TWO LECTURES

RHETORIC,

DELIVERED IN THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, TORONTO,

BY THE

REV. DAVID RINTOUL.

"All persons are under some obligation to improve their own understanding, otherwise it will be a barren desert, or a forest overgrown with weeds and brambles."—DR. WATTS.

Toronto:

PRINTED BY JAMES CLELAND, 15, CITY BUILDINGS,

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL,

Patron:

TO THE PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS,
AND OTHER OFFICE-BEARERS OF THE MECHANICS INSTITUTE,
IN THE CITY OF TORONTO:

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE MOST HUMBLY AND
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

policy, but it is of the most benevolent and enlightened kind, and may be held as indicating the dawn of a brighter day upon the nations. How seldom do we meet, in the history of the world, with statesmen addressing themselves to the people in language like this,—"We will not be accessary to upholding on the one hand a tax upon education, and on the other an immunity upon ignorance. Here are two classes of laborers, we shall suppose, the one having both the capacity and the will to correspond with their friends at a distance, by means of writing, and the other having neither the will nor the capacity, we shall not allow ourselves to be either so unwise, or so unjust, as to tax those who ought rather to be free, and to free those who ought rather to be taxed. It is true, we need the money which this tax brought into the public purse, but we shall raise it from a source less objectionable than one which bears the aspect of discouraging the superior tastes and education of the people." It was a spirit of the same kind as this that led the eloquent poet, Cowper, to exclaim—"England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!" It is now admitted by men of all parties, nearly of all religious opinions, that education, more especially in our large cities, has been very greatly neglected; and, I may afterwards show, that there are certain special considerations which serve to prove, that a neglect in them is a more serious thing than a like neglect among a population living in the country.* Meanwhile I proceed to bring again before you the topics which I touched upon the last time I addressed you, when recommending English Composition as a branch of study. I observed, that the mere art of speaking or writing in an ornate style, would be an acquirement of a very inferior kind. The most accomplished pupil in the school of rhetoric would be but poorly qualified for the real business of the world were his mind not previously stored with useful knowledge. Were he not imbued with materials for thought and reflection, it would be of small avail that he had acquired the art of presenting us with elegantly turned sentences, but filled only with empty declamation. This branch of study supposes you have disciplined your mind by reflection, and furnished it with a measure of knowledge; and it meets you at this stage of your progress, and proposes to instruct you in the best mode of conveying, through the medium of written language, your thoughts to other minds. And surely in a community like ours, in which intelligence in all the departments of business is so highly prized, it seems only needful to state the object of a class for English Composition in order to secure for it the countenance of the public, at least of all those, who, entering on the busy arena of life, desire to perform their part with efficiency and honor. I shewed, that in the earliest stages of society, we could trace

* See Note A.

some attention bestowed on the graces of language, and that in all communities that had made any progress in civilization, and in the arts, this branch of study was diligently cultivated—more especially that it was of the utmost importance to young men devoting themselves to the study of the law—since it was by the power of using with force and elegance the English language that the Barrister, whether addressing a learned Judge or Jury, could rivet conviction on the understanding and heart. I noticed a popular imagination that only a few select spirits could succeed in these studies, and shewed that the ability of speaking, or of writing with force and fluency, was not so much derived from nature, in the vast majority of cases, as acquired by means of pains and study. I shewed, that by learning to compose with a measure of facility, we were taking the surest way to form in our minds those principles of criticism by which we shall be enabled to form a correct judgment of books and other writings—an object of no small importance, when the press teems with publications, and the good and the bad solicit public patronage with like importunity. I observed that there was an additional recommendation of these studies on this ground, that they formed a subject of innocent and agreeable relaxation to the mind—that in point of fact the power of conveying our sentiments with force and eloquence, was an art which belonged to young men of all professions, seeing that any degree of proficiency therein brought along with it this farther recommendation, that it enabled us to think with accuracy—to transfuse into our own minds, and by reflection to make thoroughly our own, facts and opinions which we might have received in conversation or from books, and which otherwise would have soon faded from our remembrance.—I observed still farther, that it was an art not restricted to professional men, but belonged to all who had occasion to make statements in writing concerning matters of business, or even to maintain an epistolary correspondence with their friends. I noticed a device not unfrequently used to compensate the inability of composing—that of having recourse to printed forms of epistles which certain authors had published for the benefit of the uninstructed—and I pointed out the great imperfection of all such set forms of writing, seeing they were of necessity inapplicable to the precise business in hand, and unsuitable as expressions of our special sympathy and interest in the concerns of friends; that as there was usually a stiffness and formality about such productions, our correspondents would be prone either to form erroneous impressions of our feelings, or if they discovered the source from which we had borrowed our phraseology, would form a low estimate of our talents and education. In every way, therefore, both in writing letters of business or of friendship, it was of the utmost importance we should have a facility of using

