

**ALCOTT  
WILLIAM  
ANDRUS**

THE YOUNG MAN'S GUIDE

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*The Young Man's Guide:*

# Содержание

TO THE READER	4
INTRODUCTION	7
CHAPTER I.	14
CHAPTER II.	81
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	83

# William A. Alcott

## The Young Man's Guide

### TO THE READER

When I commenced this work, my object was a mere compilation. There were many excellent books for young men, already in circulation, but none which I thought unexceptionable; and some of them contained sentiments which I could not approve. I sat down, therefore, intending to make selections from the choicest parts of them all, and prepare an unexceptionable and practical manual; such an one as I should be willing to see in the hands of any youth in the community.

In the progress of my task, however, I found much less that was wholly in accordance with my own sentiments, than I had expected. The result was that the project of *compiling*, was given up; and a work prepared, which is chiefly *original*. There are, it is true, some quotations from 'Burgh's Dignity of Human Nature,' 'Cobbett's Advice to Young Men,' 'Chesterfield's Advice,' and Hawes' Lectures; but in general what I have derived from other works is re-written, and much modified. On this account it was thought unnecessary to refer to authorities in the body of the work.

The object of this book is to *elevate* and *reform*. That it may

prove useful and acceptable, as a means to these ends, is the hearty wish of

*THE AUTHOR*

Boston, Dec. 9, 1833.

## **ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION**

The great purpose of the Young Man's Guide, is the formation of such character in our young men as shall render them the worthy and useful and happy members of a great republic. To this end, the author enters largely into the means of improving the *mind*, the *manners* and the *morals*;—as well as the proper management of *business*. Something is also said on *amusements*, and *bad habits*. On the subject of *marriage* he has, however, been rather more full than elsewhere. The importance of this institution to every young man, the means of rendering it what the Creator intended, together with those incidental evils which either accompany or follow—some of them in terrible retribution—the vices which tend to oppose His benevolent purposes, are faithfully presented, and claim the special attention of every youthful reader.

## **ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION**

The rapid sale of a large edition of this work, and the general

tribute of public praise which has been awarded to its merits, instead of closing the eyes of the Publishers or the Author against existing defects, have, on the contrary, only deepened their sense of obligation to render the present edition as perfect as possible; and no pains have been spared to accomplish this end. Several new sections have been added to the work, and some of the former have been abridged or extended.

## **ADVERTISEMENT TO THE THIRD EDITION**

An increasing demand for the Young Man's Guide, evinced by the sale of more than five thousand copies of the work in a few months, have induced the publishers to give a third edition, with some amendments and additions by the author; who has also derived important suggestions from gentlemen of high literary and moral standing, to whom the work had been submitted for examination.

*THE PUBLISHERS.*

# INTRODUCTION

The young are often accused of being thoughtless, rash, and unwilling to be advised.

That the former of these charges is in a great measure just, is not denied. Indeed, what else could be expected? They are *thoughtless*, for they are yet almost strangers to the world, and its cares and perplexities. They are forward, and sometimes *rash*; but this generally arises from that buoyancy of spirits, which health and vigor impart. True, it is to be corrected, let the cause be what it may; but we shall correct with more caution, and probably with greater success, when we understand its origin.

That youth are *unwilling to be advised*, as a general rule, appears to me untrue. At least I have not found it so. When the feeling does exist, I believe it often arises from parental mismanagement, or from an unfortunate method of advising.

The infant seeks to grasp the burning lamp;—the parent endeavors to dissuade him from it. At length he grasps it, and suffers the consequences. Finally, however, if the parent manages him properly, he learns to follow his advice, and obey his indications, in order to avoid pain. Such, at least, is the natural result of *rational* management. And the habit of seeking parental counsel, once formed, is not easily eradicated. It is true that temptation and forgetfulness may lead some of the young *occasionally* to grasp the *lamp*, even after they are told

better; but the consequent suffering generally restores them to their reason. It is only when the parent neglects or refuses to give advice, and for a long time manifests little or no sympathy with his child, that the habit of filial reliance and confidence is destroyed. In fact there are very few children indeed, however improperly managed, who do not in early life acquire a degree of this confiding, inquiring, counsel-seeking disposition.

Most persons, as they grow old, forget that they have ever been young themselves. This greatly disqualifies them for social enjoyment. It was wisely said; 'He who would pass the latter part of his life with honor and decency, must, when he is young, consider that he shall one day be old, and when he is old, remember that he has once been young.' But if forgetfulness on this point disqualifies a person for *self* enjoyment, how much more for that which is social?

Still more does it disqualify us for giving advice. While a lad, I was at play, one day, with my mates, when two gentlemen observing us, one of them said to the other; 'Do you think you ever acted as foolishly as those boys do?' 'Why yes; I suppose I did;' was the reply. 'Well,' said the other, 'I never did;—I *know* I never did.'

Both of these persons has the name of parent, but he who could not believe he had ever acted like a child himself, is greatly destitute of the proper parental spirit. He never—or scarcely ever—puts himself to the slightest inconvenience to promote, directly, the happiness of the young, even for half an hour.

He supposes every child ought to be grave, like himself. If he sees the young engaged in any of those exercises which are really adapted to their years, he regards it as an entire loss of time, besides being foolish and unreasonable. He would have them at work, or at their studies. Whereas there is scarcely any thing that should give a parent more pleasure than to see his children, in their earliest years, enjoying that flow of spirits, which leads them forth to active, vigorous, blood-stirring sports.

Of all persons living, he who does not remember that he has once been young, is the most completely disqualified for giving youthful counsel. He obtrudes his advice occasionally, when the youth is already under temptation, and borne along with the force of a vicious current; but because he disregards it, he gives him up as heedless, perhaps as obstinate. If advice is afterwards asked, his manners are cold and repulsive. Or perhaps he frowns him away, telling him he never *follows* his advice, and therefore it is useless to *give* it. So common is it to treat the young with a measure of this species of roughness, that I cannot wonder the maxim has obtained that the young, generally, 'despise counsel.' And yet, I am fully convinced, no maxim is farther from the truth.

When we come to the very close of life, we cannot transfer, in a single moment, that knowledge of the world and of human nature which an experience of 70 years has afforded us. If, therefore, from any cause whatever, we have not already dealt it out to those around us, it is likely to be lost;—and lost for ever. Now is it not a pity that what the young would regard as

an invaluable treasure, could they come at it in such a manner, and at such seasons, as would be *agreeable* to them, and that, too, which the old are naturally so fond of distributing, should be buried with their bodies?

Let me counsel the young, then, to do every thing they can, consistently with the rules of good breeding, to draw forth from the old the treasures of which I have been speaking. Let them even make some sacrifice of that buoyant feeling which, at their age, is so apt to predominate. Let them conform, for the time, in some measure, to the gravity of the aged, in order to gain their favor, and secure their friendship and confidence. I do not ask them wholly to forsake society, or their youthful pastimes for this purpose, or to become grave *habitually*; for this would be requiring too much. But there are moments when old people, however disgusted they may be with the young, do so far unbend themselves as to enter into cheerful and instructive conversation. I can truly say that when a boy, some of my happiest hours were spent in the society of the aged—those too, who were not always what they should have been. The old live in the past, as truly as the young do in the future. Nothing more delights them than to relate stories of 'olden time,' especially when themselves were the *heroes*. But they will not relate them, unless there is somebody to hear. Let the young avail themselves of this propensity, and make the most of it. Some may have been heroes in war; some in travelling the country; others in hunting, fishing, agriculture or the mechanic arts; and it may be that here and there one will

boast of his skill, and relate stories of his success in that noblest of arts and employments—the making of his fellow creatures wise, and good, and happy.

In conversation with all these persons, you will doubtless hear much that is uninteresting. But where will you find any thing pure or perfect below the sun? The richest ores contain dross. At the same time you cannot fail, unless the fault is your own, to learn many valuable things from them all. From war stories, you will learn history; from accounts of travels, geography, human character, manners and customs; and from stories of the good or ill treatment which may have been experienced, you will learn how to secure the one, and avoid the other. From one person you will learn *one* thing; from another something else. Put these shreds together, and in time you will form quite a number of pages in the great book of human nature. You may thus, in a certain sense, live several lives in one.

One thing more is to be remembered. The more you *have*, the more you are bound to *give*. Common sense, as well as the Scripture, says, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Remember that as you advance in years you are bound to avoid falling into the very errors which, 'out of your own mouth' you have 'condemned' in those who have gone before you; and to make yourselves as acceptable as you can to the young, in order to secure their confidence, and impart to them, little by little, those accumulated treasures of experience which you have acquired in going through life, but which must otherwise, to a very great

extent, be buried with you in your graves.

But, my young friends, there is one method besides conversation, in which you may come at the wisdom of the aged; and that is through the medium of books. *Many* old persons have *written* well, and you cannot do better than to avail yourselves of their instructions. This method has even one advantage over conversation. In the perusal of a book, you are not so often prejudiced or disgusted by the repulsive and perhaps chilling manner of him who wrote it, as you might have been from his conversation and company.

I cannot but indulge the hope that you will find some valuable information and useful advice in *this* little book. It has cost me much labor to embody, in so small a compass, the results of my own experience on such a variety of subjects, and to arrange my thoughts in such a manner as seemed to me most likely to arrest and secure your attention. The work, however, is not wholly the result of my own experience, for I have derived many valuable thoughts from other writers.

An introductory chapter or preface is usually rather dry, but if this should prove sufficiently interesting to deserve your attention till you have read it, and the table of contents, thoroughly, I have strong hopes that you will read the rest of the book. And in accordance with my own principles, I believe you will try to follow my advice; for I take it for granted that none will purchase and read this work but such as are willing to be advised. I repeat it, therefore—I go upon the presumption that my advice will,

in the main, be followed. Not at every moment of your lives, it is true; for you will be exposed on all sides to temptation, and, I fear, sometimes fall. But when you come to review the chapter (for I hope I have written nothing but what is worth a second reading) which contains directions on that particular subject wherein you have failed, and find, too, how much you have suffered by neglecting counsel, and rashly seizing the *lamp*, I am persuaded you will not soon fall again in that particular direction.

In this view, I submit these pages to the youth of our American States. If the work should not please them, I shall be so far from attributing it to any fault or perversity of theirs, that I shall at once conclude I have not taken a wise and proper method of presenting my instructions.

# CHAPTER I.

## On the Formation of Character

### Section I. *Importance of aiming high, in the formation of character*

To those who have carefully examined the introduction and table of contents, I am now prepared to give the following general direction; *Fix upon a high standard of character.* To be *thought* well of, is not sufficient. The point you are to aim at, is, the greatest possible degree of usefulness.

Some may think there is danger of setting *too high* a standard of action. I have heard teachers contend that a child will learn to write much faster by having an *inferior copy*, than by imitating one which is comparatively perfect; 'because,' say they, 'a pupil is liable to be discouraged if you give him a *perfect* copy; but if it is only a little in advance of his own, he will take courage from the belief that he shall soon be able to equal it.' I am fully convinced, however, that this is not so. The *more* perfect the copy you place before the child, provided it be *written*, and not *engraved*, the better. For it must always be *possible* in the nature of things, for the child to imitate it; and what is not absolutely impossible, every child may reasonably be expected to aspire after, on the

principle, that whatever man *has done*, man *may* do.

