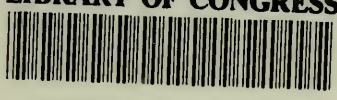


.W5

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00004449769



PROPERTY OF THE  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



---

JUDGE WHITE'S ADDRESS

WITH

AN APPENDIX.

---



AN

# ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT IPSWICH,

BEFORE

THE ESSEX COUNTY LYCEUM,

AT THEIR

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING,

MAY 5, 1830.

---

BY DANIEL APPLETON WHITE.

---

“What is a man,  
“If his chief good, and market of his time,  
“Be but to sleep, and feed? A beast, no more.  
“Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse,  
“Looking before, and after, gave us not  
“That capability and godlike reason,  
“To fust in us unused.”

SHAKSPEARE.

3  
0  
3  
3  
3  
3  
3  
3  
3

---



SALEM :  
FOOTE & BROWN, PRINTERS—COURT STREET.  
1830.

LC 6515

.W5

M. I. J. Griffin

2 D '02

## ADDRESS.



I CONGRATULATE you, my friends, upon the present meeting, as the result of your successful exertions to establish Lyceums in your respective towns, and to form a County Association to co-operate with them, in the noble work of mutual improvement and the diffusion of useful knowledge.

In this Introductory Address, nothing more will be attempted, than to offer some remarks upon the design of Lyceums, their leading objects and advantages, the value of knowledge, the importance of education, especially self-education; and to glance at a few of the great variety of topics, which may be usefully discussed or investigated in these institutions.

As the Essex County Lyceum owes its existence to the local Lyceums of which it is the representative, so it is especially designed to advance their interests and usefulness. This it will be enabled effectually to do, in the simple manner pointed out in its constitution; the principal object of which is to provide for keeping up a friendly intercourse between the several Town Lyceums, within the County, and for collecting from all of them, as well as from other sources, such valuable facts and information, as may be usefully transmitted, in a systematized form, to each Lyceum in return, that each

may thus be possessed of a full knowledge of the means and methods of instruction, the experience, proceedings and prospects of all the rest.

Much advantage and satisfaction may result from such an interchange of information and good offices. In addition to the direct aid and encouragement, afforded to the local Lyceums by the intercommunication of Lectures and otherwise, it will serve to extend over the County the beneficial influence of a liberal intercourse and fellowship between gentlemen of different occupations, habits, and connexions in society. Among the numerous benefits to be derived from Lyceums, this is not the least important or interesting. It is truly gratifying to see assembled, on the present occasion, without distinction of sect or party, enlightened and liberal promoters of the public welfare. This is as it should be. Friends to the same valuable objects, actuated by the same generous motives, ought to enjoy the privilege of uniting their counsels and efforts for the general good. This enlarges the circle of their social affections and rational enjoyments, while it multiplies and extends their means of usefulness. We might well rejoice in the establishment of Lyceums, were they attended with no other advantages than bringing together, for a valuable purpose, individuals of various professions, pursuits, and opinions, and producing a cordial co-operation among those who are too apt to become estranged from each other, in consequence of different sentiments and views on some important subjects. All our great and essential interests, as members of society, are held in



common ; and whatever associations serve to excite a common feeling of attachment to them, and common efforts to preserve and improve them, to suppress the growth of unkind prejudices, and make us think, and feel, and act, as, what we really are, brethren of one great family, must be blessings to the whole community.

Some of those who have been eminently instrumental in the establishment of Lyceums have extended their views more widely, connecting with these institutions arrangements for the promotion of popular education throughout the country, and contemplating a great American Lyceum, constituted from the various local Lyceums, as its branches. These comprehensive views manifest a laudable zeal in the cause of education, and it is to be hoped that the enlightened exertions, to which they may lead, will be crowned with success. But Lyceums, though sustaining a friendly connexion for their mutual benefit, are independent of each other, as to their own proceedings and regulations. The immediate and main concern of the members of each association must be with themselves, to enlighten and improve their own minds, and, in doing this, to diffuse the blessings of knowledge around them. For this purpose, they will of course adopt such measures as are suited to their own situation and circumstances, and best calculated to awaken attention to the means of knowledge which they possess, to elicit the instruction which is important and interesting to themselves, and to excite a taste and desire for it.

Lyceums are not intended to supersede, or inter-

ferre with any existing institutions or means of education, but to exert an influence in co-operation with them all ; nor are they limited in their plans of instruction to particular branches of knowledge or science, or to particular descriptions of people, but the whole range of human knowledge is open to them, and all who desire solid information or rational entertainment, are invited to partake of it.

Thus are they designed to supply a pressing public want, created by the circumstances of the times in which we live ; and the establishment of them is in full accordance with the spirit of our wise and practical forefathers, who were in no respect more remarkable, than for extending their views of education, as the public good required. They brought from the mother country, as to education as well as jurisprudence, such principles only as were useful and applicable in their situation here, and afterwards increased their means of instruction, as their necessities demanded, till they built up that system of free schools, which has been justly regarded as the glory of New-England. These schools, together with their cherished University, satisfied all their wants as to education. Incessantly occupied in the active duties of life, they had, in general, little leisure for intellectual pursuits, beyond what consisted in perusing the Bible. This, however, they studied so thoroughly, as not only to acquire that “wisdom and knowledge” which was “the stability of their times,” and that strength of principle and moral energy, which sustained them in every exigency, but to make attainments in the knowledge of

human nature, and the practical philosophy of life, of which the superficial readers of that sacred volume of various history, and sublime sentiments and truths, can have no conception.

But the times have changed, and, with them, the whole face of society. With a wonderful increase of population, and a vast accession to the objects of general pursuit and inquiry, the desire of various knowledge has abounded, as well as the number of those whose leisure enables them to indulge such a desire, or exposes them to the temptations of folly, dissipation, and vice. In such a state of things, something is required in addition to our ordinary schools and institutions of learning; something more general, various and popular, calculated to be attractive and useful to persons of every age and condition in life. We are in want of institutions for improvement, which would combine instruction with entertainment, in a manner so convenient, as to be accessible to all classes of the community, and so interesting as to engage universal attention, to satisfy the inquisitive, to rouse the idle, to teach the frivolous to think, to arrest the heedless in their career of dissipation, and draw them from inebriating pleasures and degrading amusements, to the pursuits of sober industry and intellectual enjoyment. Such institutions Lyceums are designed to be; and, as such, they claim the patronage of the public, and the cheering support of all good men. Formed by the voluntary association of those who are attracted by a love of science or literature, a desire for general information, or a wish to be agreeably entertained,

uniting the studious and the active, the learned scholar and the man of the world, aided too by the presence and influence of woman, so essential to the success of good undertakings ; and accustomed, in all their discussions and exercises, to the contemplation of useful and elevating subjects of thought, which furnish also rich topics for general conversation, these associations, wherever they may exist and be sustained, cannot fail to promote the well-being of society as well as the gratification and improvement of individuals. While they remain true to their principles, and pursue with vigor the objects for which they are formed, their whole tendency and influence must be, to multiply the resources for rational amusement and recreation, to introduce, among all classes of people, a higher tone of conversation, a more frank and liberal interchange of sentiments ; to raise the standard of literary and moral taste, to excite a greater love of science, a deeper sense of the value of truth and virtue, to expand the social and kind affections, and to promote the growth of that practical wisdom, which is the highest prize of intelligence and learning. All these objects are embraced in the great and immediate design of Lyceums, the cultivation and diffusion of useful knowledge ; that knowledge, which is conducive to our highest welfare, as intelligent, moral, and social beings.

But, before we enter upon a more particular consideration of this part of our subject, it may be proper to notice certain objections, which have occasionally been made to these institutions, though, we trust, they are disappearing, and will soon cease to exist,

being founded in a misapprehension of the true nature and character of Lyceums.

Fears have been expressed by some, that associations, so numerous and extensive, may become dangerous to our civil and religious liberties, by leading to combinations, or parties, hostile to the interests of the people at large. But the design of Lyceums is altogether of a beneficent and public nature. They can have no concealed plans or operations, nor any purposes whatever, which do not alike concern the whole people. They are created, not by election under party influences, but by a voluntary association of individuals from all the various parties and sects in the community, for objects approved by all, and the members are held together, not by any secret or permanent tie, but purely by the common desire of uniting their efforts in well-doing. It must, therefore, be manifest to every candid mind acquainted with the subject, that Lyceums, in addition to all other good effects, are admirably adapted to soften party asperities of every description, to produce a sympathy of feeling for worthy purposes only, to call into exercise the benevolent affections, to promote public spirit, and to strengthen attachment to the free institutions of our common country.

Others have entertained fears, that these associations may have an injurious effect upon some of their own members, by enticing them from their ordinary occupations, interrupting their industrious habits, and giving them in return a mere smattering of learning, which is worse than useless ; imagining,

with the poet, that “a little learning is a dangerous thing.” But, in our community certainly, there is too much good sense prevailing among the people, on this subject, to justify such apprehensions. They neither expect, nor desire, in these institutions, courses of learned lectures on abstruse branches of science, beyond their ability to comprehend or apply to a valuable purpose. The knowledge, which is most desirable to them, is that general acquaintance with the works and laws of the material world, which tends to elevate and enlarge the mind; and that perception of their own nature, duties, and means of happiness, which may assist them in improving their condition in life, and advancing themselves in moral and intellectual excellence. Is not a little of this sort of learning better than none? Is not much of it desirable? This, indeed, is conceded. Let then every institution for producing and disseminating it be encouraged. Fear not that this will tend to disturb the sober habits of industry among any portion of the people. Every acquisition of useful knowledge, every exercise of the mental faculties to obtain it, will, on the contrary, serve to confirm those habits, to give juster views of moral obligation and the duties of social life, and to prevent that heedless dissipation, which, in a greater or less degree, inevitably results from the idleness of leisure hours.

