfast on that bright opening in the lurid sky, where are seen those angel forms, and whence are heard those angel voices, saying, "Come up hither!" Above all, "look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith," who himself has passed those fearful straits, and who, to encourage thee, —now about to make the same dark passage,—says, "Fear not, for I will be with thee;" and, as thy dim eye, growing still more hazy amid the cold mists of the Jordan, fixes its gaze on Him, thou shalt see "the chariots of God, with their thousands of angels," and the Lord Jesus in the midst of them, ready to welcome thee to the everlasting and glorious rest! This is that "eternal life," the recompense of those who, by faith in Jesus Christ, "seek for glory, honor and immortality."

APPENDIX.

THE OUTFIT.

When a long or important voyage is about to be undertaken, the inquiry naturally is, what is the requisite outfit? Some things are indispensable, and some are merely convenient. Who would think of embarking on the trackless ocean, without a chart to mark out the way, and a compass to guide the vessel? Anchors and cables must also be provided, as a security against shipwreck, in case of peril from storms, on a dangerous coast. The ship must be well manned and amply provisioned. All these things are carefully attended to by those accustomed to do business on the great waters. Experience teaches them what is needed; and a regard to their personal safety, and the success of the voyage, induces them to see that all needful things are provided.

And should not those who undertake the eventful and perilous voyage of life inquire as to what is needful; in order, so far as human foresight can go, to insure security and success? The question applies especially to the young, who are in the condition somewhat of those who are making preparation for a voyage. The young are getting ready for the active and responsible duties of life. They are laying in stores for the voyage. They may scarcely be said, as yet, to have spread their sails on the wide ocean. What, then, is needful for them, ere they shall set forth to encounter the vicissitudes of life's troubled deep?

They must, in the first place, provide themselves with a *chart.* Is there such a thing to be had? — one that is reliable, — that indicates the true path, and lays down all the rocks and quicksands? The great point with the navigator is that his chart be accurate, — so perfectly accurate that he can place the utmost confidence in its indications. He accordingly compares it with other charts, purporting to mark out the same course.

He inquires, also, of those who have sailed by it, if they have found it reliable. All these precautions being taken, if the chart be well authenticated, he fearlessly trusts himself to its guidance.

Now, there is but one safe and reliable chart for the young voyager, — a map of life's ocean, that never deceives; that points out the track to be pursued, and reveals all the hidden dangers to which he may be exposed. That chart is the *Bible!* In the previous pages allusion has frequently been made to it, and its precepts have been the guiding principles in all the activities and duties of life, as set forth in this little volume. It traces in unerring lines the whole pathway of existence, and unfolds the bright and glorious haven to which the successful voyager at length arrives. Many, nay, millions, have sailed by this sure guide, and have found that it never deceives. Their testimony is, in the language of inspired song, "Through thy precepts I get understanding." "The law of the Lord is perfect." "By it is thy servant warned, and in keeping of it there is great reward." "Thou

wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." This chart teaches the young what they may expect, and what they must do. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." There is no treacherous current that it does not indicate; and no adverse wind that blows, but it signalizes. It was written by one who sees the end from the beginning; who traces the human heart perfectly; and whose omniscience enables him to portray, with minute accuracy, its deceitfulness, and the temptations and dangers to which it is exposed.

Take this chart, then, as an indispensable guide; unroll it every day, and mark, with eye intent, its every indication. Whatever perplexity may attend thy course, however dark the atmosphere may grow, attend to this sure guide, and steer by its marks and lines, and you will neither falter nor founder in your course.

There must also be provided a *compass*, whose needle shall always indicate the true position of

the vessel. That needle points unerringly to one part of the heavens. The mariner is never deceived by it. Darkness and storm may surround him; but, with his eye on the compass, he knows the direction, and understands how to manage his helm. What a provision is this! How wonderful the Providence that has discovered it! What vast interests are intrusted to that little, trembling needle, which holds communion with some mysterious power of nature at the north! What could a vessel do in mid ocean without some such guide?

But is there no moral compass in life's eventful voyage? If the Bible is a chart, may we not say that the religion of the Bible — true Christian principle — is the needle that points unerringly to the heavens? The soul that is renewed is like the steel that is magnetized; it turns instinctively to God and to heaven. The love of God is the loadstone that draws in one direction. It never greatly deviates. Like the needle, it may have its perturbations, — may be disturbed, and for a moment made to vibrate, —

but soon settles in the same direction. Launched on the ocean of existence, where so much is at stake, and so many perils await us, how much the young voyager needs this compass, this soul-magnet, drawing him in the direction of heaven, and showing to his oft bewildered mind the star of Bethlehem, shining on the brow of the moral firmament!

The spiritual outfit includes what the apostle calls the "anchor of the soul." "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast." Hope is generally represented under this symbol. Hence the phrase "anchor of hope." But the mere earthly hope, that which looks only to what may be enjoyed in *this* world, offers but a frail support amid the storms of life. We need an anchor strong enough to hold us safe, amid the heaviest billows and the fiercest winds. We need one that shall hold us safe, even when the waves of Jordan rise dark and dreadful around us. None but "that which entereth within the vail," which fixes itself on the eternal throne, — nothing, in short, but a

true Christian hope, — can prove an adequate support and stay.

The young are apt to think they can get on without much extraneous aid, — that, depending on their conscious energies and activities, they can cope with the difficulties and trials that are before them. This is owing, in part, to their inexperience. But, ere they have proceeded far on their voyage, they find themselves encompassed with dangers and perplexities, and are fain to seek for some friend to interpose and help them. Some sink under their early discouragements, and never rise to the dignity of conquered evils. They founder ere the voyage is half over. How many shipwrecked youthful hopes are seen on the shores of life! It makes one's heart bleed to witness the premature ruin that is going on in our population, among young men and women, — but especially among young *men*, who might have lived to adorn their country's annals, and shed over society a healthful influence; but who, through pride, and vanity, and sensuality, and self-confidence, have gone down to an early grave and to a disgraceful end!

What they needed was *religion*. They followed their own impulses, their own evil passions, instead of that unerring guide which God has given, and by taking heed to which a young man may cleanse his way. They went to sea without a *chart*. They flung themselves out on the deep with nothing to guide them. They suffered themselves to float wherever the waves of selfish passion set. They had no *compass*, — no religious principle to fall back upon when temptation beset, or when error was presented. What wonder, then, that they made shipwreck of their early manhood?

Sad picture! and too often not a *picture*, but a *reality*. O, youthful voyager, bound for eternity! so soon to lie stranded on the shores of time, so soon to end thy course, — why wilt thou not provide against the evils which threaten, and secure the good that is attainable? Secure the necessary outfit, — the chart, the compass, the help divine. Make God your portion, and heaven your aim. Steer by the Star of Bethlehem, and the voyage, even if tempestuous, will terminate in peace!