So in human conduct, generally; whatever is possible should be aimed at. Did my limits permit, I might show that it is a part of the divine economy to place before his rational creatures a perfect standard of action, and to make it their duty to come up to it.

He who only aims at *little*, will *accomplish* but little. *Expect* great things, and *attempt* great things. A neglect of this rule produces more of the difference in the character, conduct, and success of men, than is commonly supposed. Some start in life without any leading object at all; some with a low one; and some aim high:—and just in proportion to the elevation at which they aim, will be their progress and success. It is an old proverb that he who aims at the sun, will not reach it, to be sure, but his arrow will fly higher than if he aims at an object on a level with himself. Exactly so is it, in the formation of character, except in one point. To reach the sun with a arrow is an impossibility, but a youth may aim high without attempting impossibilities.

Let me repeat the assurance that, as a general rule, *you may be whatever you will resolve to be*. Determine that you will be useful in the world, and you *shall* be. Young men seem to me utterly unconscious of what they are capable of being and doing. Their efforts are often few and feeble, because they are not awake to a full conviction that any thing great or distinguished is in their power.

But whence came en Alexander, a Cæsar, a Charles XII, or

a Napoleon? Or whence the better order of spirits,—a Paul, an Alfred, a Luther, a Howard, a Penn, a Washington? Were not these men once like yourselves? What but self exertion, aided by the blessing of Heaven, rendered these men so conspicuous for usefulness? Rely upon it,—what these men once *were*, you *may be*. Or at the least, you may make a nearer approach to them, than you are ready to believe. Resolution is almost omnipotent. Those little words, *try*, and *begin*, are sometimes great in their results. 'I can't,' never accomplished any thing;—'I will try,' has achieved wonders.

This position might be proved and illustrated by innumerable facts; but one must suffice.

A young man who had wasted his patrimony by profligacy, whilst standing, one day, on the brow of a precipice from which he had determined to throw himself, formed the sudden resolution to regain what he had lost. The purpose thus formed was kept; and though he began by shoveling a load of coals into a cellar, for which he only received twelve and a half cents, yet he proceeded from one step to another till he more than recovered his lost possessions, and died worth sixty thousand pounds sterling.

You will derive much advantage from a careful perusal of the lives of eminent individuals, especially of those who were *good* as well as great. You will derive comparatively little benefit from reading the lives of those scourges of their race who have drenched the earth in blood, except so far as it tends to show you

what an immense blessing they *might* have been to the world, had they devoted to the work of human improvement those mighty energies which were employed in human destruction. Could the physical and intellectual energy of Napoleon, the order and method of Alfred, the industry, frugality, and wisdom of Franklin and Washington, and the excellence and untiring perseverance of Paul, and Penn, and Howard, be united in each individual of the rising generation, who can set limits to the good, which they might, and inevitably would accomplish! Is it too much to hope that some happier age will witness the reality? Is it not even probable that the rising generation may afford many such examples?

## Section II. *On Motives to action*

Not a few young men either have no fixed principles, no governing motive at all, or they are influenced by those which are low and unworthy. It is painful to say this, but it is too true. On such, I would press the importance of the following considerations.

Among the motives to action which I would present, the first is a regard to *your own happiness*. To this you are by no means indifferent at present. Nay, the attainment of happiness is your primary object. You seek it in every desire, word, and action. But you sometimes mistake the road that leads to it, either for the want of a friendly hand to guide you, or because you refuse

to be guided. Or what is most common, you grasp at a smaller good, which is near, and apparently certain, and in so doing cut yourselves off from the enjoyment of a good which is often infinitely greater, though more remote.

Let me urge, in the second place, a regard for the family to which you belong. It is true you can never fully know, unless the bitterness of ingratitude should teach you, the extent of the duty you owe to your relatives; and especially to your parents. You *cannot* know—at least till you are parents yourselves,—how their hearts are bound up in yours. But if you do not *in some measure* know it, till this late period, you are not fit to be parents.

In the third place, it is due to society, particularly to the neighborhood or sphere in which you move, and to the *associations* to which you may belong, that you strive to attain a very great elevation of character. Here, too, I am well aware that it is impossible, at your age, to perceive fully, how much you have it in your power to contribute, if you will, to the happiness of those around you; and here again let me refer you to the advice and guidance of aged friends.

But, fourthly, it is due to the nation and age to which you belong, that you fix upon a high standard of character. This work is intended for American youth. *American!* did I say? This word, alone, ought to call forth all your energies, and if there be a slumbering faculty within you, arouse it to action. Never, since the creation, were the youth of any age or country so imperiously called upon to exert themselves, as those whom

I now address. Never before were there so many important interests at stake. Never were such immense results depending upon a generation of men, as upon that which is now approaching the stage of action. These rising millions are destined, according to all human probability, to form by far the greatest nation that ever constituted an entire community of freemen, since the world began. To form the character of these millions involves a greater amount of responsibility, individual and collective, than any other work to which humanity has ever been called. And the reasons are, it seems to me, obvious.

Now it is for you, my young friends, to determine whether these weighty responsibilities shall be fulfilled. It is for you to decide whether this *greatest* of free nations shall, at the same time, be the *best*. And as every nation is made up of individuals, you are each, in reality, called upon daily, to settle this question: 'Shall the United States, possessing the most ample means of instruction within the reach of nearly all her citizens, the happiest government, the healthiest of climates, the greatest abundance of the best and most wholesome nutriment, with every other possible means for developing all the powers of human nature, be peopled with the most vigorous, powerful, and happy race of human beings which the world has ever known?'

There is another motive to which I beg leave, for one moment, to direct your attention. You are bound to fix on a high standard of action, from the desire of obeying the will of God. *He* it is who has cast your lot in a country which—all things considered

—is the happiest below the sun. *He* it is who has given you such a wonderful capacity for happiness, and instituted the delightful relations of parent and child, and brother and sister, and friend and neighbor. I might add, *He* it is, too, who has given you the name *American*,—a name which alone furnishes a passport to many civilized lands, and like a good countenance, or a becoming dress, prepossesses every body in your favor.

But what young man is there, I may be asked, who is not influenced more or less, by all the motives which have been enumerated? Who is there that does not seek his own happiness? Who does not desire to please his parents and other relatives, his friends and his neighbors? Who does not wish to be distinguished for his attachment to country and to liberty? Nay, who has not even some regard, in his conduct, to the will of God?

I grant that many young men, probably the most of those into whose hands this book will be likely to fall, are influenced, more or less, by all these considerations. All pursue their own happiness, no doubt. By far the majority of the young have, also, a general respect for the good opinion of others, and the laws of the Creator.

Still, do not thousands and tens of thousands mistake, as I have already intimated, in regard to what really promotes their own happiness? Is there any certainty that the greatest happiness of a *creature* can be secured without consulting the will of the Creator? And do not those young persons greatly err, who suppose that they can secure a full amount, even of earthly

blessings, without conforming, with the utmost strictness, to those rules for conduct, which the Bible and the Book of Nature, so plainly make known?

Too many young men expect happiness from wealth. This is their great object of study and action, by night and by day. Not that they suppose there is an inherent value in the wealth itself, but only that it will secure the means of procuring the *happiness* they so ardently desire. But the farther they go, in the pursuit of wealth, for the sake of happiness, especially if successful in their plans and business, the more they forget their original purpose, and seek wealth for the *sake* of wealth. To *get rich*, is their principal motive to action.

So it is in regard to the exclusive pursuit of sensual pleasure, or civil distinction. The farther we go, the more we lose our original character, and the more we become devoted to the objects of pursuit, and incapable of being roused by other motives.

The laws of God, whether we find them in the constitution of the universe around us, or go higher and seek them in the revealed word, are founded on a thorough knowledge of human nature, and all its tendencies. Do you study natural science—the laws which govern matter, animate and inanimate? What is the lesson which it constantly inculcates, but that it is man's highest interest not to violate or attempt to violate the rules which Infinite Wisdom has adopted; and that every violation of his laws brings punishment along with it? Do you study the laws of God, as revealed in the Bible? And do not they, too, aim to inculcate

the necessity of constant and endless obedience to his will, at the same time that their rejection is accompanied by the severest penalties which heaven and earth can inflict? What, in short, is the obvious design of the Creator, wherever and whenever any traces of his character and purposes can be discovered? What, indeed, but to show us that it is our most obvious duty and interest to love and obey Him?

The young man whose highest motives are to seek his own happiness, and please his friends and neighbors, and the world around him, does much. This should never be denied. He merits much—not in the eye of God, for of this I have nothing to say in this volume—but from his fellow men. And although he may have never performed a single action from a desire to obey God, and make his fellow men really *better*, as well as happier, he may still have been exceedingly useful, compared with a large proportion of mankind.

But suppose a young man possesses a character of this stamp—and such there are. How is he ennobled, how is the dignity of his nature advanced, how is he elevated from the rank of a mere companion of creatures,—earthly creatures, too,—to that of a meet companion and fit associate for the inhabitants of the celestial world, and the Father of all; when to these traits, so excellent and amiable in themselves, is joined the pure and exalted desire to pursue his studies and his employments, his pleasures and his pastimes—in a word, every thing—even the most trifling concern which is *worth* doing, exactly as God would

wish to have it done; and make the *means* of so doing, his great and daily study?

This, then, brings us to the highest of human motives to action, the love of God. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God supremely, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, are the two great commands which bind the human family together. When our love to God is evinced by pure love to man, and it is our constant prayer, 'Lord what wilt thou have me to *do*;' then we come under the influence of motives which are worthy of creatures destined to immortality. When it is our meat and drink, from a sacred regard to the Father of our spirits, and of all things in the universe, material and immaterial, to make every thought, word and action, do good—have a bearing upon the welfare of one or more, and the more the better—of our race, then alone do we come up to the dignity of our nature, and, by Divine aid, place ourselves in the situation for which the God of nature and of grace designed us.

I have thus treated, at greater length than I had at first intended, of the importance of having an *elevated aim*, and of the *motives to action*. On the *means* by which young men are to attain this elevation, it is the purpose of this little work to dwell plainly and fully. These *means* might be classed in three great divisions; viz. *physical*, *mental*, and *moral*. Whatever relates to the health, belongs to the first division; whatever to the improvement of the mind, the second; and the formation of good manners and virtuous habits, constitutes the third. But although

an arrangement of this sort might have been more logical, it would probably have been less interesting to the reader. The means of religious improvement, appropriately so called, require a volume of themselves.

### Section III. *Industry*

Nothing is more essential to usefulness and happiness in life, than habits of industry. 'This we commanded you,' says St. Paul, 'that if any would not work, neither should he eat.' Now this would be the sober dictate of good sense, had the apostle never spoken. It is just as true now as it was 2,000 years ago, that no person possessing a sound mind in a healthy body, has a right to live in this world without labor. If he claims an existence on any other condition, let him betake himself to some other planet.