Others again, who fear no particular evil consequences from the introduction of Lyceums, affect to regard them as useless, and, like some other great societies and utopian projects of the day, little more

than a vain parade, as the name itself would seem to indicate. But why are they useless? Because knowledge may be better obtained from books than from lectures, especially since books have become so cheap and abundant. But are there not many who are still unable to procure the books necessary for affording them the variety of information, which they desire, even had they time to peruse them? Are there not many, too, unaccustomed to the practice of reading, who, from the habit of listening to discourses, would derive essential benefit from lectures? Would not many, who abound in books more than in leisure for reading them, gladly accept from a lecture what might cost them many hours to find in books? Might not all receive, in this way, valuable hints, and a salutary mental excitement? And is not the multiplicity of books, in itself, a great evil to those who cannot discriminate between the good and the bad, between those which improve and those which corrupt the mind? Has not a flood of worthless publications swept away, or buried out of sight, works of real value, on which past generations had fixed the stamp of merit? Are not many of the most fascinating volumes of the day fraught with pollution to the mind of the youthful reader? Will not the indiscriminate perusal of them vitiate the taste and imagination, prevent habits of thought and reflection, without which all reading is useless; and create a disinclination, if not a

---

\* The late eminent Dr. Rush says, (Essays, &c. p. 47,) "The perfection of the ear, as an avenue to knowledge, is not sufficiently known. Ideas acquired through that organ are much more durable than those acquired by the eyes."

mental disability, for that close attention and sustained effort, without which no real progress in science or knowledge can be expected? If so, may it not be among the important uses of Lyceums, to direct and assist the young in the selection of books for reading and study? May they not thus aid in promoting a more correct taste and better habits in reading, together with more improving conversation, sounder principles of morality, and higher motives of conduct? The very circumstances, therefore, which might seem to form an objection to these associations, really constitute a strong argument in their favor.

The name which they have so generally adopted might, indeed, savor of pretension, if it were supposed to be taken from the splendid Lyceums in some of the cities of Europe; but when we look back to its origin, the application of it, in the present instance, appears to be remarkably appropriate. The Lyceum, it will be recollected, was a place at Athens where ARISTOTLE and other philosophers were accustomed to discourse with their pupils on subjects of science and useful knowledge, as the Academy was where PLATO and his disciples assembled for a similar purpose. So the Athenæum and Gymnasium were places of resort, at the same celebrated city, for intellectual and athletic exercises. All these terms have been variously applied to modern institutions, but never, perhaps, more appositely than in the case before us. The design of our Lyceum is not dissimilar to that of the philosophic meetings at Athens, though its



objects of inquiry have, of course, multiplied with the advance of science and knowledge. Guided by the light which has come down to us from those ancient sages and their successors in wisdom, we may hope to arrive at results as useful and interesting, as were attained in the Grecian Lyceum or Academy.

But whatever may be thought of the name in question, and it can be of little consequence, while we find it both convenient and agreeable, the institution itself has all possible simplicity and plainness, in its design and arrangements. It aims at no quixotic undertakings. It aspires to no prizes of distinction or fame. All splendid achievements are left for more ambitious and adventurous associations. The great work of those who constitute a Lyceum, is the improvement of themselves; their loftiest ambition, to add something to the improvement of society, and their only reward is in the accomplishment of their work.

But though the design of Lycæums is thus simple, it is comprehensive, and embraces objects of the highest interest, which deserve the united and persevering exertions of all intelligent men. What can be more worthy of such exertions than the culture of the mind, the attainment of real knowledge, the pursuit of truth and moral excellence? What is it, indeed, that truly constitutes man? Is it anything which he has in common with the lower animals? What demands his constant care, his most strenuous efforts? Can it be his animal nature, the adornment of his person, or the indulgence of his

senses and appetites? In these respects, will not many of the lower animals be able to surpass him, by the superior beauty of their wardrobe and a purer enjoyment of the pleasures of sense; pleasures, which to them never cloy? In such a competition he must surely fail. Taking no benefit of his own reason, and not being blest with brute instinct, how is it possible he should not sink below the mere animal? Something of a nobler nature is wanted to satisfy man. The happiness, which is worthy of him, must be suited to his higher capacities of enjoyment, must partake of mind, and be built upon knowledge and virtue. These, then, demand his chief care, his never ceasing efforts; and, with these, all his other pleasures become rational and satisfactory. This, indeed, is familiar truth; it is old truth, but momentous as it is old. In every age of the world it has been inculcated, acknowledged, and practically disregarded. A constant struggle has been kept up between virtue and vice, knowledge and ignorance, mind and body. Here, allow me to give you the thoughts of a celebrated Roman author, whose works have been admired for nearly two thousand years, and whose sentiments must fall upon your minds with weight.

“It is incumbent on all men, who aspire to rank above the other animals, to exert their highest powers, and not pass their lives in obscurity, like the beasts of the field, which are created to look downward and to be subject to bodily appetites. Our nature is composed of both mind and body. The former is for government; the latter for subjection.

The one allies us with the gods; the other with the brutes. Wherefore, we ought to seek the distinction which arises from exertions of the mind, rather than the body; and, since life is short, strive to live as long as possible in the memory of posterity. Beauty and riches are frail and fleeting; but knowledge and virtue are refulgent and eternal. Yet, what multitudes do we find passing through life, ignorant and uncultivated, buried in sloth, and slaves to appetite! Through a perversion of their nature, thought becomes a burden to them, and sensual indulgence is their sole gratification. Whether such creatures crawl upon the earth, or sink into the grave, is of no moment. But that man appears truly to live, and to enjoy an intellectual being, whose mind is worthily occupied, and who seeks the reputation of some useful employment, or the glory of illustrious deeds.”\*

Such were the sublime thoughts of this ancient sage, while the world around him was immersed in the darkness of idolatry, and his own views of a future existence had not extended beyond the mere memory of posterity; and while the human mind had not yet unfolded the one half of its native energies. What might he not have said, had the divine light of Christianity beamed upon his mind, and disclosed to him its immortality? How would his admiration of the extent and dignity of the human intellect have been raised, had he witnessed its power to penetrate into the recesses of nature, and

---

\* Sall. Bell. Cat. 1.

develope the most subtle laws of the material and intellectual world ; and to ascend the highest heavens, reveal the secrets of the stars, and unfold the principles which keep the universe in motion and harmony ? With what enthusiasm would he have described its achievements, had he beheld the flood of light, which science has poured upon the world, or the stupendous power, which man has derived from the inventions of art, and especially that single wonderful invention, the printing press, which perpetuates, at once, the knowledge of all arts and all sciences, and spreads it through the earth, as upon the wings of the wind ? Could he have had a glimpse of such glorious events, would it have been possible for him to believe that there would still be found multitudes of men, more solicitous for the body than the mind, more intent upon gratifying the senses than improving the faculties, more alive to frivolous pleasures than rational pursuits ; multitudes, as before, who would pass through life ignorant und uncultivated, sunk in indolence, and slaves to sensual indulgence ?

The lamentable fact, so contrary to what might have been hoped, only proves, however, that the profusion of the light of science, the abundance of the means and facilities for acquiring knowledge, which distinguish our age, cannot supersede the necessity of personal exertion ; and that there are now, as there always have been, many who will not labor for learning, and more, perhaps, who will not believe that it is necessary to labor for virtue. But it is as fixed a law of our nature that we must labor

for knowledge, as that we must till the earth by the sweat of the brow. Neither knowledge nor virtue can be given to those who will not exert their faculties to obtain them; from their very nature, they must be wrought into the mind by its own efforts. The acquisition of knowledge, too, as well as virtue, is a duty incumbent upon mankind, to the extent of their means, in all conditions of life. But it is a duty, the performance of which involves its own rich reward. Through the beneficent goodness of our creator, we are so constituted, as naturally to receive pleasure in the acquisition of knowledge, and to find in its possession a vast increase of power in advancing our own happiness and the happiness of others.

Curiosity, or a desire for information, is as natural to the mind as hunger or thirst to the body; and, from the earliest period of life, its gratification is sought in the pursuit either of useful or trifling intelligence, as the taste of the individual happens to be directed. With what inquiring looks does the infant, before its ideas can be articulated, gaze upon a striking object, a brilliant color or beautiful flower, for instance, and exert all its little efforts to ascertain what it is? This inquisitive disposition grows with the growth, and strengthens with the strength of the child; his inquiries multiply, as his views expand, and he listens with eager delight to any one, who will undertake to satisfy his inquiries, and kindly assist in developing his powers, and storing his infant mind with thoughts. Pleasure attends upon every step of his progress. If this vig-

orous principle is wisely directed, it becomes a powerful instrument in advancing him in real knowledge, and guarding him against evil influences. But if his curiosity is suffered to degenerate, for it cannot be extinguished, and to be drawn to unworthy objects, the gratification it will seek affords no valuable information, the vigor of the mind is exhausted to little good purpose, perhaps to purposes worse than useless; and the man may thus become more frivolous than the child, giving his daily attention to petty inquiries and petty details, forgotten with the setting sun, or remembered only to enliven the scandal of another day. Pleasure, of a certain sort, may accompany the ephemeral acquirements, worthless as they are, of this humble class of inquirers; but it must be a transient, profitless pleasure, unworthy of an intellectual being; at the best, never rising above that of the idlers whom Paul found at Athens, "who spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." But the pleasures, which flow from the pursuit and acquisition of real knowledge, and the successful inquiries after truth, are substantial, durable, and suited to our highest powers of enjoyment, at every period of our existence. As beautifully expressed by the great statesman and orator of ancient Rome, who enjoyed these pleasures in their fullest extent, "other pursuits are not suited to every time, to every age, and to every place; but these delight us in youth and in age, by day and by night, at home and on our travels, in the city and in the country, are the charm of prosperity, and a refuge and solace in adversity."\*

---

\* Cicero pro Archia.

A learned prelate of the English church, who could also speak from experience, animates the clergy of his diocese, in their pursuit of learning, by reminding them of “that serene pleasure which accompanies the progress, and that happiness which crowns the end of our labors for intellectual improvement, and that pure and undisturbed delight, which flows from increasing knowledge.”\*

Such are the pleasures accompanying the acquisition of true knowledge; pleasures, which may be enjoyed, in a greater or less degree, by all of every condition in life, who have the power to think and to feel. What stronger motives can be necessary to awaken our sleeping energies, and rouse us to persevering intellectual exertions?

But motives, still more powerful, may be found in the importance, the absolute necessity, indeed, of useful knowledge to our happiness and real well-being, as individuals and as members of society. In the language of Dr. Brown, the recent philosopher of Scotland, “so essential is knowledge, if not to virtue, at least to all the ends of virtue, that, without it, benevolence itself, when accompanied with power, may be as destructive and desolating as intentional tyranny. The whole native vigor of a state may be kept down for ages, and the comfort, and prosperity, and active industry of unexisting millions be blasted by regulations, which, in the intention of their generous projectors, were to stimulate those very energies which they repressed, and

---

\* Bishop Warburton's Triennial Charge, 1761.

to relieve that very misery which they rendered irremediable.”\* The whole history and present condition of Turkey afford a striking illustration of this remark of the Scottish Philosopher.