with freedom, that great instrument of thought, the English language. I stated also that that quality which was looked upon as a great grace in writing, namely, the simple and the natural, was really the result of much study and practice—that in truth the one great object of the teacher who professes to give instruction in this branch of knowledge, is just to teach the art of using language as a translucent medium for reflecting the perfect lineaments of thought and feeling—consequently, other things being equal, he is really the most natural writer of letters who has cultivated the powers of taste and language with the greatest success. And I concluded with observing, that in order the more efficiently to initiate you into the art of writing well, it was my purpose to prescribe a weekly exercise which you would be expected carefully to write, and that thus I felt confident you would acquire, in the course of your attendance at this class, a facility of expressing yourselves in writing clearly and copiously on any given subject. And now, in the prosecution of what I intimated in my former Lecture, I proceed to bring before you some observations as to the best method of acquiring a good English style.

1. The first grand requisite to which I desire to call your attention is, that you *read always the best and most approved authors.* A great part of our most important knowledge is learned by a process of imitation. For example, it is in this way that a child comes to acquire the art of expressing his wants and feelings by means of articulate language. In the early stage of his being, he seems as incapable of speech as any of the inferior animals. He has no other way of communicating his wants to those about him than in the way they adopt, by means of cries or other outward signs. In the course of time, however, by hearing his parents addressing him, or conversing together in articulate speech, his mind is excited by the pleasing sounds, and he attempts to imitate with his own lips that which he hears from the lips of others. In this instance we see how strong are those powers of imitation, seeing they develope themselves as if spontaneously at the most tender age—and by means of these the child is enabled to furnish himself with the gift of articulate speech—thus raising himself to a higher state of intellectual existence. And not only are these powers of imitation strong, they are also delicately accurate. Not only does the child learn the gift of articulate speech from his parents, but he learns it in the very dialect they use, however unseemly it may be,—nay, more, he acquires their exact mode of expression and intonation,—so that in one generation, you have a pretty exact transcript, generally speaking, of that which went before.—Now these powers of imitation do not belong exclusively to infancy. In point of fact, we are ever more or less under their influence; and