There are many kinds of labor. Some which are no less useful than others, are almost exclusively mental. You may make your own selection from a very wide range of employments, all, perhaps, equally important to society. *But something you must do.* Even if you happen to inherit an ample fortune, your health and happiness demand that you should labor. To live in idleness, even if you have the means, is not only injurious to yourself, but a species of fraud upon the community, and the children,—if children you ever have,—who have a claim upon you for what you can earn and do.

Let me prevail with you then, when I urge you to set out in

life fully determined to depend chiefly on yourself, for pecuniary support; and to be in this respect, independent. In a country where the general rule is that a person shall rise,—if he rise at all,—by his own merit, such a resolution is indispensable. It is usually idle to be looking out for support from some other quarter. Suppose you should obtain a place of office or trust through the friendship, favor, or affection of others; what then? Why, you hold your post at uncertainties. It may be taken from you at almost any hour. But if you depend on yourself alone, in this respect, your mountain stands strong, and cannot very easily be moved.

He who lives upon any thing except his own labor, is incessantly surrounded by rivals. He is in daily danger of being out-bidden; his very bread depends upon caprice, and he lives in a state of never ceasing fear. His is not, indeed, the dog's life, '*hunger and idleness,*' but it is worse; for it is '*idleness with slavery;*' the latter being just the price of the former.

Slaves, are often well *fed* and decently *clothed*; but they dare not *speak*. They dare not be suspected even to *think* differently from their master, despise his acts as much as they may;—let him be tyrant, drunkard, fool, or all three at once, they must either be silent, or lose his approbation. Though possessing a thousand times his knowledge, they yield to his assumption of superior understanding; though knowing it is they who, in fact, do all that he is paid for doing, it is destruction to them to *seem as if they thought* any portion of the service belonged to themselves.

You smile, perhaps, and ask what all this tirade against slavery means. But remember, there is slavery of several kinds. There is *mental* slavery as well as bodily; and the former is not confined to any particular division of the United States.

Begin, too, with a determination to labor through life. There are many who suppose that when they have secured to themselves a competence, they shall sit with folded arms, in an easy chair, the rest of their days, and enjoy it. But they may be assured that this will never do. The very fact of a person's having spent the early and middle part of life in active usefulness, creates a necessity, to the body and mind, of its continuance. By this is not meant that men should labor as *hard* in old age, even in proportion to their strength, as in early life. Youth requires a great variety and amount of action, maturity not so much, and age still less. Yet so much as age does, in fact, demand, is more necessary than to those who are younger. Children are so tenacious of life, that they do not *appear to suffer immediately*, if exercise is neglected; though a day of reckoning must finally come.

Hence we see the reason why those who retire from business towards the close of life, so often become diseased, in body and mind; and instead of enjoying life, or making those around them happy, become a source of misery to themselves and others.

Most people have a general belief in the importance of industrious habits; and yet not a few make strange work in endeavoring to form them. Some attempt to do it by compulsion; others by flattery. Some think it is to be accomplished by set

lessons, in spite of example; others by example alone.

A certain father who was deeply convinced of the importance of forming his sons to habits of industry, used to employ them whole days in removing and replacing heaps of stones. This was well intended, and arose from regarding industry as a high accomplishment; but there is some danger of defeating our own purpose in this way, and of producing *disgust*. Besides this, labor enough can usually be obtained which is obviously profitable.

All persons, without exception, ought to labor more or less, every day in the open air. Of the truth of this opinion, the public are beginning to be sensible; and hence we hear much said, lately, about manual labor schools. Those who, from particular circumstances, cannot labor in the open air, should substitute in its place some active mechanical employment, together with suitable calisthenic or gymnastic exercises.

It is a great misfortune of the present day, that almost every one is, by his own estimate, *raised above his real state of life*. Nearly every person you meet with is aiming at a situation in which he shall be exempted from the drudgery of laboring with his hands.

Now we cannot all become '*lords*' and '*gentlemen*,' if we would. There must be a large part of us, after all, to make and mend clothes and houses, and carry on trade and commerce, and, in spite of all that we can do, the far greater part of us must actually *work* at something; otherwise we fall under the sentence; '*He who will not work shall not eat.*' Yet, so strong

is the propensity to be *thought* 'gentlemen;' so general is this desire amongst the youth of this proud money making nation, that thousands upon thousands of them are, at this moment, in a state which may end in starvation; not so much because they are too *lazy* to earn their bread, as because they are too *proud*!

And what are the *consequences*? A lazy youth becomes a burden to those parents, whom he ought to comfort, if not support. Always aspiring to something higher than he can reach, his life is a life of disappointment and shame. If marriage *befall* him, it is a real affliction, involving others as well as himself. His lot is a thousand times worse than that of the common laborer. Nineteen times out of twenty a premature death awaits him: and, alas! how numerous are the cases in which that death is most miserable, not to say ignominious!

#### **Section IV. *On Economy***

There is a false, as well as a true economy. I have seen an individual who, with a view to economy, was in the habit of splitting his wafers. Sometimes a thick wafer can be split into two, which will answer a very good purpose; but at others, both parts fall to pieces. Let the success be ever so complete, however, all who reflect for a moment on the value of time, must see it to be a losing process.

I knew a laboring man who would hire a horse, and spend the greater part of a day, in going six or eight miles and purchasing

half a dozen bushels of grain, at sixpence less a bushel than he must have given near home. Thus to gain fifty cents, he subjected himself to an expense, in time and money, of one hundred and fifty. These are very common examples of defective economy; and of that 'withholding' which the Scripture says 'tends to poverty.'

Economy in time is economy of money—for it needs not Franklin to tell us that time is equivalent to money. Besides, I never knew a person who was economical of the one, who was not equally so of the other. Economy of time will, therefore, be an important branch of study.

But the study is rather difficult. For though every young man of common sense knows that an hour is *sixty minutes*, very few seem to know that sixty minutes make an hour. On this account many waste fragments of time,—of one, two, three or five minutes each—without hesitation, and apparently without regret;—never thinking that fifteen or twenty such fragments are equal to a full hour. 'Take care of the pence, the pounds will take care of themselves,' is not more true, than that hours will take care of themselves, if you will only secure the minutes.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A teacher, who has been pleased to say much in behalf of this work, and to do much to extend its circulation, in a late letter, very modestly, but properly makes the following inquiry; 'Has not Dr. Franklin's precept, *time is money*, made many misers? Is it not used without sufficient qualification?' There is no good thing, nor any good advice, but what may be abused, if used or taken *without qualification*. There may be misers in regard to time, as well as money; and no one can become miserly in the one respect without soon becoming so in the other. He who cannot or rather will not give any portion of his time to promote the happiness of those around him, in the various

In order to form economical habits, several important points must be secured. You must have for every *purpose* and *thing* a *time*, and *place*; and every thing must be done *at the time*, and all things put *in their place*.

1. *Every thing must be done at the time.* Whether you attempt little or much, let every hour have its employment, in business, study, social conversation, or diversion; and unless it be on extraordinary occasions, you must not suffer your plan to be broken. It is in this way that many men who perform an incredible amount of business, have abundant leisure. And it is for want of doing business systematically that many who effect but little, never find much leisure. They spend their lives in literally 'doing nothing.'

An eminent prime minister of Holland was asked how he could perform such a vast amount of business, as it was known he did, and yet have so much leisure. 'I do every thing at the time;' was the reply.

Some of you will say you have no room for any plan of your own; that your whole time is at the will of your master, or employer. But this is not so. There are few persons who are so entirely devoted to others as not to have minutes, if not hours, every day, which they can call their own. Now here it is that character is tried and proved. He alone who is wise in small

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ways of doing good, which perpetually offer, lest it should take from his means of earning property, is as much to be pitied as he who hoards all his dollars and cents. Still it is true that youth should husband well their time, and avoid wasting either that or their money.

matters, will be wise in large ones. Whether your unoccupied moments amount in a day to half an hour, or an hour, or two hours, have something to do in each of them. If it be social conversation, the moment your hour arrives, engage in it at once; if study, engage at once in that. The very fact that you have but a very few minutes at your command, will create an interest in your employment during that time.

Perhaps no persons read to better purpose than those who have but very little leisure. Some of the very best minds have been formed in this manner. To repeat their names would be to mention a host of self educated men, in this and in other countries. To show what can be done, I will mention one fact which fell under my own observation. A young man, about fifteen years of age, unaccustomed to study, and with a mind wholly undisciplined, read Rollin's Ancient History through in about three months, or a fourth of a year; and few persons were ever more closely confined to a laborious employment than he was during the whole time. Now to read four such works as Rollin in a year, is by no means a matter to be despised.

2. *Every thing should have its place.* Going into a shop, the other day, where a large number of persons were employed, I observed the following motto, in large letters, pasted on the side of the room; 'Put every thing in its proper place.' I found the owner of the shop to be a man of order and economy.

An old gentleman of my acquaintance, who always had a place for every thing, made it a rule, if any thing was out of its

place, and none of his children could find it, to blame the whole of them. This was an unreasonable measure, but produced its intended effect. His whole family follow his example; they have a place for every thing, and they put every thing in its place.

Unless both the foregoing rules are observed, true economy does not and cannot exist. But without economy, life is of little comparative value to ourselves or others. This trait of character is *generally* claimed, but more *rarely* possessed.

## Section V. *Indolence*

One of the greatest obstacles in the road to excellence, is indolence. I have known young men who would reason finely on the value of time, and the necessity of rising early and improving every moment of it. Yet I have also known these same *aspiring* young men to lie dozing, an hour or two in the morning, after the wants of nature had been reasonably, and more than reasonably gratified. You can no more rouse them, with all their fine arguments, than you can a log. There they lie, completely enchained by indolence.

I have known others continually complain of the shortness of time; that they had no time for business, no time for study, &c. Yet they would lavish hours in yawning at a public house, or hesitating whether they had better go to the theatre or stay; or whether they had better get up, or indulge in 'a little more slumber.' Such people wear the most galling chains, and as long

as they continue to wear them there is no reasoning with them.

An indolent person is scarcely human; he is half quadruped, and of the most stupid species too. He may have good intentions of discharging a duty, while that duty is at a distance; but let it approach, let him view the time of action as near, and down go his hands in languor. He *wills*, perhaps; but he *unwills* in the next breath.

What is to be done with such a man, especially if he is a young one? He is absolutely good for nothing. Business tires him; reading fatigues him; the public service interferes with his pleasures, or restrains his freedom. His life must be passed on a bed of down. If he is employed, moments are as hours to him—if he is amused, hours are as moments. In general, his whole time eludes him, he lets it glide unheeded, like water under a bridge. Ask him what he has done with his morning,—he cannot tell you; for he has lived without reflection, and almost without knowing whether he has lived at all.

The indolent man sleeps as long as it is possible for him to sleep, dresses slowly, amuses himself in conversation with the first person that calls upon him, and loiters about till dinner. Or if he engages in any employment, however important, he leaves it the moment an opportunity of talking occurs. At length dinner is served up; and after lounging at the table a long time, the evening will probably be spent as unprofitably as the morning: and this it may be, is no unfair specimen of his whole life. And is not such a wretch, for it is improper to call him a man—good for

nothing? What is he good for? How can any rational being be willing to spend the precious gift of life in a manner so worthless, and so much beneath the dignity of human nature? When he is about stepping into the grave, how can he review the past with any degree of satisfaction? What is his history, whether recorded here or there,—in golden letters, or on the plainest slab—but, 'he was born' and 'he died!'