But a fuller illustration of the essential value of knowledge to truth, to virtue and happiness, may be found in the history of those times, which are emphatically called the dark ages. To what a depth of degradation and misery was our wretched race reduced by ignorance and her inseparable ministers of vengeance, superstition and fanaticism ! What havoc was made of the noble nature of man ! What a flood of errors, absurdities and delusions came over him ! What crimes and cruelties sprung up every where around him ! And how was he rescued from the thralldom of these ministers of vengeance, and raised from a state of moral desolation and death to intellectual life and dignity ? By knowledge, and that exertion of his powers which knowledge produced. All other means for this purpose were ineffectual till the cultivation of knowledge gave them energy. Even the divine light of christianity, except through the medium of knowledge, was dim and powerless. Religious faith, to have any moral strength, must be founded upon knowledge.

But knowledge, it has been said, is power for evil as well as for good, and, like edge tools in children’s hands, may do mischief, where it is not skilfully used.

Like every other human power, knowledge may, indeed, be abused. But, in most cases, where it is

---

\* Brown’s Philosophy, v. 1, p. 13.



supposed to be abused to the injury of its possessor, it will be found to be of the superficial and useless kind; and, of course, the evils experienced proceed not so much from the abuse of real knowledge, as from real ignorance of what ought to be known. So too we shall find, that it is not so much through want of skill in the use and application of knowledge by those who possess it, as from motives of interest or ambition, and the opportunity afforded by the ignorance of others, that knowledge has been often abused, and made the source of evils instead of blessings to society. The remedy for all such evils, therefore, is to be sought in the cultivation and general diffusion of real and useful knowledge.

In those countries, where the interests of men in authority, civil or ecclesiastical, are considered as incompatible with the diffusion of knowledge among the people, it will be withheld from them as far as practicable, and the measure will be justified, not without some show of reason, provided you admit the principle upon which it is adopted. If it be granted, that the political or religious concerns of a nation are the exclusive charge of particular orders of men, and that those in humbler occupations have no right, in any way, to intermeddle with them, it will not appear wholly absurd to confine these latter classes of men to the information, which is appropriate to their several callings. Hence, probably, the old maxim, "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam,*" keep the mechanic to his tools—the laborer to his task; a maxim, sound and useful, in its just sense; and, in that sense, is, in our country, and under our institu-

tions, as applicable to one calling or profession as another, from the humblest up to the highest in the nation. All are alike bound to perform well the duties, which they assume. Beyond this, too, all stand on equal ground, citizens of the same free country, subject to the same duties, with the same privileges, and having the same right to knowledge and intellectual enjoyment.

A different doctrine may be expected to prevail where distinct political ranks exist, and the spirit of aristocracy and family pride is cherished. It may be natural, under such circumstances, for those who succeed to honors and distinctions, as their lawful inheritance, to feel jealous of the least encroachment upon their privileges, and to combine their influence to prevent the rise of "new men" into their ranks from the lower classes. Regarding also such as are bred to manual occupation, as having nothing to do with mental labor, beyond what their particular occupations require, they may think it absurd to indulge them in a taste for literature or general knowledge of any kind. This might be injurious to the work of their hands, and, if so, it must be wrong. The convenience of all the higher orders is concerned in the manual skill of the artizan or mechanic, the servant or laborer, in which, if he never fails, he fulfils the purpose of his existence. The improvement of his mind in science or knowledge, can have respect only to the duties which he owes to God and his family. Upon the same principle it is, that the slave-holder, in a land of liberty, would shut out from the mind of his slave every ray of light, which

might disclose to him higher duties than implicit submission to his earthly master.

Thanks to our fathers, who have transmitted to us the blessings of freedom and knowledge, we live under institutions, which recognise no distinctions, but what our creator has made, or enabled us to make for ourselves. Merit, personal merit, intellectual and moral merit, is the claim to distinction, which we acknowledge. Other claims are arbitrary, and at war with nature, which has established a rotation of talents and virtues, and the distinction grounded upon them, more sure and inevitable, than any rotation of civil office, which the will of man could ever effect. While some families cease to be distinguished, others rise from obscurity and take their place, led on, perhaps, by some gifted individual, whose force and vigor of mind impel him from the humble orbit, in which he first moved, and carry him onward and upward, against all opposing obstacles, till his name becomes a fixed star in the firmament of glory.

Such are the character and effect of our free and christian institutions. Under their fostering protection and influence, if any where on earth, our race might be expected to attain, in no restricted sense, to the glorious liberty of sons of God; the liberty of mind, of truth, of virtue, of happiness, temporal and eternal. The greatest foes to this liberty are prejudice and vice; and these may be successfully opposed by knowledge, the cultivation and diffusion of knowledge, with the renovating principles to which knowledge gives energy; that knowledge, which is

suiting to the wants and circumstances of society, and which is calculated to improve and exalt the mind and heart of him who receives it, to enlighten and aid him in the duties of his particular calling, in the duties which he owes to his family and children, who look to him for guidance and instruction; which he owes to himself, to his never dying mind, which he owes to his country and to his God, duties, from the faithful performance of which, there can be no dispensation. In proportion as such knowledge abounds, prejudice and vice will disappear. The effect of all sound knowledge is to purify the mind from prejudice, to raise it above low desires and pursuits, to soften and subdue the passions, and to expand and refine the affections. The very exercise of the faculties in acquiring knowledge, the consciousness of intellectual power which it excites, the rational occupation and entertainment which it affords, the interesting associations which it awakens, as well as the stores of thought and contemplation, which it gathers for the mind, all have a most salutary influence upon the moral sentiments and character, and lead directly to the formation of good principles, and virtuous habits.

We sometimes, indeed, see distinguished talents and attainments in science, united with depravity and vice. But this is not common, and it is still less so, that we find those whose understandings have been judiciously cultivated, and who have advanced themselves in various learning, deficient in moral rectitude. In all ages of the world, the most eminent philosophers have generally been illustrious for

their virtues. But, however particular causes may operate in some instances to counteract the moral influence of knowledge upon the individual, it will be found universally the case, that the age and country, which are the most enlightened by knowledge, are also the most virtuous and happy.\*

It is not because I supposed the truth of what has now been urged in behalf of knowledge would be questioned by any one, that I have thus dwelt upon the subject, but because, like many other admitted truths, it is apt to be practically disregarded; and because the deeper our impression is of the value of knowledge, the stronger will be our desire to possess it, and the more strenuous our efforts to diffuse its blessings among our fellow men. In proportion as knowledge ceases to be cultivated, the deplorable evils of ignorance and moral darkness will return. Knowledge is the true light of the mind, and as essential to it for its safety and guidance, as natural

---

\* A writer of the present day, in England, after stating that "no fact of human nature is better ascertained than that the classes of men, whose range of ideas is the narrowest, are the most prone to vice," observes of the English population that "in the narrowness of the circle of ideas and its effect upon morals, no class comes so near the lowest of all as the highest in wealth and fashion. Few individuals in that class, he says, can endure books, or have profited by the forms of education through which they have passed. Being exempt from the cares of life, they have none of those ideas which the occupations of the middle classes force them to acquire. The circle of their ideas, therefore, is confined to their amusements and pleasures, the ceremonial of fashionable life, the private history of a few scores of families, which associate with one another only, which they call the world, and which in truth are the world to them. The demoralizing effect of these monotonous pleasures and this narrow circle of ideas, is the same with the monotonous occupations of those in the lowest class, who are confined to the constant repetition of a small number of operations, and whose senses and thoughts for almost the whole of their working hours are chained to a few objects." Thus, virtue and happiness prevail most in those classes of the community, whose minds have the most liberal range of ideas, and whose occupations are relieved by interesting objects of thought and feeling. Such must be the case in all nations, and at all times, as well as in Great Britain, at the present day.

light is to the body. We justly feel a deep compassion for the unfortunate being, whose eyes are closed to the sweet light of the sun and all the beautiful objects it exhibits; and surely he is not less entitled to our compassion, whose mind is darkened by ignorance and closed to the pure delights of knowledge, and who, instead of being cheered and guided through his journey of life by reason, and truth, and intelligence, is assailed by the foul harpies of vice, haunted by the phantoms of superstition, or seized upon by the furies of fanaticism.

Such being the value of knowledge, we perceive, at once, the immense importance of education; a subject, which has always interested the learned, and which now engages universal attention. Yet, after all the inquiries and speculations upon this subject, the views generally entertained of education appear to be limited and imperfect. We are apt to regard it as confined to the season of youth, or, if extended beyond that period, as belonging exclusively to those, with whose profession or occupation it is particularly connected. Juster views would lead us to consider education as the personal and practical concern of every individual, and at all periods of his life. I shall not presume, at this time, to tax your patience by entering, at large, upon this fruitful theme, but shall hope to be indulged in a few desultory remarks, chiefly respecting self-education, as more immediately applicable to the consideration of Lyceums.

Education, in the most extensive sense of the term, comprehends every thing which is conducive

to the cultivation of our nature, and to our advancement in necessary knowledge. In this comprehensive view of the subject, certain philosophers have considered education as the cause of the great difference among mankind, as to intellectual and moral attainments and character. Mr. Locke, that profound explorer of the human mind, and the first author of a systematic treatise on education, says, "That of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education. It is that which makes the great difference in mankind;" including, as he did, in his view of education, the earliest impressions of infancy, as well as all the efforts for self-education through life. Sir Isaac Newton relied for success, in all his investigations, upon the persevering exertion of his faculties, rather than the possession of any superior endowments, and attributed his glorious discoveries in science to unwearied industry and patience of thought, not to extraordinary natural sagacity.\* Though we may not adopt these opinions in their full extent, yet no one will doubt that much depends upon human exertion, and that education, if it cannot perform every thing, possesses incalculable power, and demands the attention of all who are blest with understanding and freedom, whatever may be their occupation, or condition in society. Those who have been favored with advantages of early instruction, or even with a course of liberal

---

\* Lord Teignmouth says, "It was a favorite opinion of Sir William Jones, that all men are born with an equal capacity for improvement."