## Section VI. *Early Rising and Rest*

Dr. Rush mentions a patient of his who thought himself wonderfully abstinent because he drank no spirituous or fermented liquors, *except a bottle of wine or so*, after dinner!

In like manner some call it early to retire at *ten or eleven o'clock*. Others think *ten very late*. Dr. Good, an English writer on medicine, in treating of the appropriate means of preventing the gout in those who are predisposed to it, after giving directions in regard to diet, drink, exercise, &c., recommends an early hour of retiring to rest. 'By all means,' says he, 'you should go to bed by eleven.'

To half the population of New England such a direction would seem strange; but by the inhabitants of cities and large towns, who already begin to ape the customs and fashions of the old world, the caution is well understood. People who are in the habit of making and attending parties which commence at 9 or 10 o'clock in the evening, can hardly be expected to rise with the

sun.

We hear much said about the benefit of the morning air. Many wise men have supposed the common opinion on this subject to be erroneous; and that the mistake has arisen from the fact that being refreshed and invigorated by rest, the change is *within* instead of *without*; that our physical frames and mental faculties are more healthy than they were the previous evening, rather than that the surrounding atmosphere has altered.

Whether the morning air is *more* healthy or not, it is certainly healthy enough. Besides, there are so many reasons for early rising that if I can persuade the reader to go to bed early, I shall have little fear of his lying late in the morning.

1st. He who rises early and plans his work, and early sets himself about it, generally finds his business go well with him the whole day. He has taken time by the foretop; and will be sure to go before, or *drive* his business; while his more tardy neighbor 'suffers his business to drive him.' There is something striking in the feeling produced by beginning a day's work thus seasonably. It gives an impulse to a man's thoughts, speech, and actions, which usually lasts through the day. This is not a mere whim, but sober fact; as can be attested by thousands. The person who rises late, usually pleads (for mankind are very ingenious in defence of what falls in with their own inclinations,) that he does as much in the progress of the day, as those who rise early. This may, in a few instances, be true; but in general, facts show the reverse. The motions of the early riser will be more lively

and vigorous all day. He may, indeed, become dull late in the evening, but he ought to be so.

Sir Matthew Hale said that after spending a Sunday well, the rest of the week was usually prosperous. This is doubtless to be accounted for—in part at least—on the above principle.

2. In the warm season, the morning is the most agreeable time for labor. Many farmers and mechanics in the country perform a good half day's work before the people of the city scarcely know that the sun shines.<sup>2</sup>

3. To lie snoring late in the morning, assimilates us to the most beastly of animals. Burgh, an ingenious English writer, justly observes; 'There is no time spent more stupidly than that which some luxurious people pass in a morning between sleeping and waking, after nature has been fully gratified. He who is awake may be doing something: he who is asleep, is receiving the refreshment necessary to fit him for action: but the hours spent in dozing and slumbering can hardly be called existence.'

The late Dr. Smith, of Yale College, in his lectures, used to urge on his hearers never to take '*the second nap*.' He said that if this rule were steadily and universally followed by persons in health,—there would be no dozing or oversleeping. If, for once, they should awake from the first nap before nature was sufficiently restored, the next night would restore the proper

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Franklin, in view of the latter fact, wrote a humorous Essay, at Paris, in which he labored hard to show the people of that luxurious and dissipated city, that the sun gives light as soon as it rises.

balance. In laying this down as a rule, Dr. Smith would, of course, except those instances in which we are awakened by accident.

4. It has been remarked by experienced physicians that they have seldom, if ever, known a person of great age, who was not an early riser. In enumerating the causes of longevity, Rush and Sinclair both include early rising.

5. It is a trite but just maxim that one hour's sleep before midnight is worth two afterward. Why it is so, would perhaps be difficult to say. The power of habit is great, and as the majority of children are trained to go to bed early, perhaps this will in part account for the fact. So when the usual hour for meal arrives, a given amount of food eaten at the time, is digested in a more healthy and regular manner than if eaten one, or two, or three hours afterwards. Again, nature certainly intended man should exercise during the day, and sleep in the night. I do not say the *whole* night; because in the winter and in high northern latitudes, this would be devoting an unreasonable portion of time to sleep. It would hardly do to sleep three or four months. But in all countries, and in all climates, we should try to sleep half our hours before midnight.

6. The person who, instead of going to bed at nine, sits up till eleven, and then sleeps during two hours of daylight the following morning, is grossly negligent of economy. For, suppose he makes this his constant practice, during his whole *business* life, say fifty years. The extra oil or tallow which he would consume would not be estimated at less than one cent an evening; which, in fifty

years would be \$182.50. Not a very large sum to be sure; but, to every *young* man, worth saving; since, to a community of 1,000 young men, the amount would be no less than \$182,500. Then the loss in health and strength would be far greater, though it is obvious that it cannot so easily be computed.

7. Once more. If an hour's sleep before midnight is worth more than an hour in the morning, then an hour in the morning is of course worth less than an hour before midnight, and a person must sleep a greater number of hours in the morning to obtain an equal amount of rest. A person retiring at eleven and rising at eight, would probably get no more rest, possibly less, than a person who should sleep from nine to five;—a period one hour shorter. But if so, he actually loses an hour of time a day. And you well know, if Franklin had not told you so, that *time is money*.

Now, if we estimate the value of this time at ten cents an hour for one person in four, of the population of the United States—and this is probably a fair estimate—the loss to an individual in a year, or 313 working days, would be \$31.30; and in 50 years \$1,565. A sum sufficient to buy a good farm in many parts of the country. The loss to a population equal to that of the United States, would, in fifty years, be no less than five thousand and eighty-six millions of dollars!

But this is not the whole loss. The time of the young and old is beyond all price for the purposes of mental and moral improvement. Especially is this true of the precious golden hours of the morning. Think, then, of the immense waste in a year! At

twelve hours a day, more than a million of years of valuable time are wasted annually in the United States.

I have hitherto made my estimates on the supposition that we do not sleep too much, in the aggregate, and that the only loss sustained arises from the *manner of procuring it*. But suppose, once more, we sleep an hour too much daily. This involves a waste just twice as great as that which we have already estimated.

Do you startle at these estimates! It is proper that many of you should. You have misspent time enough. Awake your 'drowsy souls,' and shake off your stupid habits. Think of Napoleon breaking up the boundaries of kingdoms, and dethroning kings, and to accomplish these results, going through with an amount of mental and bodily labor that few constitutions would be equal to, with only *four hours of sleep in the twenty-four*. Think of Brougham too, who *works* as many hours, perhaps, as any man in England, and has as much influence, and yet sleeps as few; i.e., only four. A hundred persons might be named, and the list would include some of the greatest benefactors of their race, who never think of sleeping more than *six* hours a day. And yet many of you are scarcely contented with eight!

Would you conquer as Bonaparte did—not states, provinces, and empires,—but would you aspire to the high honor of conquering yourselves, and of extending your conquests intellectually and morally, you must take the necessary steps. The path is a plain one; requiring nothing but a little moral courage. 'What man has done, man may do.' I know you do not and ought

not to aspire to conquer kingdoms, or to become prime ministers; but you ought to aspire to get the victory over yourselves:—a victory as much more noble than those of Napoleon, and Cæsar, and Alexander, as intellectual and moral influence are superior to mere brute force.

## **Section VII. *On Duty to Parents***

It was the opinion of a very eminent and observing man, that those who are obedient to parents, are more healthy, long lived, and happy than those who are disobedient. And he reasons very fairly on the subject.

Now I do not know whether the promise annexed to the fifth command, (whatever might have been intended, as addressed to the Jews,) has any special reference to happiness in this life. I only know that in general, those who are obedient to parents are apt to be virtuous in other respects; for the virtues as well as the vices usually go in companies. But that virtue in general tends to long life and happiness, nobody will entertain a doubt.

I am sorry, however, to find that the young, when they approach adult years, are apt to regard authority as irksome. It should not be so. So long as they remain under the parental roof, they ought to feel it a pleasure to conform to the wishes of the parents in all the arraignments of the family, if not absolutely unreasonable. And even in the latter case, it is my own opinion—and one which has not been hastily formed, either—that it would

be better to submit, with cheerfulness; and for three reasons.

1st. For the sake of your own reputation; which will always be *endangered* by disobedience, however unjust the parental claim may be.

2d. From a love of your parents, and a sense of what you owe them for their kind care; together with a conviction that perfect rectitude is not to be expected. You will find error, more or less, every where around you—even in yourselves; why should you expect perfection in your parents?

3d. Because it is better to *suffer* wrong than to *do* wrong. Perhaps there is nothing which so improves human character, as suffering wrongfully; although the world may be slow to admit the principle. More than this; God himself has said a great deal about *obedience to parents*.

If real evils multiply so that a young man finds he cannot remain in his father's house, without suffering not only in his feelings, but permanently in his temper and disposition, I will not say that it is never best to leave it. I do not believe, however, there is *often* any such necessity. Of those who leave their paternal home on this plea, I believe nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand might profitably remain, if they would; and that a very large number would find the fault in themselves—in their own temper, disposition or mistaken views—rather than in their parents.

And what is to be *gained* by going away? Unfortunately this is a question too seldom asked by restless, or headstrong youths;

and when asked and answered, it is usually found that their unhappy experience proves the answer to have been incorrect. I have seldom known a youth turn out well who left his parents or his guardian or master. On this subject, Franklin, I know, is often triumphantly referred to; but for one such instance as that, I hazard nothing in saying there are hundreds of a contrary character. Within the circle of my own observation, young men who leave in this manner, have wished themselves back again a thousand times.

But be this as it may, so long as you remain in the family, if you are 70 years of age, by all means yield to authority implicitly, and if possible, cheerfully. Avoid, at least, altercation and reproaches. If things do not go well, fix your eye upon some great example of suffering wrongfully, and endeavor to profit by it.

There is no sight more attractive than that of a well ordered family; one in which every child, whether five years old or fifty, submits cheerfully to those rules and regulations which parental authority has thought fit to impose. It is, to use a strong expression, an image of heaven. But, exactly in the same proportion, a family of the contrary character resembles the regions below.

Nor is this all. It is an ancient maxim,—and however despised by some of the moderns, none can be more true,—that he only is fit to command who has first learned to obey. Obedience, is, in fact, the great lesson of human life. We first learn to yield our will to the dictates of parental love and wisdom. Through them

we learn to yield submissively to the great laws of the Creator, as established in the material world. We learn to avoid, if possible, the flame, the hail, the severity of the cold, the lightning, the tornado, and the earthquake; and we do not choose to fall from a precipice, to have a heavy body fall on us, to receive vitriol or arsenic into our stomachs, (at least in health) or to remain a very long time, immersed in water, or buried in the earth. We submit also to the government under which we live. All these are lessons of obedience. But the Christian goes farther; and it is his purpose to obey not only all these laws, but any additional ones he may find imposed, whether they pertain to material or immaterial existences.