*Life prefixed to Works of Sir W. Jones, v. 2, p. 259.*

education, ought to regard it rather as a good foundation to build upon, than as a reason for relaxing in their efforts to make advances in learning. The design of early education, it should be remembered, is not so much to accumulate information, as to develop, invigorate, and discipline the faculties, to form habits of attention, observation, and industry, and thus to prepare the mind for more extensive acquirements, as well as for a proper discharge of the duties of life.\*

Those, who have not enjoyed the privileges of early instruction, must feel the stronger inducement to avail themselves of all the means and opportunities, in their power, for the cultivation of their minds and the acquisition of knowledge. It can never be too late to begin or to advance the work of improvement. They will find distinguished examples of success, in the noble career of self-education, to animate their exertions. These will teach them, that no condition of life is so humble, no circumstances so depressing, no occupation so laborious, as to present insuperable obstacles to success in the pursuit of knowledge. All such disheartening obstacles combined may be surmounted, as they have been, in a thousand instances, by a resolute and persevering

---

\* "Locke, though educated within her walls (Oxford), was much more indebted to himself than to his instructors, and was in himself an instance of that self-teaching, always the most efficient and valuable, which he afterwards so strongly recommends. In a letter to the Earl of Peterborough, he observes, 'Mr. Newton learned his mathematics only of himself; and another friend of mine, greek, (wherein he is very well skilled,) without a master; though, both these studies seem to require the help of a tutor more than any other.' In another letter he says, 'When a man has got an entrance into any of the sciences, it will be time then, to depend on himself and rely upon his own understanding, and exercise his own faculties, which is the only way to improvement and mastery.'" *Lord King's Life of Locke.*



determination to overcome them. Some of the most celebrated philosophers of antiquity rose from the condition of slaves ; and many of the most learned among the moderns have educated themselves under circumstances scarcely less depressing, than those of servitude. Heyne, the first classical scholar of Germany, during the last century, and the brightest ornament of the University of Gottingen, raised himself from the depths of poverty, by his own persevering, determined spirit of application, rather than by superior force of natural genius. Gifford, the elegant translator of Juvenal, struggled with poverty and hardships in early life, and nobly persevered till he gained the high rewards of British learning. And Ferguson, the celebrated astronomer and mechanician, was the son of a day laborer, and, at an early age, was placed at service with several farmers, in succession ; yet, without teachers, and almost without means of instruction, he attained to a high rank among the philosophers of his time, and, as a lecturer, was listened to by the most exalted as well as humblest in rank and station. By his clear and simple manner of teaching the physical sciences, he rendered the knowledge of them more general than it had ever before been in England, and through his learned publications he became also the instructor of colleges and universities. All these extraordinary men have left memoirs of themselves, detailing the struggles through which they passed, which will forever teach persevering resolution, against opposing obstacles, to all who have a love of knowledge or a

desire for improvement.\* What encouragement may they not afford to those who have no such struggles to encounter, and who can obtain without difficulty the means of instructing themselves? There would seem to be no apology at the present day, in this country at least, for extreme ignorance, in any situation or condition of life. The most valuable knowledge, that which is essential to moral cultivation, is certainly within the reach of all.

Innumerable are the instances of successful self-instruction, not only among men of bright natural talents, but among those of apparently moderate powers; not only against the force of early disadvantages, but against that of the most adverse circumstances of active and public employment. The highest honors of learning have been won amidst laborious professional duties, and the pressing cares of state. Hardy seamen, too, who have spent their days in conflict with the storms of the ocean, have found means to make themselves distinguished in science and literature, as well as by achievements in their profession. The lives of Columbus, Cook, and Lord Collingwood gloriously attest this fact. Our own country has produced her full proportion of self-taught men, statesmen and civilians, philosophers and men of science. At their head stand Washington and Franklin, neither of whom enjoyed, in early life, advantages of education equal to those which are afforded by some of our free schools to the humblest of the people. And there is not, prob-

---

\* See prefixed to Ferguson's Lectures, and Gifford's Juvenal, the simple and affecting narratives of their respective literary adventures.

ably, now upon the earth, a more honorable example of self-education, than our own La Place, alike profound in science, and accomplished in the practical duties of life, and whose brilliant reputation has already become national property.

These great examples show how much an individual may accomplish for himself by vigorous and persevering efforts in pursuit of knowledge and the improvement of his mind and character. The experience and observation of all who have been concerned in the instruction of others will testify, that success cannot be anticipated from any possible external advantages of education, without the pupil's own diligent exertion. Universities, professors, and public libraries have no magical power to give and to grant knowledge; it must be earned by the labors of him who seeks it, must be created, in fact, by the powers of the mind which is blest with it. Difficulties, even, have sometimes a stimulating effect upon the mind, which is of more value to the student than the united aid of these splendid advantages. When facilities abound, and the pupil has his instructor and guide ever at hand, to relieve his embarrassment and lighten his labor, he is apt to relax in the vigor of his application, and to lose the main object of early education, mental discipline and strength, while the information he gains is too superficial to be of much worth. An ardent desire for knowledge will do more in its acquisition, than all that wealth and influence can effect.

Let it never be forgotten, therefore, that the various means and opportunities for improvement, for

advancement in science, or proficiency in general knowledge, which are so abundant at the present day, are nothing without attention, and thought, and persevering exercise of the understanding and reason. Let no one expect to receive from Lyceums, or other institutions, any improvement or benefit, but upon the condition that he exert the powers of his mind in appropriating to himself the instruction, which is there given. Let him look there, too, for excitement and direction, in his pursuit of knowledge, still more than for knowledge itself. And let him bear in mind two of the rules adopted by Sir William Jones, that illustrious example of diligence and learning—that “whatever had been attained was attainable by him”; and “never to neglect an opportunity of improving his intellectual faculties, or acquiring any valuable accomplishment.”\*

Among the numerous benefactors, who have risen up in our eventful times, to bless the human race, none will be entitled to more veneration from posterity, than those who have led the way in developing the intellectual faculties and moral affections of the young, inspiring them with a love and desire of excellence, and stimulating their exertions in the attainment of it; and in extending among all classes of people the blessings of knowledge, virtue and happiness. The name of Pestalozzi will be dear throughout all generations; dear to the friend of humanity, to the lover of truth and goodness, to the whole family of want; but, above all, dear to the

---

\* Life of Sir W. Jones, v. 2, p. 298.

mother, who so deeply feels her responsibility, and who will find in him a never failing guide, to cheer and animate her in the discharge of her holy duties. His principles of education, both in opening the infant mind, and in rescuing the poor from the dark dominion of ignorance, were as simple as they were profound, and as original as they were true to nature.\* He found a kindred spirit in Fellenberg, whose splendid establishment at Hofwyl, in Switzerland, has given additional celebrity to the principles of Pestalozzi. On that beautiful and salubrious spot, the sons of the wealthy and the poor are educated in the most appropriate manner, by means of literary and practical institutions, a spacious farm for agricultural labor and instruction, and a manufactory of implements and machinery, in which mechanical skill may be acquired. It is ardently to be hoped, that our country may yet be blessed with similar establishments. To introduce them, if only so far as respects the poor, in the vicinity of our great cities, where they might afford employment and instruction to those thousands who are now supported, at the public expense, in idleness, ignorance, and vice, would be an object worthy of the best energies of American philanthropy.

The influence of Pestalozzi and Fellenberg extended to England, and, if it did not enkindle, served to spread the excitement there in favor of popular education. Renowned as Brougham may be, as a statesman, his fame with posterity will probably rest

---

\* See Principles of Pestalozzi, &c., by C. Mayo, LL. D.; also, Journal of Education, v. 4, p. 97, 414, 548.

upon his labors in this great cause. He has gloriously led the way in providing for the British population some of those blessings of a free education, which the fathers of New England planted here. It is but about seven years since the introduction of the Mechanics' Institution in London; though something of the kind had before existed, both at Glasgow and Edinburgh. The example being thus set in London, under the auspices of Mr. Brougham, was immediately followed in the principal provincial towns, and has since extended even to Van Diemen's land, on the opposite side of our globe; where, we are told, a mechanics' institution is in successful operation at Hobart Town. These associations appear to have excited a deep interest among all classes of people in Great Britain. The Society for the diffusion of useful knowledge are furnishing excellent treatises on scientific subjects and the various branches of knowledge, designed for the extension of popular instruction, and especially adapted to the use of all such associations.\* Similar institutions have, for some time,

---

\* The learned Committee of this Society, with Mr. Brougham at their head, proceed in their labors with energy and effect. Their first undertaking was "the Library of Useful Knowledge," commenced in 1827, being a series of treatises, published at the beginning and middle of every month, about seventy of which have already appeared, embracing subjects of Natural Philosophy, History, Biography, &c. Last year the Committee commenced, in addition to these, the publication of "the Farmer's Series," for the more immediate benefit of that class of readers; and also the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," comprising "as much entertaining matter as can be given along with useful knowledge, and as much knowledge as can be conveyed in an amusing form." They are also proceeding with the publication of a series of ancient and modern Maps. The British Almanac, a work of great utility, is likewise published under their superintendence. All these works appear to be executed with ability, and are admirably adapted for the purposes intended. The engravings are very neat, some of them beautiful. The Preliminary Treatise is an eloquent and learned discourse by Mr. Brougham, presenting a masterly exposition of the objects, advantages and pleasures of

existed in our country, and been conducted, in this vicinity at least, with much spirit and success. Proficiency in the various manufacturing and mechanic arts is advanced by a knowledge of the scientific principles applicable to each; and, therefore, the immediate design of the mechanics' institution has been to extend among mechanics and manufacturers the most necessary information of this description.

Lyceums, as established with us, being constituted by individuals from all the various professions and occupations, are, of course, more comprehensive in their objects. The plan of these institutions nearly resembles that of several associations, which have sprung up in London within the last five years, composed of young men engaged in commercial and professional pursuits. These, we are informed, have lectures delivered to them, once in a week, upon some branch of science or literature; and also weekly discussions upon historical, moral, and political questions, avoiding all subjects of a party or purely controversial nature.