In short, he who would put himself in the most easy position, in the sphere allotted him by the Author of Nature, must learn *to obey*,—often implicitly and unconditionally. At least he must know how to obey: and the earlier this knowledge is acquired, and corresponding habits established, the better and happier will he find his condition, and the more quiet his conscience.

### **Section VIII. *Faithfulness***

Hardly any thing pleases me more in a young man, than faithfulness to those for whom he is employed, whether parents, guardians, masters, or others.

There appears to be a strange misapprehension, in the minds of many, in regard to this point. There are few who will not admit,

in theory, whatever may be their practice, that they ought to be faithful to their parents. And by far the majority of the young doubtless perceive the propriety of being faithful to their masters; so long at least, as they are present. I will even go farther and admit that the number of young men—sons, wards, apprentices, and servants—who would willingly be so far unfaithful as to do any thing positively wrong because those who are set over them happen to be absent, is by no means considerable.

But by faithfulness to our employers, I mean something more than the mere doing of things because we are *obliged* to do them, or because we *must*. I wish to see young men feel an interest in the well being and success of their employers; and take as good care of their concerns and property, whether they are present or absent, as if they were their own. The youth who would be more industrious, persevering, prudent, economical, and attentive in business, if the profits were his own, than he now is, does not in my opinion come up to the mark at which he should aim.

The great apology for what I call unfaithfulness to employers, is, 'What shall I get by it?' that is, by being faithful. I have seen many a young man who would labor at the employment regularly assigned him, during a certain number of hours, or till a certain job was completed, after which he seemed unwilling to lift a finger, except for his own amusement, gratification, or emolument. A few minutes' labor might repair a breach in a wall or corn crib, and save the owner many dollars' worth of property, but it is passed by! By putting a few deranged parcels of goods in

their proper place, or writing down some small item of account, which would save his employer much loss of time or money, or both, a faithful clerk might often do a great service. Would he not do it, if the loss was to be his own? Why not then do it for his employer?

Those who neglect things, or perform them lazily or carelessly, because they imagine they shall get nothing for it, would do well to read the following story of a devoted and faithful domestic; which I suppose to be a fact. It needs no comment.

A Mahratta Prince, in passing through a certain apartment, one day, discovered one of his servants asleep with his master's slippers clasped so tightly to his breast, that he was unable to disengage them. Struck with the fact, and concluding at once, that a person who was so jealously careful of a trifle, could not fail to be faithful when entrusted with a thing of more importance, he appointed him a member of his body-guards. The result proved that the prince was not mistaken. Rising in office, step by step, the young man soon became the most distinguished military commander in Mahratta; and his fame ultimately spread through all India.

## **Section IX. *On Forming Temperate Habits***

'Be temperate in all things,' is an excellent rule, and of very high authority.

*Drunkenness* and *Gluttony* are vices so degrading, that advice

is, I must confess, nearly lost on those who are capable of indulging in them. If any youth, unhappily initiated in these odious and debasing vices, should happen to see what I am now writing, I beg him to read the command of God, to the Israelites, Deut. xxi. The father and mother are to take the bad son 'and bring him to the elders of the city; and they shall say to the elders, this our son will not obey our voice: he is a *glutton* and a *drunkard*. And all the men of the city shall stone him with stones, that he die.' This will give him some idea of the odiousness of his crime, at least in the sight of Heaven.

But indulgence *far short* of gross drunkenness and gluttony is to be deprecated; and the more so, because it is too often looked upon as being no crime at all. Nay, there are many persons, who boast of a refined taste in matters connected with eating and drinking, who are so far from being ashamed of employing their thoughts on the subject, that it is their boast that they do it.

Gregory, one of the Christian fathers, says: 'It is not the *quantity* or the *quality* of the meat, or drink, but the *love of it*, that is condemned:' that is to say, the indulgence beyond the absolute demands of nature; the hankering after it; the neglect of some duty or other for the sake of the enjoyments of the table. I believe, however, there *may* be error, both in *quantity* and *quality*.

This *love* of what are called 'good eating and drinking,' if very unamiable in grown persons, is perfectly hateful in a *youth*; and, if he *indulge* in the propensity, he is already half ruined. To warn you against acts of fraud, robbery, and violence, is not

here my design. Neither am I speaking against acts which the jailor and the hangman punish, nor against those moral offences which all men condemn, but against indulgences, which, by men in general, are deemed not only *harmless*, but *meritorious*; but which observation has taught me to regard as destructive to human happiness; and against which all ought to be cautioned, even in their boyish days.

Such indulgences are, in the first place, very *expensive*. The materials are costly, and the preparation still more so. What a monstrous thing, that, in order to satisfy the appetite of one person there must be one or two others *at work constantly*.<sup>3</sup> More fuel, culinary implements, kitchen room: what! all these merely to tickle the palate of four or five people, and especially people who can hardly pay their bills! And, then, the *loss of time*—the time spent in pleasing the palate!

"A young man," says an English writer, "some years ago, offered himself to me, as an *amanuensis*, for which he appeared to be perfectly qualified. The terms were settled, and I requested him to sit down, and begin; but looking out of the window, whence he could see the church clock, he said, somewhat hastily, 'I *cannot stop now* sir, I must go to *dinner*.' 'Oh!' said I, 'you *must* go to dinner, must you! Let the dinner, which you *must* wait upon to-day, have your constant services, then; for you and I shall

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<sup>3</sup> I have occasionally seen four or five persons in constant employ, solely to supply the wants of a family of the same number, whose health, *collectively*, required an amount of physical labor adequate to their own wants.

never agree.'

"He had told me that he was in *great distress* for want of employment; and yet, when relief was there before his eyes, he could forego it for the sake of getting at his eating and drinking three or four hours sooner than was necessary."

This anecdote is good, so far as it shows the folly of an unwillingness to deny ourselves in small matters, in any circumstances. And yet punctuality, even at meals, is not to be despised.

*Water-drinkers* are universally *laughed at*: but, it has always seemed to me, that they are amongst the most welcome of guests, and that, too, though the host be by no means of a niggardly turn. The truth is, they give *no trouble*; they occasion *no anxiety* to please them; they are sure not to make their sittings *inconveniently long*; and, above all, their example teaches *moderation* to the rest of the company.

Your notorious 'lovers of good cheer' are, on the contrary, not to be invited without *due reflection*. To entertain one of them is a serious business; and as people are not apt voluntarily to undertake such pieces of business, the well-known 'lovers of good eating and drinking' are left, very generally, to enjoy it by themselves, and at their own expense.

But, all other considerations aside, *health*, one of the most valuable of earthly possessions, and without which all the rest are worth nothing, bids us not only to refrain from *excess* in eating and drinking, but to stop short of what might be indulged in

without any *apparent* impropriety.

The words of Ecclesiasticus ought to be often read by young people. 'Eat modestly that which is set before thee, and *devour* not, lest thou be *hated*. When thou sittest amongst many, reach not thine hand out first of all. *How little is sufficient for a man well taught!* A wholesome sleep cometh of a temperate belly. Such a man *riseth up in the morning*, and is *well at ease with himself*. Be not too hasty of meats; for excess of meats bringeth sickness, and choleric disease cometh of gluttony. By surfeit have many perished, and he that *dieteth himself* *prolongeth his life*. Show not thy valiantness in wine; for wine hath destroyed many.'

How true are these words! How well worthy of a constant place in our memories! Yet, what pains have been taken to apologize for a life contrary to these precepts! And, what punishment can be too great, what mark of infamy sufficiently signal, for those pernicious villains of talent, who have employed that talent in the composition of *Bacchanalian songs*; that is to say, pieces of fine and captivating writing in praise of one of the most odious and destructive vices in the black catalogue of human depravity!

'Who,' says the eccentric, but laborious Cobbett, 'what man, ever performed a greater quantity of labor than I have performed? Now, in a great measure, I owe my capability to perform this labor to my disregard of dainties. I ate, during one whole year, one mutton chop every day. Being once in town, with one son (then a little boy) and a clerk, while my family was in

the country, I had, for several weeks, nothing but legs of mutton. The first day, a leg of mutton boiled or *roasted*; second, *cold*; third, *hashed*; then, leg of mutton *boiled*; and so on.

'When I have been by myself, or nearly so, I have *always* proceeded thus: given directions for having *every day the same thing*, or alternately as above, and every day exactly at the same hour, so as to prevent the necessity of any *talk* about the matter. I am certain that, upon an average, I have not, during my life, spent more than *thirty-five minutes a day at table*, including all the meals of the day. I like, and I take care to have, good and clean victuals; but, if wholesome and clean, that is enough. If I find it, by chance, *too coarse* for my appetite, I put the food aside, or let somebody do it; and leave the appetite to gather keenness.'

Now I have no special desire to recommend *mutton chops* to my readers, nor to hold out the example of the individual whose language I have quoted, as worthy of general imitation. There is one lesson to be learned, however. Cobbett's never tiring industry is well known. And if we can rely on his own statements in regard to his manner of eating, we see another proof that what are called 'dainties,' and even many things which are often supposed to be necessaries, are very far from being indispensable to health or happiness.

I am even utterly *opposed* to the rapid eating of which he speaks. In New England especially, the danger is on the other side. 'Were it not from respect to others, I never would wish for more than eight minutes to eat my dinner in,' said a merchant

to me one day. Now *I* can *swallow* a meal at any time, in *five* minutes; but this is not *eating*. If it is, the teeth were made—as well as the saliva—almost in vain. No! this *swallowing* down a meal in five or even ten minutes, so common among the active, enterprising, and industrious people of this country, is neither healthy, nor decent, nor economical. And instead of spending only *thirty-five minutes* a day in eating; every man, woman, and child ought, as a matter of duty, to spend about *twice* the time in that way. This would give the teeth and salivary glands an opportunity to come up to the work which God in nature assigned them. We may indeed cheat them for a time, but not with impunity, for a day of reckoning will come; and some of our rapid eaters will find their bill (in stomach or liver complaints, or gout or rheumatism) rather large. They will probably lose more time in this way, than they can possibly save by eating rapidly.

The idea of preventing conversation about what we eat is also idle, though Dr. Franklin and many other wise men, thought otherwise. Some of our students in *commons* and elsewhere, suppose themselves highly meritorious because they have adopted the plan of appointing one of their number to read to the company, while the rest are eating. But they are sadly mistaken. Nothing is gained by the practice. On the contrary, much is lost by it. The bow cannot always remain bent, without injury. Neither can the mind always be kept 'toned' to a high pitch. *Mind* and *body* must and will have their relaxations.

I am not an advocate for *wasting time* or for *eating more* than

is necessary. Nay, I even believe, on the contrary, with most *medical* men, that we generally eat about twice as much as nature requires. But I do say, and with emphasis, that food must be *masticated*.

Before I dismiss the subject of temperance, let me beseech you to resolve to free yourselves from slavery to *tea* and *coffee*. Experience has taught me, that they are *injurious to health*. Even my habits of sobriety, moderate eating, and early rising, were not, until I left off using them, sufficient to give me that complete health which I have since had.

I do not undertake to prescribe for others exactly; but, I do say, that to pour down regularly, every day, a quart or two of *warm liquid*, whether under the name of tea, coffee, soup, grog, or any thing else, is greatly injurious to health. However, at present, what I have to represent to *you*, is *the great deduction which they make, from your power of being useful*, and also from your *power to husband your income*, whatever it may be, and from whatever source arising. These things *cost* something; and wo to him who forgets, or never knows, till he pays it, how large a bill they make—in the course of a year.

How much to be desired is it, that mankind would return once more, to the use of no other drink than that pure beverage which nature prepared for the sole drink of man! So long as we are in health, we need no other; nay, we have no right to any other. It is the testimony of all, or almost all whose testimony is worth having, that water is the best known drink. But if water is *better*

than all others, *all others are*, of course, *worse than water*.

As to food and drink *generally*, let me say in conclusion, that *simplicity* is the grand point to aim at. Water, we have seen, is the sole drink of man; but there is a great variety of food provided for his sustenance. He is allowed to select from this immense variety, those kinds, which the experience of mankind generally, combined and compared with his own, show to be *most useful*. He can *live* on almost any thing. Still there is a *choice* to be observed, and so far as his circumstances permit, he is in duty bound to exercise that choice. God has said by his servant Paul; 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do,' &c.

What we believe to be most useful to us, though at first disagreeable, we may soon learn to prefer. Our habits, then, should be early formed. We should always remember these two rules, however. 1st. The fewer different articles of food used at any one meal, the better; however excellent in their nature those may be which are left untasted. 2. Never eat a moment longer than the food, if well masticated, actually *revives* and *refreshes* you. The moment it makes you feel heavy or dull, or palls upon the taste, *you have passed the line of safety*.

## **Section X. On Suppers**

*Suppers*, properly so called, are confined, in a considerable degree, to cities; and I was at first in doubt whether I should do as much good by giving my voice against them, as I should of

mischievous by spreading through the country the knowledge of a wretched practice. But farther reflection has convinced me that I ought to offer my sentiments on this subject.

By suppers, I mean a fourth meal, just before going to bed. Individuals who have eaten quite as many times during the day as nature requires, and who take their tea, and perhaps a little bread and butter, at six, must go at nine or ten, they think, and eat another hearty meal. Some make it the most luxurious repast of the day.

Now many of our plain country people do not know that such a practice exists. They often eat too much, it is true, at *their* third meal, but their active habits and pure air enable them to digest it better than their city brethren could. Besides, their third meal never comes so late, by several hours, as the suppers of cities and towns.

Our English ancestors, 200 years ago, on both sides of the Atlantic, dined at eleven, took tea early, and had no suppers. So it was with the Jews of old, one of the healthiest nations that ever lived beyond the Mediterranean. They knew nothing of our modern dinners at three or four, and suppers at nine, ten, or eleven.

But not to 'take something late at night with the rest,' would at present be regarded as 'vulgar,' and who could endure it? Here, I confess, I tremble for some of my readers, whose lot it is to be cast in the city, lest they should, in this single instance, hesitate to 'take advice.' But I will hope for better things.

If you would give your stomach a season of repose, as well as the rest of your system; if you would sleep soundly, and either dream not at all, or have your dreams pleasant ones; if you would rise in the morning with your head clear, and free from pain, and your mouth clean and sweet, instead of being parched, and foul; if you would unite your voice—in spirit at least—with the voices of praise to the Creator, which ascend every where unless it be from the dwellings of creatures that should be men,—if, in one word, you would lengthen your lives several years, and increase the enjoyment of the last thirty years 33 per cent. without diminishing that of the first forty, then I beg of you to abstain from *suppers*!

I am acquainted with one individual, who partly from a conviction of the injury to himself, and partly from a general detestation of the practice, not only abstains from every thing of the kind, but from long observation of its effects, goes to the other extreme, and seldom takes even a *third* meal. And I know of no evil which arises from it. On the contrary, I believe that, for him, no course could be better. Be that as it may, adult individuals should never eat more than three times a day, nor should they ever partake of any food, solid or liquid, within three or four hours of the period of retiring to rest.

But if eating ordinary suppers is pernicious, what shall we say of the practice which some indulge who aspire to be pillars in church or state, with others of pretensions less lofty, of going to certain eating houses, at a very late hour, and spending a

considerable portion of the night—not in eating, merely, but in quaffing poisonous draughts, and spreading noxious fumes, and uttering language and songs which better become the inmates of Pandemonium, than those of the counting-house, the college, or the chapel! If there be within the limits of any of our cities or towns, scenes which answer to this horrid picture, let 'it not be told in Gath, or published in the streets of Askelon,' lest the fiends of the pit should rejoice;—lest the demons of darkness should triumph.

## Section XI. *On Dress*

The object of dress is fourfold: 1st. It is designed as a covering; 2d. As a means of warmth; 3d. As a defence; 4th. To improve our appearance.

These purposes of dress should all be considered; and in the order here presented. That dress, which best answers all these purposes combined, both as respects the material and the *form* or *fashion*, is unquestionably the best and most appropriate. It is certainly true that the impressions which a person's first appearance makes upon the minds of those around him are deep and permanent, and the subject should receive a measure of our attention, on this account. It is only a slight tax which we pay for the benefits of living in civilized society. When, however, we sacrifice every thing else to appearance, we commit a very great error. We make that first in point of importance, which ought

to be fourth.

Let your dress be as cheap as may be without shabbiness, and endeavor to be neither first nor last in a fashion. Think more about the cleanliness, than the gloss or texture of your clothes. Be always as clean as your occupation will permit; but never for one moment believe that any human being, who has good sense, will love or respect you *merely* on account of a fine or costly coat.

Extravagance in the haunting of *play-houses*, in *horses*, in every thing else, is to be avoided, but in young men, extravagance in *dress* particularly. This sort of extravagance, this waste of money on the decoration of the body, arises solely from vanity, and from vanity of the most contemptible sort. It arises from the notion, that all the people in the street, for instance, will be *looking at you*, as soon as you walk out; and that they will, in a greater or less degree, think the better of you on account of your fine dress.

Never was a notion more false. Many sensible people, that happen to see you, will think nothing at all about you: those who are filled with the same vain notion as you are, will perceive your attempt to impose on them, and despise it. Rich people will wholly disregard you, and you will be envied and hated by those who have the same vanity that you have, without the means of gratifying it.

Dress should be suited, in some measure, to our condition. A surgeon or physician need not dress exactly like a carpenter; but, there is no reason why any body should dress in a very *expensive*

manner. It is a great mistake to suppose, that they derive any *advantage* from exterior decoration.

For after all, men are estimated by other *men* according to their capacity and willingness to be in some way or other *useful*; and, though, with the foolish and vain part of *women*, fine clothes frequently do something, yet the greater part of the sex are much too penetrating to draw their conclusions solely from the outside appearance. They look deeper, and find other criterions whereby to judge. Even if fine clothes should obtain you a wife, will they bring you, in that wife, *frugality*, *good sense*, and that kind of attachment which is likely to be lasting?

Natural beauty of person is quite another thing: this always has, it always will and must have, some weight even with men, and great weight with women. But, this does not need to be set off by expensive clothes. Female eyes are, in such cases, discerning; they can discover beauty though surrounded by rags: and, take this as a secret worth half a fortune to you, that women, however vain they may be themselves, *despise vanity in men*.

## **Section XII. *Bashfulness and Modesty***

Dr. Young says, 'The man that blushes is not quite a brute.' This is undoubtedly true; yet nothing is more clear, as Addison has shown us, than that a person may be both bashful and impudent.

I know the world commend the former quality, and condemn

the latter; but I deem them both evils. Perhaps the latter is the greater of the two. The proper medium is true modesty. This is always commendable.

We are compelled to take the world, in a great measure, as it is. We can hardly expect men to come and buy our wares, unless we advertise or expose them for sale. So if we would commend ourselves to the notice of our fellow men, we must set ourselves up,—not for something which we are not;—but for what, upon a careful examination, we find reason to think we are. Many a good and valuable man has gone through *this* life, without being properly estimated; from the vain belief that true merit could not always escape unnoticed. This belief, after all, is little else but a species of fatalism.

By setting ourselves up, I do not mean puffing and pretending, or putting on airs of haughtiness or arrogance; or any affectation whatever. But there are those—and some of them are persons of good sense, in many respects, who can scarcely answer properly, when addressed, or look the person with whom they are conversing in the face; and who often render themselves ridiculous *for fear they shall be so*. I have seen a man of respectable talents, who, in conversation never raised his eyes higher than the tassels of his friend's boots; and another who could never converse without turning half or three quarters round, so as to present his shoulder or the backside of his head, instead of a plain, honest face.

I have known young men *injured* by bashfulness. It is vain to

say that it should not be so. The world is not what it should be, in many respects; *and I must insist* that it is our duty, to take it as it is, in order to make it better, or even in order to live in it with comfort. He that *thinks* he *shall* not, most surely *will* not, please. A man of sense, and knowledge of the world, will assert his own rights, and pursue his own purposes as steadily and uninterruptedly as the most impudent man living; but then there is at the same time an air of modesty in all he does; while an overbearing or impudent *manner* of doing the same things, would undoubtedly have given offence. Hence a certain wise man has said; 'He who knows the world will not be too bashful; and he who knows himself will never be impudent.'

Perpetual embarrassment in company or in conversation, is sometimes even construed into meanness. Avoid,—if you can do it, without too great a sacrifice—every appearance of deserving a charge so weighty.

### **Section XIII. *Politeness and Good-Breeding***

Awkwardness is scarcely more tolerable than bashfulness. It must proceed from one of two things; either from not having kept good company, or from not having derived any benefit from it. Many very worthy people have certain odd tricks, and ill habits, that excite a prejudice against them, which it is not easy to overcome. Hence the importance of *good-breeding*.

Now there are not a few who despise all these *little things* of

life, as they call them; and yet much of their lives is taken up with them, small as they are. And since these self same little things cannot be dispensed with, is it not better that they should be done in the easiest, and at the same time the pleasantest manner possible?

There is no habit more difficult to attain, and few so necessary to possess, as perfect good-breeding. It is equally inconsistent with a stiff formality, an impertinent forwardness, and an awkward bashfulness. True Christian education would seem to include it; and yet unfortunately, Christians are not always polite.

Is it not surprising that we may sometimes observe, in mere men of the world, that kind of carriage which should naturally be expected from an individual thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christianity, while his very neighbors, who are professing Christians, appear, by their conduct, to be destitute of such a spirit? Which, then, in practice (I mean so far as this fact is concerned) are the best Christians? But I know what will be the answer; and I know that these things ought not so to be.

No good reason can be given why a Christian should not be as well-bred as his neighbor. It is difficult to conceive how a person can follow the rules given in the Sermon on the Mount, without being, and showing himself to be, well-bred. I have even known men who were no friends to the bible, to declare it as their unequivocal belief that he whose life should conform to the principles of that sermon, could not avoid being *truly polite*.

There are not a few who *confound* good-breeding with

affectation, just as they confound a reasonable attention to dress with foppery. This calling things by wrong names is very common, how much soever it may be lamented.