This slight account of the plan of the London associations may sufficiently indicate the course of exercises usually pursued in our Lyceums, originating in similar views, though not adopted with any designed coincidence. In the choice of subjects for these exercises, we have before us the whole extent

---

natural science. These excellent publications, moreover, are remarkably cheap; the Library of Useful Knowledge being afforded here at the low rate of 15 cents for each number, including the plates, having 32 closely filled pages, containing in matter nearly the amount of three times that number of common octavo pages.

of useful knowledge; and all knowledge is useful, which is conducive to improvement, or rational enjoyment, or which may be applied to any valuable purpose. Philosophy, literature, the sciences and arts, the history of past ages and of the present, the affairs of nations, the occupations of society, the lives of individuals, the great works of nature and of man, the whole world, indeed, around us and within us, abound in topics, which excite inquiry and lead to interesting results. The difficulty is not in finding attractive and useful subjects, but in selecting, from a boundless variety, those which are proper for popular discussion, and most deserving of general attention.

The natural sciences, which embrace the objects of the material world, will always engage attention, as being not only important in their application to the useful arts, but calculated to awaken the curiosity and develop the powers of the youthful mind; and, at the same time, to inspire a taste for the beauties of nature, and a devout veneration of the almighty author, whose wisdom and goodness they exemplify. It is not easy to imagine a more interesting exercise, than to examine into the laws and operations of nature through all her works, from the wonderful objects of natural history, the curious disclosures of chemistry, or the brilliant exhibitions of electricity and optics, up to the grand and astonishing views, which are presented to us by astronomy.

All those branches of knowledge, which more immediately respect man, his physical, intellectual, and moral nature, his rights, duties, interests, and rela-



tions in society, are not less important, certainly, than the natural sciences, though some of them may be more suited to the student of maturer years. Others, however, are well adapted to interest and improve the young; and the whole of this class of subjects may be so treated and discussed, as to afford pleasure and instruction to persons of every age and condition. The philosophy of the human mind, as it now exists, cleared of the metaphysical jargon which once perplexed it, presents a rich field of inquiry, which could not be explored without benefit by those, who are desirous of looking into their own minds, and understanding more clearly the nature of the faculties they possess, and learning how each may be most effectually improved. A lecture upon any one of the mental faculties might afford, to every hearer, valuable hints for its cultivation and improvement. Who would not desire a clear perception, a sound judgment, a faithful memory, a well regulated imagination, a habit of attention, with the power of applying the mind so closely to any subject, as to be able to comprehend it, and reasoning so correctly as to arrive at the truth? All these advantages, it is the province of this science to assist us in acquiring.

Education, nearly connected with mental philosophy, and depending upon it for every substantial improvement, is a subject full of interest to the whole community; and in regard to which there is at all times a tendency to extremes, both in theory and practice. What should we think, at this day, of the sort of discipline alluded to by good old Rog-

er Ascham, the tutor of Queen Elizabeth, in his statement of a conversation, which took place at the table of Lord Cecil, the Queen's secretary of state, a small portion of which you will allow me to introduce. In his quaint manner he relates, that after being seated at table, "Mr. Secretary saith, 'I have strange news brought me this morning, that divers scholars of Eton be run away from the school for fear of beating.' Mr. Peter, as one somewhat severe of nature, said plainly, 'that the rod only was the sword, that must keep the school in obedience, and the scholar in good order.' Mr. Haddan was fully of Mr. Peter's opinion, and said 'that the best schoolmaster of our time was the greatest beater.' "\* Such a doctrine would now be shocking to most parents; but, in the opinion of some judicious observers of human nature, the extreme of the present day, which consists in stimulating the spirit of competition among children so highly as to make them overwork themselves, is not less cruel, in effect, and more dangerous in its consequences. They would admonish us, not to overlook the hearts of these little ones in our zeal to bring forward their understandings; nor to lose the precious season, which nature designed for the developement of their moral and benevolent affections and planting the seeds of all good principles, by employing it wholly in tasking their tender faculties.

The discussion of topics like these, as well as every thing relating to our schools and institutions of

---

\* Works of Roger Ascham, p. 187.

learning, could not fail to be interesting and useful, especially in bringing into view the results of experience, and a comparison of the observations of different authors, both ancient and modern, for some of the most just ideas of education are found among the former, and deducing from the whole the best principles and practical rules.

Ethical and political philosophy, mechanical science, civil history, and general literature, all abound in topics of lively interest and practical utility. The governments, state and national, under which we live, their various establishments, all the great interests and institutions of society, together with political economy, which has now become a science, and whatever concerns our social, civil, and political relations, are at all times deserving of inquiry, and a free and faithful discussion of them could not fail to engage and reward the attention of any portion of our people.

It has been thought by some, that there is a tendency, in the spirit of our times, to overlook the just claims of the intellectual and moral sciences, as objects of general pursuit, compared with physical and mechanical philosophy. The present age, among other characteristic denominations, has, indeed, been called the mechanical age, or the age of machinery. The brilliant discoveries and astonishing inventions, which have burst upon our view, and which so immediately affect the public affairs of business, and the accommodations of the active world, strike upon the senses and powerfully excite the imaginations of men. It is not surprising, therefore, that, when

compared with such dazzling objects, those branches of knowledge, which are so much less imposing to observation, should fail of a just appreciation, however essential they may be to the growth of wisdom, and truth, and virtue, the great instruments, ordained by the author of our being, for producing human happiness, and advancing the solid welfare of society.

In estimating the comparative value of different branches of knowledge, as objects of general pursuit, it should be considered, whether the cultivation of them is necessary to all, or only to a portion of the community. There are many sciences and arts, the flourishing existence of which is highly important to society, which it little concerns any to study thoroughly, if at all, excepting those to whose profession or occupation they are appropriate. The skill of the professed artist or mechanic affords to the whole community their practical results and benefits. It might gratify curiosity, a laudable curiosity, indeed, if indulged without neglecting more substantial inquiries, to investigate minutely the scientific principles of the arts, which daily minister to our comfort or delight; but it could not add materially to the enjoyment, which their productions are designed to afford.

Those ingenious men, who have distinguished themselves by their invention or skill in the mechanic arts, are justly regarded as great public benefactors, but not so great, as those, who have been distinguished for their zeal and efficiency in advancing the intellectual and moral condition of the human race. Mankind might have better spared a Watt,

an Arkwright, or a Fulton, than a Bacon or Locke, an Alfred or Washington. The beneficent influence of the labors and works of this class of benefactors is less questionable or precarious, than of the former. The mighty labor-saving machines, which have created such prodigious human power, and the want of which is so much felt, or thought to be felt, after they are once known, have not, perhaps, in all instances, added to the amount of human happiness. Had they never existed, the want of them would not probably have been felt so severely, as the want of employment now is by thousands of that class of people, whose labor they have usurped.\* Even the safety-lamp, the glorious invention of Sir Humphrey Davy, the success of which in preserving human life was thought to be beyond the reach of accident, seems to have become subservient to the gains of the avaricious coal-owners, instead of saving the lives of the poor pit-men; who are compelled to work in places so much more dangerous than formerly, that, according to a statement publicly made, for the ten years immediately following the use of the safety-lamp, the number of explosions which took place in the mines, was double that of those,

---

\* Such machines, too, may be the occasion of great loss to the proprietors. A writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, (v. 50, p. 354) after remarking that, in a simple state of society, the cottage weaver, if he cannot sell his web, becomes an agriculturist, &c. proceeds to observe: "But a power-loom factory cannot be diverted from its original destination; and its proprietors continue to work it, even in the face of a falling market, and of reduced profits, in order to secure some interest, however small, on their fixed capital. The extreme delicacy of some of the machinery, used in manufactures, renders it necessary that work should be continued, even without profit, lest the machinery should perish by being left inactive. The rapid improvements in machinery, though increasing the sum of national wealth, produce for a time great pressure on individuals. An enterprising merchant may, in 1829, have invested his disposable capital in machinery, which in 1830 becomes valueless by the competition of an improved invention."

which happened during the ten years preceding its introduction. And thus this most benevolent effort of science has been converted into the means of destroying the very lives, it was intended to save.

It is no part of the design of these remarks to disparage the claims of mechanical or chemical science, but merely to lead your minds to a just comparative estimate of that knowledge, which is most important in general education, and which merits your particular attention as members of Lyceums. The boundless region of knowledge cannot be explored by any of us, and it concerns us deeply to direct our inquiries judiciously, and with a constant reference to our highest good.

On this point, however, the opinions of profound and experienced observers of human life and affairs, must be more acceptable, than any thing which it is in my power to suggest. The great intellectual philosopher, already mentioned, observes: "There are so many things to be known, while our time on earth is so short, that we must, at once, reject all useless learning. The great object of education is, to form the pupil's mind, to settle good habits, and the principles of virtue and wisdom; and to excite him to a love and imitation of what is excellent and praiseworthy; and to give him vigor, activity, and industry."\*

The celebrated bishop Warburton says: "Of all literary exertions, whether designed for the use or entertainment of the world, there are none of so

---

\* Locke on Ed., &c.

much importance, or so immediately our concern, as those which let us into a knowledge of our own nature. Others may exercise the understanding, or amuse the imagination, but these only can improve the heart, and form the human mind to wisdom.”\*

The great British moralist, in his *Life of Milton*, says, “The truth is, that the knowledge of external nature, and the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or conversation, whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind, and with those examples, which may be said to embody truth, and prove by events the reasonableness of opinions. Prudence and justice are virtues and excellencies of all times and of all places; we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary and at leisure.” And in support of these views, Dr. Johnson appeals to Socrates, the ancient sage, who is proverbially known, as having called home philosophy from her vain and useless wanderings, to teach man the knowledge and culture of his own nature, and the practical duties of life.