*Good-breeding*, or true politeness, is the art of showing men, by external signs, the internal regard we have for them. It arises from good sense, improved by good company. Good-breeding is never to be learned, though it may be *improved*, by the study of books; and therefore they who attempt it, appear stiff and pedantic. The really well-bred, as they become so by use and observation, are not liable to affectation. You see good-breeding in all they do, without seeing the art of it. Like other habits, it is acquired by practice.

An engaging manner and genteel address may be out of our power, although it is a misfortune that it should be so. But it is in the power of every body to be kind, condescending, and affable. It is in the power of every person who has any thing to say to a fellow being, to say it with kind feelings, and with a sincere desire to please; and this, whenever it is done, will atone for much awkwardness in the manner of expression. Forced complaisance is foppery; and affected easiness is ridiculous.

Good-breeding is, and ought to be, an amiable and persuasive thing; it beautifies the actions and even the looks of men. But the *grimace* of good-breeding is not less *odious*.

In short, good-breeding is a forgetting of ourselves so far as to seek what may be agreeable to others, but in so artless and delicate a manner as will scarcely allow them to *perceive* that we

are so employed; and the regarding of ourselves, not as the centre of motion on which every thing else is to revolve, but only as one of the wheels or parts, in a vast machine, embracing other wheels and parts of equal, and perhaps more than equal importance. It is hence utterly opposed to selfishness, vanity, or pride. Nor is it proportioned to the supposed riches and rank of him whose favor and patronage you would gladly cultivate; but extends to all. It knows how to contradict with respect; and to please, without adulation.

The following are a few plain directions for attaining the character of a well-bred man.

1. Never weary your company by talking too long, or too frequently.

2. Always look people in the face when you address them, and generally when they are speaking to you.

3. Attend to a person who is addressing you. Inattention marks a trifling mind, and is a most unpardonable piece of rudeness. It is even an *affront*; for it is the same thing as saying that his remarks are not *worth* your attention.

4. Do not interrupt the person who is speaking by saying *yes*, or *no*, or *hem*, at every sentence; it is the most useless thing that can be. An occasional assent, either by word or action, may be well enough; but even a nod of assent is sometimes repeated till it becomes disgusting.

5. Remember that every person in a company likes to be the *hero* of that company. Never, therefore, engross the whole

conversation to yourself.

6. Learn to sit or stand still, while another is speaking to you. You will not of course be so rude as to dig in the earth with your feet, or take your penknife from your pocket and pair your nails; but there are a great many other little movements which are scarcely less clownish.

7. Never anticipate for another, or *help him out*, as it is called. This is quite a rude affair, and should ever be avoided. Let him conclude his story for himself. It is time enough for you to make corrections or additions afterward, if you deem his account defective. It is also a piece of impoliteness to interrupt another in his remarks.

8. Say as little of *yourself* and *your friends* as possible.

9. Make it a rule never to accuse, without due consideration, any body or association of men.

10. Never try to appear more wise or learned than the rest of the company. Not that you should *affect* ignorance; but endeavor to remain within your own proper sphere.

## **Section XIV. *Personal Habits***

I have elsewhere spoken of the importance of early rising. Let me merely request you, in this place, to form a *habit* of this kind, from which no ordinary circumstances shall suffer you to depart. Your first object after rising and devotion, should be to take a survey of the business which lies before you during the

day, making of course a suitable allowance for exigencies. I have seldom known a man in business thrive—and men of business we all ought to be, whatever may be our occupation—who did not rise early in the morning, and plan his work for the day. Some of those who have been most successful, made it a point to have this done before daylight. Indeed, I was intimately acquainted with one man who laid out the business of the day, attended family worship, and breakfasted before sunrise; and this too, at all seasons of the year.

Morning gowns and slippers are very useful things, it is said. But the reasons given for their utility are equally in favor of *always* wearing them. 'They are loose and comfortable.' Very well: Should not our dress always be loose? 'They save *other clothes*.' Then why not wear them all day long? The truth, after all, is, that they are *fashionable*, and as we usually give the *true* reason for a thing *last*, this is probably the principal reason why they are so much in use. I am pretty well convinced, however, that they are of little real use to him who is determined to eat his bread 'in the sweat of his face,' according to the Divine appointment.

Looking-glasses are useful in their place, but like many other conveniences of life, by no means indispensable; and so much abused, that a man of sense would almost be tempted, for the sake of example, to lay them aside. Of all wasted time, none is more *foolishly* wasted than that which is employed in *unnecessary* looking at one's own pretty face.

This may seem a matter of small consequence; but nothing

can be of small importance to which we are obliged to attend *every day*. If we dressed or shaved but once a year, or once a month, the case would be altered; but this is a piece of work that must be done once every day; and, as it may cost only about *five minutes* of time, and may be, and frequently is, made to cost *thirty*, or even *fifty minutes*; and, as only fifteen minutes make about a fiftieth part of the hours of our average daylight; this being the case, it is a matter of real importance.

Sir John Sinclair asked a friend whether he meant to have a son of his (then a little boy) taught Latin? 'No,' said he, 'but I mean to do something a great deal better for him.' 'What is that?' said Sir John. 'Why,' said the other, 'I mean to teach him *to shave with cold water, and without a glass*.'

My readers may smile, but I can assure them that Sir John is not alone. There are many others who have adopted this practice, and found it highly beneficial. One individual, who had tried it for years, has the following spirited remarks on the subject.

'Only think of the inconvenience attending the common practice! There must be *hot water*; to have this there must be a *fire*, and, in some cases, a fire for that purpose alone; to have these, there must be a *servant*, or you must light a fire yourself. For the want of these, the job is put off until a later hour: this causes a stripping and another dressing bout: or, you go in a slovenly state all that day, and the next day the thing must be done, or cleanliness must be abandoned altogether. If you are on a journey, you must wait the pleasure of the servants at the inn

before you can dress and set out in the morning; the pleasant time for travelling is gone before you can move from the spot: instead of being at the end of your day's journey in good time, you are benighted, and have to endure all the great inconveniences attendant on tardy movements. And all this from the apparently insignificant affair of shaving. How many a piece of important business has failed from a short delay! And how many thousand of such delays daily proceed from this unworthy cause!

These remarks are especially important to those persons in boarding-houses and elsewhere, for whom hot water, if they use it, must be expressly prepared.

Let me urge you never to say I cannot go, or do such a thing, till I am shaved or dressed. Take care always to be *shaved and dressed*, and then you will always be ready to act. But to this end the habit must be formed in early life, and pertinaciously adhered to.

There are those who can truly say that to the habit of adhering to the principles which have been laid down, they owe much of their success in life; that however sober, discreet, and abstinent they might have been, they never could have accomplished much without it. We should suppose by reasoning beforehand, that the *army* could not be very favorable to steady habits of this or any other kind; yet the following is the testimony of one who had made the trial.

'To the habit of early rising and husbanding my time well, more than to any other thing, I owed my very extraordinary

promotion in the army. I was *always ready*. If I had to mount guard at *ten*, I was ready at *nine*: never did any man, or any thing, wait one moment for me. Being, at an age *under twenty years*, raised from corporal to sergeant major *at once*, over the heads of thirty sergeants, I should naturally have been an object of envy and hatred; but this habit of early rising really subdued these passions.

'Before my promotion, a clerk was wanted to make out the morning report of the regiment. I rendered the clerk unnecessary; and, long before any other man was dressed for the parade, my work for the morning was all done, and I myself was on the parade ground, walking, in fine weather, for an hour perhaps.

'My custom was this: to get up, in summer, at daylight, and in winter at four o'clock; shave, dress, even to the putting of my sword-belt over my shoulder, and having my sword lying on the table before me, ready to hang by my side. Then I ate a bit of cheese, or pork, and bread. Then I prepared my report, which was filled up as fast as the companies brought me in the materials. After this, I had an hour or two to read, before the time came for any duty out of doors, unless when the regiment, or part of it, went out to exercise in the morning. When this was the case, and the matter was left to me, I always had it on the ground in such time as that the bayonets glistened in the *rising sun*; a sight which gave me delight, of which I often think, but which I should in vain endeavor to describe.

'If the *officers* were to go out, eight or ten o'clock was the hour. Sweating men in the heat of the day, or breaking in upon the time for cooking their dinner, puts all things out of order, and all men out of humor. When I was commander, the men had a long day of leisure before them: they could ramble into the town or into the woods; go to get raspberries, to catch birds, to catch fish, or to pursue any other recreation, and such of them as chose, and were qualified, to work at their trades. So that here, arising solely from the early habits of one very young man, were pleasant and happy days given to hundreds.'

For my own part, I confess that only a few years since, I should have laughed heartily at some of these views, especially the cold water system of shaving. But a friend whom I esteemed, and who shaved with cold water, said so much in its favor that I ventured to make the trial; and I can truly say that I would not return to my former slavery to hot water, if I had a servant who had nothing else to do but furnish it. I cannot indeed say with a recent writer (I think in the *Journal of Health*) that cold water is a great deal *better* than warm; but I can and do say that it makes little if any difference with me which I use; though on going out into the cold air immediately afterward, the skin is more likely to chap after the use of warm water than cold. Besides I think the use of warm water more likely to produce eruptions on the skin.—Sometimes, though not generally, I shave, like Sir John Sinclair, without a glass; but I would never be enslaved to one, convenient as it is.

## Section XV. *Bathing and Cleanliness*

Cleanliness of the body has, some how or other, such a connection with mental and moral purity, (whether as cause or effect—or both—I will not undertake now to determine) that I am unwilling to omit the present opportunity of urging its importance. There are those who are so attentive to this subject as to wash their whole bodies in water, either cold or warm, every day of the year; and never to wear the same clothes, during the day, that they have slept in the previous night. Now this habit may by some be called whimsical; but I think it deserves a *better name*. I consider this extreme, if it ought to be called an extreme, as vastly more safe than the common extreme of *neglect*.

Is it not shameful—*would* it not be, were human duty properly understood—to pass months, and even years, without washing the whole body once? There are thousands and tens of thousands of both sexes, who are exceedingly nice, even to fastidiousness, about externals;—who, like those mentioned in the gospel, keep clean the 'outside of the cup and the platter,'—but alas! how is it within? Not a few of us,—living, as we do, in a land where soap and water are abundant and cheap—would blush, if the whole story were told.

This chapter, if extended so far as to embrace the whole subject of cleanliness of person, dress, and apartments, and cold and warm bathing, would alone fill a volume; a volume too,

which, if well prepared, would be of great value, especially to all young men. But my present limits do not permit of any thing farther. In regard to *cold bathing*, however, allow me to refer you to two articles in the third volume of the Annals of Education, pages 315 and 344, which contain the best directions I can give on this subject.

## Section XVI. *On Little Things*

There are many things which, viewed without any reference to prevailing habits, manners, and customs, appear utterly unworthy of attention; and yet, after all, much of our happiness will be found to depend upon them. We are to remember that we live—not alone, on the earth—but among a *multitude*, each of whom claims, and is entitled to his own estimate of things. Now it often happens that what *we* deem a *little* thing, another, who views the subject differently, will regard as a matter of importance.