Such are the intimations of these illustrious guides to wisdom and knowledge The subjects of inquiry,

---

\* See “The Friend, a Series of Essays,” by S. T. Coleridge, vol. 1, 192: a work, by the way, deserving more attention than it seems yet to have received in this country. Whatever some may think of the author’s estimate of Locke, as a philosopher, no one can be insensible to the powerful and elevating moral influence of these Essays.

which they would recommend to our chief attention, afford instruction suited to all persons, under all circumstances, and at all periods of life; instruction, too, which there could be no difficulty in finding lecturers to communicate, wherever individuals of judgment and taste, or of literary or professional leisure are to be found, who are willing to impart to others the results of their reading and reflection, aiming, as we ever ought to aim in these institutions, at usefulness rather than originality. There are many, we may hope, in our community, who would readily yield to the advice, which a learned pleader of ancient Rome gave to those of his own profession, who had quitted the busy scenes of the forum, that they could not better employ and dignify the evening of life, than in bestowing upon the rising generation the fruits of their experience and learning.\*

Biography, so rich, at the present day, in those "examples which embody truth," would supply you with materials of never failing interest, whatever science or art, or branch of knowledge or wisdom you might wish to illustrate or enforce. In tracing the life and character of a man eminent for genius or learning, you would naturally be led to a consideration of his leading objects of pursuit, as well as his virtues and talents. Important general views, even of the exact sciences, might thus be given, enlivened by historical anecdote and sketches of human life. How could instruction be more agreeably conveyed to a popular audience, as to the inductive philoso-

---

\* Quintil. l. 12. 11.



phy of Bacon, the mental researches of Locke, or the discoveries of Newton or of Davy, than by exhibiting the virtues and prominent events in the lives of these great men, together with the progress and result of their scientific labors? So, too, all that is most interesting in the history and description of the useful or the fine arts might be connected with the lives of those, who have been most conspicuous in the invention or advancement of them. But it is the more peculiar province of biography to assist us in acquiring and communicating that kind of knowledge, which has been considered as of the highest value and of universal application. The "virtues of all times and of all places" are eloquent in the lives of illustrious men. The intellectual and moral developement of our nature, by others, reveals to us our own capacities of improvement and action. How could a lecturer more clearly demonstrate the ability of man for self-education, than by the life of Franklin, or, his moral power over others, than by the history of Socrates? The biography of the American philosopher has often been thus applied, and that of the Grecian sage is not less fruitful of instruction and interest. Socrates was the father of true philosophy in the ancient world, and has left an example, which will never cease to proclaim the moral energies of our nature. Such were the original and elevating views and principles, which he unfolded in his discourses, transmitted to us by Plato and Xenophon, that, although he left nothing in writing himself, no author has surpassed him in the veneration of succeeding ages. From him we might

learn how old are some of the most sublime sentiments of truth and duty, and how competent we are, with or without the aids of modern science, to become wise, virtuous and happy. We might learn, too, how superior was the humble heathen, seeking the divine truths of immortality, which he could not find, to the proud skeptic, who glories in the light which surrounds him, yet blindly rejects that, which alone penetrates the veil of futurity.\*

What could be more pertinent, to the object of Lyceum meetings, than to introduce the wise and good of other times, uttering anew their best thoughts, and exhibiting again the virtues, which have always inspired admiration? History, it has been said, is philosophy teaching by example. Biography would thus instruct us, both by precept and example; together with finished models of excellence, she would

---

\* A few words may here be acceptable from the discourse of Socrates with his friend Aristodemus, concerning the worship and providence of God, as translated by Cudworth, in his great work, "The Intellectual System." (v. 2, p. 285.)

Aristodemus says, "I despise not the Deity, O Socrates, but think him to be too magnificent a being to stand in need of my worship." Socrates replies, "How much the more magnificent and illustrious that being is, who takes care of you; so much the more, in all reason, ought he to be honored by you."

Aristodemus discovering his disbelief of Providence, "as being incredible, that one and the same Deity should be able to regard all things at once," Socrates says to him, "Consider, friend, I pray you, if that mind, which is in your body, does order and dispose it every way, as it pleases; why should not that wisdom, which is in the universe, be able to order all things therein, as seems best to it? And if your eye can discern things several miles distant from it, why should it be thought a thing impossible for the eye of God to behold all things at once? And if your soul can mind things both here and in Egypt, and in Sicily, why may not the great mind or wisdom of God, be able to take care of all things, in all places?"

Such was the manner of Socrates, in teaching the truths of natural religion and inculcating the moral duties of man. It is worthy of remark, that in illustrating the wisdom and goodness of God from the marks of benevolent design in his works, he drew the same evidence from the structure of the human frame, that Paley has so beautifully extended and developed in his admirable work upon Natural Theology.

*Xenophon's Mem. of Socrates, by S. Fielding, p. 56.*

deliver to us the lessons of sound philosophy, the truths of science, the principles of art, and the results of general knowledge.

Thus, my friends, have I endeavored to discharge the duty, assigned to me on this occasion. In giving you so freely the sentiments and opinions of venerated authors, it has been my wish to add the weight of their authority to important truths, as well as to exemplify the principle, before suggested, that, in all the exercises connected with our Lyceums, we ought to aim at utility rather than originality. It has been my leading purpose to impress you with the general importance of the subject, and to give you such a view of the design, advantages and objects of these institutions, as might serve to deepen your sense of their value, and confirm your resolution to persevere in the noble cause, in which you have engaged. Higher motives to exertion cannot be addressed to intelligent, accountable beings, than are involved in the cause of human improvement; a cause, to which every thing in the condition and prospects of our country adds importance. These motives apply with peculiar force to those, whom providence has blessed with influence in society, or with the treasures of science and knowledge. Exert your influence in advancing the well-being of society, and communicate freely of the treasures, which you possess. These are treasures, which you cannot bequeath to your friends, which you cannot leave to be inherited by your children. Labor, then, to impart them while you may; you cannot make a

nobler benefaction, or one which will leave in the world a more precious memorial of your existence in it ; and, while you enrich the minds of others with knowledge, and bless society by its influence, you will provide for yourselves a pure enjoyment, and contribute your aid to strengthen the foundations of the great temple of public liberty and social happiness.

## APPENDIX.

---

It has been thought that some more particular information may be desirable, respecting Lyceums, and the introduction of them in this County, than could be given in the preceding discourse, consistently with its plan or the time allotted for its delivery. The following selections and remarks, therefore, are added by way of an Appendix.

In Feb. 1829, a public meeting was held in Boston, consisting of members of the Legislature and other gentlemen, at which a committee was appointed to collect information concerning Lyceums in this Commonwealth, and report at a similar meeting to be held during the ensuing session of the Legislature. At this second meeting, held Feb. 19, 1830, his Excellency Governor Lincoln presiding, committees were appointed for the several counties, to collect and diffuse information on the subject of Lyceums, and to report at another meeting during the next winter session of the General Court. At a general meeting of these county committees, a central committee of Massachusetts was chosen, of which the Hon. A. H. Everett is chairman, for the purpose of corresponding with the committees in the several counties. The first circular of this central committee has just been issued, and contains, among other things, the following authentic summary information concerning Lyceums.

“A Lyceum is a voluntary association of persons for mutual improvement. The *subjects* of their inquiries may be, the sciences, the useful arts, political economy, domestic economy, or such other matters as are best adapted to the wants, or inclination, or employments of the members, and may vary according to times and circumstances. The more frequent topics, thus far, have been, the exact sciences, in their application to the arts and purposes of life; with others of a practical nature, and such as are profitable to persons of different classes and ages.

“The *regulations* of these associations are few and simple, and resemble those which are adopted in small benevolent societies. The

officers are, usually, a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and — Managers, who, together, constitute a Board of Directors.

“The *exercises* of the Lyceum, are, familiar lectures from men of education in the town, or from other members who investigate particular subjects for the occasion ; also, discussions and debates. In some small Lyceums, or in the classes into which the larger are divided for occasional purposes, the exercises are free conversation, written themes, recitations, or mutual study. The lectures are sometimes procured at the expense of the Lyceums ; more frequently they are given by the members, and in this case, are always gratuitous.

“The *persons* who associate are of any age, and from any class in society, sustaining a good character ; all who are in pursuit of knowledge, more particularly the young and middle aged. The system is specially adapted to teachers of every grade ; the more advanced pupils in the various schools, and enterprising young men already engaged in business, who have done with schools, but who thirst for more knowledge. Ladies are invited to be present at the lectures and discussions, not as active members, but to participate in the benefits.

“The *meetings* are in the evenings, usually at intervals of one or two weeks ; but are, in most places, suspended during the busiest part of the summer season.

“It is highly important to the efficiency of a village Lyceum, that its inquiries be aided by apparatus. The more simple and cheap kinds are procured. Early foundations have also been laid, for interesting collections of minerals and other cabinets of science. Many Lyceums have valuable libraries for the use of their members. In some instances, these have been formed anew, and in others, a union has been effected with social libraries, already existing : an arrangement which, it is believed, will be found profitable to both parties.

“Associations, under the name of Lyceums, were first formed in the south part of the county of Worcester in the autumn of 1826 ; though some existed before on a similar principle, under other names. They have been gradually extending in this State to the present time. The number of town Lyceums reported at the public meeting was 78 ; in Suffolk county, 1 ; Essex, 14 ;\* Middlesex, 16 ; Norfolk, 6 ; Plymouth, 4 ; Barnstable, 3 ; Nantucket, 1 ; Bristol, 2 ; Worcester, 23 ; Hampshire, 2 ; Hampden, 3 ; Franklin, 1 ; Berkshire, 2. The information received was incomplete, particularly in regard to the four western counties.— There are *County* Lyceums in Worcester, Middlesex, and Essex counties. A county Lyceum is composed of delegates from such town Lyceums as choose to unite ; the union is formed for some purposes of

---

\* At present 18.

common interest, and meetings are held once or twice a year. It is but an association of Lyceums, as a town Lyceum is of individual persons.

“A Lyceum is easily formed in almost any country village or neighborhood. It requires two or three active, enterprising, matter-of-fact men, to collect their friends together, take hold of any topic of common interest, adopt a few regulations, and go *to work*. There is nothing mysterious, nothing difficult, in the process, if the members have only a desire for knowledge and improvement, and each resolves to do his own part in suggesting topics, promoting investigations, and solving inquiries. The social principle is brought into active operation; and where energy and promptness are the order of the day, a Lyceum becomes a most profitable school of mutual instruction.

“The advantages of this kind of association, where the experiment has been faithfully tried, are great and obvious; but they cannot here be named. The committee, however, can venture the assurance with perfect confidence, that the American Lyceum promises a very extensive diffusion of practical and useful knowledge. Their beneficial influence is soon manifest, in the improved character of schools and teachers, in the mental habits of all classes engaged in them, and in the elevation of the moral and social character. It would afford the committee peculiar gratification, to be able to announce, at the close of the year, that every town in the Commonwealth has its Lyceum in full operation, and every populous neighborhood, its branch or class in connexion with the Lyceum of the town.”