Among the items to which I refer, are many of the customary salutations and civilities of life; and the modes of *dress*. Now it is perfectly obvious that many common phrases which are used at meeting and separating, during the ordinary interviews and concerns of life, as well as in correspondence, are in themselves wholly unmeaning. But viewed as an introduction to things of more importance, these little words and phrases at the opening of a conversation, and as the language of hourly and daily salutation, are certainly useful. They are indications of good and friendly

feeling; and without them we should not, and could not, secure the confidence of some of those among whom we are obliged to live. They would regard us as not only unsocial, but selfish; and not only selfish, but proud or misanthropic.

On account of meeting with much that disgusts us, many are tempted to avoid society generally. The frivolous conversation, and still more frivolous conduct, which they meet with, they regard as a waste of time, and perhaps even deem it a duty to resign themselves to solitude. This, however, is a great mistake. Those who have been most useful to mankind acted very differently. They mingled with the world, in hopes to do something towards reforming it. The greatest of philosophers, as well as of Christians;—even the Founder of Christianity himself—sat down, and not only sat down, but ate and drank in the society of those with whose manners, and especially whose vices, he could have had no possible sympathy.

Zimmerman, who has generally been regarded as an apostle of solitude, taught that men ought not to 'reside in deserts, or sleep, like owls, in the hollow trunks of trees.' 'I sincerely exhort my disciples,' says he, 'not to absent themselves morosely from public places, nor to avoid the social throng; which cannot fail to afford to judicious, rational, and feeling minds, many subjects both of amusement and instruction. It is true, that we cannot relish the pleasures and taste the advantages of society, without being able to give a patient hearing to the tongue of folly, to excuse error, and to bear with infirmity.'

In like manner, we are not to disregard wholly, our dress. It is true that the shape of a hat, or the cut of a coat may not add to the strength of the mind, or the soundness of the morals; but it is also true that people form an opinion often from our exterior appearance; and will continue to do so: and first impressions are very difficult to be overcome. If we regard our own usefulness, therefore, we shall not consider the fashion or character of our dress as a little thing in its results. I have said elsewhere that we ought neither to be the first nor the last in a fashion.

We should remember, also, that the *world*, in its various parts and aspects, is made up of little things. So true is this, that I have sometimes been very fond of the paradoxical remark, that 'little things are great things;' that is, in their *results*. For who does not know that throughout the physical world, the mightiest results are brought about by the silent working of small causes? It is not the tornado, or the deluge, or even the occasional storm of rain, that renews and animates nature, so much as the gentle breeze, the soft refreshing shower, and the still softer and gentler dews of heaven.

So in human life, generally, they are the little things often, that produce the mightier results. It is he who takes care of pence and farthings, not he who neglects them, that thrives. It is he alone who guards his lips against the first improper word,—trifling as it may seem—that is secure against future profanity. He who indulges one little draught of alcoholic drink, is in danger of ending a tippler; he who gives loose to one impure thought,

of ending the victim of lust and sensuality. Nor is it one single gross, or as it were accidental act, viewed as insulated from the rest—however injurious it may be—that injures the body, or debases the mind, so much as the frequent repetition of those smaller errors, whose habitual occurrence goes to establish the predominating choice of the mind, or affection of the soul.

Avoid then, the pernicious, the fatal error, that *little* things are of no consequence: little sums of money, little fragments of time, little or trifling words, little or apparently unimportant actions. On this subject I cannot help adopting—and feeling its force too,—the language of a friend of temperance in regard to those who think themselves perfectly secure from danger, and are believers in the harmlessness of *little* things. 'I tremble,' said he, 'for the man that does not tremble for himself.'

### **Section XVII. *Of Anger, and the means of restraining it***

There is doubtless much difference of native temperament. One person is easily excited, another, more slowly. But there is a greater difference still, resulting from our habits.

If we find ourselves easily led into anger, we should be extremely careful how we indulge the first steps that lead towards it. Those who naturally possess a mild temper may, with considerable safety, do and say many things which others cannot. Thus we often say of a person who has met with a misfortune,

'It is good enough for him;' or of a criminal who has just been condemned to suffer punishment, 'No matter; he deserves it.' Or perhaps we go farther, and on finding him acquitted, say, 'He ought to have been hanged, and even hanging was too good for him.'

Now all these things, in the mouths of the irritable, lead the way to an indulgence of anger, however unperceived may be the transition. It is on this principle that the saying of St. John is so strikingly true; 'He that hateth his brother is a murderer;' that is, he that indulges hatred has the seeds within him, not only of out-breaking anger, but of murder.

It is on this account that I regret the common course taken with children in relation to certain smaller tribes of the animal creation. They are allowed not only to destroy them,—(which is doubtless often a duty,) but to destroy them in *anger*; to indulge a permanent hatred towards them; and to think this hatred creditable and scriptural. When such feelings lead us to destroy even the most troublesome or disgusting reptiles or insects *in anger*, we have so far prepared the way for the indulgence of anger towards our fellow creatures, whenever their conduct shall excite our displeasure.

We can hence see why he who has a violent temper should always speak in a low voice, and study mildness and sweetness in his tones. For loud, impassioned, and boisterous tones certainly excite impassioned feelings. So do all the *actions* which indicate anger. Thus Dr. Darwin has said that any individual, by using the

language and actions of an angry person, towards an imaginary object of displeasure, and accompanying them by threats, and blows, with a doubled or clinched fist, may easily work himself into a rage. Of the justice of this opinion I am fully convinced, from actual and repeated experiments.

If we find ourselves apt to be angry, we should endeavor to avoid the road which leads to it. The first thing to be done, is to govern our voice. On this point, the story of the Quaker and the merchant may not be uninteresting.

A merchant in London had a dispute with a Quaker gentleman about the settlement of an account. The merchant was determined to bring the action *into court*,—a course of proceeding to which the Quaker was wholly opposed;—he therefore used every argument in his power to convince the merchant of his error; but all to no purpose.

Desirous of making a final effort, however, the Quaker called at the house of the merchant, one morning, and inquired of the servant if his master was at home. The merchant hearing the inquiry from the top of the stairs, and knowing the voice, called out, loudly, 'Tell that rascal I am not at home.' The Quaker, looking up towards him, said calmly; 'Well, friend, may God put thee in a better mind.'

The merchant was struck with the meekness of the reply, and after thinking more deliberately of the matter, became convinced that the Quaker was right, and he in the wrong. He requested to see him, and after acknowledging his error, said, 'I have one

question to ask you. How were you able to bear my abuse with so much patience?'

'Friend,' replied the Quaker, 'I will tell thee. I was naturally as hot and violent as thou art. But I knew that to indulge my temper was sinful, and also very foolish. I observed that men in a passion always spoke very loud; and I thought if I could control my voice, I should keep down my passions. I therefore made it a rule never to let it rise above a certain key; and by a careful observance of this rule, I have, with the blessing of God, entirely mastered my natural temper.'

When you are tempted by the conduct of those around you, to be angry, endeavor to consider the matter for a few moments. If your temper be so impetuous that you find this highly difficult, you may adopt some plan or device for gaining time. Some recommend counting twenty or thirty, deliberately. The following anecdote of the celebrated Zimmerman is exactly in point, and may afford useful hints for instruction.

Owing in part to a diseased state of body, Zimmerman was sometimes irritable. One day, a Russian princess and several other ladies entered his apartment to inquire after his health; when, in a fit of petulance, he rose, and requested them to leave the room. The prince entered some time afterward, when Zimmerman had begun to repent of his rashness, and after some intervening conversation, advised him, whenever he felt a disposition to treat his friends so uncivilly again, to repeat, *mentally*, the Lord's prayer. This advice was followed, and with

success. Not long afterward the same prince came to him for advice in regard to the best manner of controlling the violence of those transports of affection towards his young and amiable consort, in which young and happy lovers are so apt to indulge. 'My dear friend,' said Zimmerman, 'there is no expedient which can surpass your own. Whenever you feel yourself overborne by passion, you have only to repeat the Lord's prayer, and you will be able to reduce it to a steady and permanent flame.'

By adopting Zimmerman's rule, we shall, as I have already observed, gain time for reflection, than which nothing more is needed. For if the cause of anger be a report, for example, of injury done to us by an absent person, either in words or deeds, how do we know the report is true? Or it may be only partly true; and how do we know, till we consider the matter well, whether it is worth our anger at all? Or if at all, perhaps it deserves but a little of it. It may be, too, that the person who said or did the thing reported, did it by mistake, or is already sorry for it. At all events, nothing can be gained by haste; much *may* be by delay.

If a passionate person give you ill language, you ought rather to pity than be angry with him, for anger is a species of disease. And to correct one evil, will you make another? If his being angry is an evil, will it mend the matter to make *another* evil, by indulging in passion yourself? Will it cure his disease, to throw yourself into the same distemper? But if not, then how foolish is it to indulge improper feelings at all!

On the same principles, and for the same reasons, you should

avoid returning railing for railing; or reviling for reproach. It only kindles the more heat. Besides, you will often find silence, or at least very gentle words, as in the case of the Quaker just mentioned, the best return for reproaches which could be devised. I say the best 'return;' but I would not be understood as justifying any species of *revenge*. The kind of *return* here spoken of is precisely that treatment which will be most likely to cure the distemper in the other, by making him see, and be sorry for, his passion.

If the views taken in this section be true, it is easy to see the consummate folly of all violence, whether between individuals or collective bodies, whether it be by *striking*, *duelling*, or *war*. For if an individual or a nation has done wrong, will it annihilate that wrong to counteract it by *another* wrong? Is it not obvious that it only makes two evils, where but one existed before? And can two *wrongs* ever make one *right* action? Which is the most rational, when the choice is in our power, to add to one existing evil, another of similar or greater magnitude; or to keep quiet, and let the world have but one cup of misery instead of two?

Besides, the language of Scripture is *every where* full and decided on this point. 'Recompense to no man evil for evil,' and 'wo to him by whom the offence cometh,' though found but once or twice in just so many words, are in fact, some of the more prominent doctrines of the New Testament; and I very much doubt whether you can read many pages, in succession, in any part of the bible, without finding this great principle enforced.

The daily example of the Saviour, and the apostles and early Christians, is a full confirmation of it, in practice.

# CHAPTER II.

## On the Management of Business

### Section I. *On commencing Business*

Young men are usually in haste to commence business for themselves. This is an evil, and one which appears to me to be increasing. Let me caution my readers to be on their guard against it.

The evils of running in debt will be adverted to elsewhere. I mention the subject in this place, because the earlier you commence business, the greater the necessity of resorting to credit. You may, indeed, in some employments, begin on a very small scale; but this is attended with serious disadvantages, especially at the present day, when you must meet with so much competition. Perhaps a few may be furnished with capital by their friends, or by inheritance. In the latter case they may as well *use* their money, if they receive it; but I have already endeavored to show that it is generally for the interest of young men to rely upon their own exertions. It is extremely difficult for a person who has ever relied on others, to act with the same energy as those who have been thrown upon their own resources.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This fact, so obvious to every student of human nature, has sometimes given rise

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to an opinion that orphans make their way best in the world. So far as the business of making money is concerned, I am not sure but it is so.

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