In the County of Essex, public attention was not particularly drawn to the subject of Lyceums, till near the close of the year 1829, when a number of gentlemen, from different parts of the county, met at Topsfield, to consult together concerning the formation of a County Lyceum. At this meeting, it was judged proper to postpone the formation of such an institution, till Town Lyceums should be more generally introduced; and a committee was appointed to address a circular letter to gentlemen, in all parts of the county, setting forth the nature and importance of these institutions, and recommending the establishment of them in their respective towns. The committee was also authorized to fix upon the time for a meeting of delegates from such Town Lyceums as might be formed, and to prepare a constitution to be submitted to them, for the purpose of establishing a County Lyceum.

At the time appointed by the committee, which was the 17th of March last, delegates from seventeen Town Lyceums assembled at Ipswich, and were organized as a County Lyceum, adopting the constitution, which the committee had prepared. According to this constitution, the Essex County Lyceum is composed of delegates from the several Town Lyceums; and its object is to advance the interests of these

local institutions, and promote the diffusion of useful knowledge through the county. The officers are a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and ten Curators, who together constitute a board of Managers. Semi-annual meetings are to be held in the months of May and November; the time and place to be determined by the board of Managers, at each of which a public address is to be delivered, previous to the commencement of business.

Each delegation from the Town Lyceums, at these meetings, is to present "a written report of the condition and usefulness, proceedings and prospects, of the Town Lyceum which it represents. Such report to specify the methods of instruction adopted by the said Lyceum, the subjects of the lectures delivered, the questions debated, the number of meetings, the times and places of meeting, the number of tickets disposed of, and, in general, all such facts and circumstances, as may be interesting and useful." No delegation is to be recognised without such a written report. The secretary is "to compile from the reports of the delegations a general report, and circulate it to the Corresponding Secretaries of the several Lyceums, to be communicated by them to the bodies to which they respectively belong."

It is the duty of the Curators "to facilitate and provide for an inter-communication of lectures, and an interchange of civilities and accommodations between the Town Lyceums." The constitution may be altered by a vote of two thirds of the members present at any semi-annual meeting, the alteration having been proposed at the semi-annual meeting next preceding. It was determined by the delegates that the meeting in May should be considered as the annual meeting; and that an introductory Address should be delivered at the first annual meeting, to be held on the first Wednesday of May, at Ipswich.

The circular letter of the Committee appointed to prepare the constitution, contained an able exposition of the circumstances which call for the institution of Lyceums, and the benefits which would result from them.

"Every one who looks over the surface of our towns, (say the Committee) must be convinced that there are many minds among us, endowed by nature with brilliant faculties, and framed by their Creator for great usefulness and honor, which pass through their earthly existence enveloped in the darkness of ignorance, and untouched by any springs of improvement; without shedding light upon truth, without giving an impulse to knowledge, and without offering a motive to virtue.

"It is the opinion of the Committee that this lamentable waste of intellectual resources, of the treasures of mind, may to a great extent be prevented. They think that much might be done towards this end by the establishment of LYCEUMS in the several towns. Such institutions,



organized with a just and careful reference to the condition and circumstances of the places in which they propose to conduct their operations, cannot fail, if supported with zeal and guided by discretion, to work out invaluable results. They will call forth latent talent, encourage a spirit of study and inquiry, and give a predominant relish for a purer and nobler kind of entertainment and recreation, than our people are at present accustomed to seek. It would not be long before it would be discovered that there is no amusement so worthy of our patronage, or, in itself, so conducive to our happiness, as that in which the curiosity of the intellect is awakened and gratified, and the mind exercised in the rational, invigorating and delightful employment of drinking in new and refreshing draughts of knowledge."

"In our most populous towns there are many gentlemen whose professional pursuits and extensive attainments would enable them to diffuse among their fellow-citizens, in the form of popular lectures, information of the most valuable kind. The exercises at Lyceums would afford opportunity to industrious, ingenious, and intelligent individuals to spread far and wide throughout the community, knowledge which, by being buried in public libraries and in ponderous volumes, is at present accessible to a few only. There is no class in society that would not be benefited by the operation of these institutions."

"The importance of scientific knowledge to persons engaged in the several mechanical and manufacturing trades, must be apparent to all. In the operations of their business, in the use of their materials, in the construction and action of their machinery, the principles of natural philosophy are to a greater or less extent continually unfolded and applied."

"There is no class of men, who stand in greater need of instruction in science, or who could make a more effectual use of it, than the cultivators of the soil. In the fields, which they are called to till, they would find occasion for all the information that can be obtained from agricultural chemistry; in their gardens and orchards they could make a most pleasing and profitable application of the knowledge of botany. An acquaintance with the principles of mechanics would facilitate the use, and quicken invention in the improvement, of their implements of labor. Indeed, from all the departments of natural science they could derive agreeable and useful information. It is impossible to conceive, much more to describe, the benefits which would result to the whole country, by the advancement that would be made in practical husbandry, in consequence of the wide and general diffusion among our agricultural population of the principles of useful science."

"The attention of our intelligent, enterprising, and patriotic citizens is at present prevailingly directed to the developement of the internal resources of the nation, by the means of surveys, canals, railroads, and

other improvements. The riches and strength of a free and civilized commonwealth consist chiefly in the well informed and well cultivated minds of its citizens. The treasures that lie beneath the soil cannot be drawn forth and used to the best effect, neither can they be discovered, unless its surface is occupied by an enlightened and ingenious population. The *internal improvement* which philanthropists and patriots should strive most earnestly to promote, is the universal diffusion of the blessings of knowledge and science."

"It cannot be doubted for a moment that there are many intelligent individuals, many who can appreciate the value of knowledge, in every town throughout the county. Let such individuals, however limited their present resources, however modest their pretensions, however small their number, associate themselves for the purpose of diffusing knowledge, and of mutual instruction; let them allure as many as they can to co-operate with them; let them pursue their objects zealously and patiently, and, however unpromising the prospect may be at first, let them not despair. They will undoubtedly succeed in establishing an institution that will be a source of delightful entertainment and great improvement to themselves, which will spread light and knowledge around them, and operate with a sure and permanent influence in elevating the social, intellectual, and moral character of the community in which they dwell."

Though this circular address has been widely spread through our community, these portions of it will not be unacceptable, and will impress those, who have not read it, with a desire to peruse the whole. The appeal here made to those who may feel discouraged by unfavorable circumstances, from attempting the formation of a Lyceum, brings to recollection the example of Franklin; which is calculated to inspire all such with resolution to commence and persevere in the work of mutual improvement, notwithstanding apparent obstacles. He formed a Lyceum, in effect, though not in name, under more difficult circumstances than can be found, at the present day, in any of our towns. No one will doubt this, who has read the account of his arrival in Philadelphia, at the age of seventeen, and his early efforts for the improvement of himself and others. "I began, says he, now to have some acquaintance among the young people of the town, that were lovers of reading, with whom I spent my evenings very pleasantly." At the age of twenty-one, he projected his little Lyceum, which led to the institution of the splendid Library of Philadelphia, and also of the American Philosophical Society. His simple account of his proceedings in this undertaking is exceedingly interesting, besides being appropriate to the subject of this Appendix; it is, therefore, introduced here, in his own words.

“ In the autumn of the preceding year, (1727) I had formed most of my ingenious acquaintance into a club for mutual improvement, which we called the Junto ; we met on Friday evenings. The rules that I drew up required that every member, in his turn, should produce one or more queries on any point of morals, politics, or natural philosophy, to be discussed by the company ; and once in three months produce and read an essay of his own writing, on any subject he pleased. Our debates were to be under the direction of a president, and to be conducted in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute, or desire of victory ; and to prevent warmth, all expressions of positiveness in opinions, or direct contradictions, were after some time made contraband, and prohibited under small pecuniary penalties.\*

“ The club was the best school of philosophy, morality, and politics, that then existed in the province ; for our queries (which were read the week preceding their discussion) put us upon reading with attention on the several subjects, that we might speak more to the purpose ; and here too we acquired better habits of conversation, every thing being studied in our rules which might prevent our disgusting each other ; hence the long continuance of the club.

“ At the time I established myself in Pennsylvania, there was not a good bookseller’s shop in any of the colonies to the southward of Boston. In New-York and Philadelphia, the printers were indeed stationers, but they sold only paper, &c., almanacs, ballads, and a few common school-books. Those who loved reading were obliged to send for their books from England ; the members of the junto had each a

---

\* Dr. Franklin’s account of the members of this club is amusing. “ The first members were Joseph Brientnal, a copyer of deeds for the scribes ; a good natured, friendly, middle aged man, a great lover of poetry, reading all he could meet with, and writing some that was tolerable ; very ingenious in making little nicknackeries, and of sensible conversation. Thomas Godfrey, a self-taught mathematician, great in his way, and afterwards inventor of what is now called *Hadley’s Quadrant*. But he knew little out of his way, and was not a pleasing companion, as, like most great mathematicians I have met with, he expected universal precision in every thing said, or was forever denying or distinguishing upon trifles, to the disturbance of all conversation ; he soon left us. Nicholas Scull, a surveyor, afterwards surveyor-general, who loved books, and sometimes made a few verses. William Parsons, bred a shoemaker, but loving reading, had acquired a considerable share of mathematics, which he first studied with a view to astrology, and afterwards laughed at it ; he also became surveyor-general. William Mautridge, joiner, but a most exquisite mechanic, and a solid, sensible man. Hugh Meredith, Stephen Potts, and George Webb, I have characterized before. Robert Grace, a young gentleman of some fortune, generous, lively, and witty ; a lover of punning, and of his friends. Lastly, William Coleman, then a merchant’s clerk, about my age, who had the coolest, clearest head, the best heart, and the exactest morals of almost any man I ever met with. He became afterwards a merchant of great note, and one of our provincial judges. Our friendship continued, without interruption, to his death, upwards of forty years.”

few. We had left the alehouse where we first met, and hired a room to hold our club in. I proposed that we should all of us bring our books to that room; where they would not only be ready to consult in our conferences, but become a common benefit, each of us being at liberty to borrow such as he wished to read at home. This was accordingly done, and for some time contented us. Finding the advantage of this little collection, I proposed to render the benefit from the books more common, by commencing a public subscription library. I drew a sketch of the plan and rules that would be necessary. So few were the readers at that time in Philadelphia, and the majority of us so poor, that I was not able, with great industry, to find more than fifty persons (mostly young tradesmen) willing to pay down for this purpose forty shillings each, and ten shillings per annum; with this little fund we began. The books were imported; the library was open one day in the week for lending them to subscribers, on their promissory notes to pay double the value if not duly returned. The institution soon manifested its utility, was imitated by other towns, and in other provinces. The libraries were augmented by donations; reading became fashionable; and our people having no public amusements to divert their attention from study, became better acquainted with books; and in a few years were observed by strangers to be better instructed, and more intelligent than people of the same rank generally are in other countries.

“This library afforded me the means of improvement by constant study; for which I set apart an hour or two each day, and thus repaired in some degree the loss of the learned education my father once intended for me. Reading was the only amusement I allowed myself. I spent no time in taverns, games, or frolic of any kind, and my industry in my business continued as indefatigable as it was necessary. My original habits of frugality continuing, and my father having among his instructions to me when a boy, frequently repeated a proverb of Solomon, “*Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men,*” I thence considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encouraged me; though I did not think that I should ever literally stand before kings, which however has since happened, for I have stood before five, and even had the honor of sitting down with one (the King of Denmark) to dinner.”\*

The late Dr. Smith, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, in his discourse upon the death of Dr. Franklin, alludes to the Junto in a manner, which cannot but be interesting to the promoters of Lyceums. The questions, which he has selected from those discussed in that club,

---

\* Franklin's Memoirs and Works, v. 1. p. 62, 83, &c.

are curious as a sample of the diversity of their inquiries, and may still be interesting topics of discussion in our Lyceums. "This society," says Dr. Smith, "after having subsisted forty years, and having contributed to the formation of some very great men, besides Dr. Franklin himself, became at last the foundation of the American Philosophical Society, now assembled to pay the debt of gratitude to his memory. A book containing many of the questions discussed by the Junto was, on the formation of the American Philosophical Society, delivered into my hands, for the purpose of being digested, and in due time published among the transactions of that body. Many of the questions are curious and cautiously handled; such as the following :

How may the phenomena of vapors be explained ?

Is self-interest the rudder that steers mankind; the universal monarch to whom all are tributaries ?

Which is the best form of government, and what was that form which first prevailed among mankind ?

Can any one particular form suit all mankind ?

What is the reason that the tides rise higher in the bay of Fundy, than in the bay of Delaware ?

How may the possession of the lakes be improved to our advantage ?

Why are tumultuous, uneasy sensations united with our desires ?

Whether it ought to be the aim of philosophy to eradicate the passions ?

How may smoky chimneys be best cured ?

Why does the flame of a candle tend upwards in a spire ?

Which is least criminal, a *bad* action joined with a *good* intention, or a *good* action with a *bad* intention ?

Is it consistent with the principles of liberty in a free government, to punish a man as a libeller, when he speaks the truth ?

These, and similar questions of a very mixed nature, being proposed in one evening, were generally discussed the succeeding evening, and the substance of the arguments entered in their books."

Dr. Smith proceeds to enumerate the various institutions and public improvements introduced by Franklin, as the Library, the Academy and College, the Pennsylvania Hospital, Fire Companies, Plan for cleaning, lighting and ornamenting the streets, &c., all which "he projected and saw established during the first twenty years of his residence in the City."\*

What a contrast does Philadelphia now present, the abode of science, learning, taste, elegance, and refined enjoyment, to Philadelphia as first described by Franklin ! Much of this change is justly attributable to

---

\* It must be gratifying to the admirers of this truly great man, to find that so distinguished a divine as Dr. Smith, who was intimately acquainted with Dr. Franklin and who says he speaks of him from a full and experimental knowledge of his character, bears the following testimony to the seriousness of his views, in the presence of those, too, who best knew him :

his noble spirit of improvement, and the practice of those humble but exalting virtues, which are within the reach of every class of people, in all parts of our country. Never was there a louder call for the exercise of such virtues, for the study and imitation of such an example, than at the present time.\* “The whole tenor of his life was a perpetual lecture against the idle, the extravagant, and the proud. It was his principal aim to inspire mankind with a love of industry, temperance and frugality; and to inculcate such duties as promote the important interests of humanity. He never wasted a moment of time, nor lavished a farthing of money, in folly or dissipation. His inquiries were spread over the whole face of nature, but the study of man seemed to be his highest delight; and, if his genius had any special bias, it lay in discovering those things that made men wiser and happier.”†

Let it be remembered, how great and extensive were the good influences of his association for mutual improvement, his spirited Lyceum for the cultivation and diffusion of useful knowledge. Let such associations be formed in every town, village, and hamlet in our community. There cannot but be found two or three persons, at least, in every place, conscious of intellect, and inspired with a love of virtue and a desire for improvement. Let such unite and set the example. If they can procure nothing more than Plutarch’s Lives and Mather’s Essays to do Good, to which Franklin acknowledged such obligations, and Paley’s Natural Theology, Bigelow’s Technology, Joyce’s Scientific Dialogues, or any similar works, they will have sufficient stock to begin with in their united exercises for instructing themselves in moral, practical, and philosophical knowledge. If they are unable to obtain these, let them commence with the Journal of Education, a valuable periodical, and the plain Scientific Tracts, now publishing by Mr.

---

“He believed in *Divine Revelation*, and the beautiful *analogy* of history, sacred as well as profane. He believed that human knowledge, however improved and exalted, stood in need of illumination from on high; and that the Divine Creator has not left mankind without such illumination, and evidence of himself, both internal and external, as may be necessary to their present and future happiness. Franklin felt and believed himself immortal!”

*The Works of William Smith, D.D., late Provost, &c.* v. 1, p. 80 of the *Oration*s.

\* “If these pages should fall into the hands of any one, at an hour for the first time stolen from his needful rest after his day’s work is done, I ask of him to reward me (who have written them for his benefit at the like hours) by saving three pence during the next fortnight, buying with it Franklin’s *Life*, and reading the first page. I am quite sure he will read the rest; I am almost quite sure he will resolve to spend his spare time and money in gaining those kinds of knowledge, which from a printer’s boy made that great man the first philosopher, and one of the first statesmen of his age. Few are fitted by nature to go so far as he did, and it is not necessary to lead so perfectly abstemious a life, and to be so rigidly saving of every instant of time. But all may go a good way after him, both in temperance, industry and knowledge, and no one can tell before he tries how near he may be able to approach him.”—*Brougham’s Practical Observations*.

† *Memoirs, &c.* v. 1, p. 510.

Holbrook, whose enlightened zeal in this cause gives a pledge that these will be fully worthy of their attention. As their numbers and means increase, they may extend their resources. The Library of Useful Knowledge, and other publications of the same society, mentioned in a note to the preceding discourse, will afford them every variety of information, which they may desire, and the means of advancing themselves in science to any degree of proficiency, that their inclination or ability may prompt them to attain. With these it would be well to take Walsh's National Gazette, which has done much to diffuse a healthful spirit of literature, as well as sound intelligence; and to add to it, as they can, the more elaborate periodical works in literature and science. There is no section of our country, surely, where a sufficient number might not be found of those who value knowledge, to unite in procuring for their common improvement most of the works here mentioned, the expense of which, apportioned among them, they could not feel. In the more populous places, books are already found, either in the hands of individuals, or in public or social libraries, in sufficient abundance for the immediate purposes of a Lyceum. Here, the first efforts may be made in bringing forth their contents to the light, and giving them circulation. An apparatus, for illustrating the sciences, will be an early object of attention, and ultimately a library of select works, as permanent means of improvement. In all the measures taken in establishing a Lyceum, the permanence of the institution should be kept in view. Having been demonstrated to be useful, in any instance, it must always be so, if properly conducted. There never can arise a generation of men, to whose minds the light of science and truth will not be propitious. The government has wisely enacted that Lyceums may form themselves into corporate bodies for the more convenient management of their property and other concerns.\* Every facility is thus afforded for increasing and perpetuating the advantages for mutual instruction, which they may be enabled to obtain. Together with a Library, Apparatus, &c., a suitable Building, containing rooms for their safe keeping; and also a Hall specially adapted for the delivery and hearing of lectures, &c., and the exhibition of philosophical experiments, must be exceedingly desirable. It cannot be difficult to procure such a building where the members of the Lyceum are numerous, and where, of course, it would be most important. Arrangements for defraying the cost of it by annual instalments would render this the most economical, as well as most effectual way of providing the necessary accommodations for such an institution. The convenience of a public Hall, constructed with a special view to the purposes of a Lyceum, would be great in various respects, besides those already alluded to. The seats might not only be arranged in the best manner for seeing and

---

\* See statute passed March 4, 1829.

hearing the performances, but so numbered and assigned to individual members and families, that all might attend together, without confusion or embarrassment. The Hall would at all times, when not occupied by meetings of the Lyceum, be an attractive and suitable place for the debates or literary exercises of any portion of the members, associating for the purpose of pursuing together any branch of knowledge or science, in which they might feel a particular interest. It is an excellence of the Lyceum system, that it adapts itself to a greater or smaller number of associates, for all general purposes of instruction. But where the number is large, separate classes, or sub-associations, may be necessary for their more effectual progress in mutual improvement. There are many young men, too diffident to appear before the public in any literary exercise, who might by free discussions in the presence of each other, gradually prepare themselves for taking a part, with satisfaction to themselves and others, in lectures or debates before the whole society. In this manner large associations may enjoy at a very trifling expense, all the benefits of mutual instruction, together with interesting public lectures and discussions, for the more general diffusion of knowledge.

The Lyceum system of instruction seems to be regarded by many as a novelty; but the novelty consists in the name and the extension of the system, not in the system itself. Were it, however, a new institution, the experiment might be ventured upon as perfectly safe and harmless, if not certainly advantageous. Intelligent beings surely can lose nothing by assembling together for the improvement of their minds; and something, it should seem, must be gained from the exercise of social feelings and the expression of thoughts and sentiments on subjects of common interest. Much may be gained. In order to this, let those who associate to form a Lyceum, feel the importance of the object, which has drawn them together. At all their meetings, let every member be disposed to contribute his share of effort for the common good, and exert a vigilant attention for his own benefit. Let the subjects discussed, and the thoughts and sentiments communicated there, dwell in his mind after he retires to his home; and let him in conversation impart them to others, and, by further reflection and inquiry, make them more familiar to himself. Let all do this, and much will be done for their own improvement, and for spreading the spirit of improvement in the community around them. An earnest desire for knowledge and moral worth, and a determination to attain them will accomplish every thing. Attention, industry, perseverance, and self-command are in the power of all; so, consequently, are knowledge, virtue, wisdom, and happiness.