they may be compared in their effects to that subtle fluid we call caloric, which, wherever it exists in any strong degree, passes insensibly into all homogeneous bodies, and introduces the same temperature into them all. Here, then, gentlemen, is an important principle to guide us in acquiring a good English style; and on the strength of it I would say to you—peruse the best English authors, that you may write with a like ease and elegance. Study those writers who have excelled in writing at once with beauty and with vigour. As the poet expresses it, "read them by day, and study them by night," and you will insensibly, and almost without an effort, acquire a relish for their graces, and when you sit down to write, you will feel it to be natural for you to transfuse these into your own. It has been on this ground that many have argued the importance of the study of the classical writers of Greece and Rome, of Homer and Xenophon, of Virgil and Livy—not so much from the positive accession of knowledge we acquire by this means, as from the excellent models which such works present to the young student of chaste and eloquent writing. Nay, some writers on rhetoric, in recommending the study of the best models of composition as a highly suitable means of acquiring an easy and vigorous style, have advised a preparatory training in the way of translating passages from Greek and Latin authors into English—arguing that in this way the mind of the student is brought into close and immediate contact with the best models by which to form his taste and his style. Still, I do not think that the general student is required, for the sake of finding suitable examples of good writing, to commence the study of the language of Greece or Rome. No doubt there was a period in the history of our country when this was necessary—when our language was rude and ill defined*—then assuredly it was the duty, not merely of professional men, such as clergymen, physicians, and lawyers, to study the Greek and Latin classics, but of all, of every profession who aimed at writing with any measure of politeness and energy. In the fifteenth century, for example, when the best literature of our country consisted of little else than a few ballads chaunted by the rustic minstrel, there was a real necessity for all who thirsted for poetic or literary distinction, having recourse to the pages of Virgil or of Homer, those great masters of song; but now that our literature has been enriched by the writings of men of genius as great and accomplished as the world has ever seen—by the writings of Shakspeare, of the sublime Milton, of Addison, Pope, Thomson, Gibbon, Robertson, Burke, Dugald Stewart, Chalmers, and a hundred others of like fame—there exists not the same necessity as in the infancy of our literature. The general student, therefore, whose aim

* See Chambers' History of the English Language and Literature, Edinburgh, 1836, p. 4.

is the perfecting of himself in English Composition, will find his labour abridged by familiarizing himself with the thoughts and modes of expressions of some of our best British authors.* Let me advise you, then, gentlemen, frequently to read leisurely and with attention, not for information merely, but with a view to the style and manner, portions of our most approved writers. You can be at no loss here, if you have access to any of the accomplished authors to whom we have just referred. It is not so much the quantity that is read which leads to excellence, as the manner of reading. This cannot be too much kept in mind in an age when reading has degenerated into a kind of mental dissipation.—There is a brief sentence which I have met with somewhere, of Lord Bacon's, well worthy of the attention of every student who aspires after the cultivation of his mental powers. I quote it from memory. "Read not for the purpose of finding matter to cavil at, or to confute, neither to assent to, and take for granted, neither to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider." And here I cannot omit noticing a practice recommended by several respectable writers, and which will be found to be only a following out of the principle we have now recommended, of improving our taste and style, by setting before ourselves the most approved authors as patterns we are to imitate, or, it may be, to rival and surpass. The practice I now allude to is, to prosecute a series of translations into our own language, of some good English author, until we have made his excellences all our own. Among others, Franklin recommends this to young men. It was his custom, when a boy, he tells us, to select a passage generally from the writings of Addison, to read it over with care once or oftener, and after he had apprehended the meaning, to close the book, lay it aside, and some days afterwards, when he could not be supposed to remember the precise words, to sit down and write in his own language fully and accurately the sentiments of the author, and then to judge of his performance by a comparison with the original. This practice has several recommendations.—First. It tends to form in the young student a habit of thoughtful reading, which is a matter of great importance in mental traning. Second. It provides against that complaint which is often made by young students when required to compose, namely, that they have no ideas; and third, as we suppose the model author to be one approved both for moral and intellectual excellence, the student has a safe guide on entering the field of speculative science, and will thus be guarded against aberrations at a period in his mental history when he is prone to fall into them. Another writer of distinguished authority also recommends the practice we have just noticed, to all young men who are any way ambitious of excelling

* The Author need scarcely add, that to the professional student he considers the study of the classical writers of Greece and Rome, of very great importance.

n the purity of their style. "I know no exercise," says he, "that will be found more useful for acquiring a proper style, than to translate some passage from an eminent English author into our own words. What I mean," he continues, "is to take for instance some page of one of Mr. Addison's Spectators, and read it carefully over two or three times, till we have got a firm hold of the thoughts contained it, then to lay aside the book, to attempt to write out the passage from memory in the best way we can, and having done so, next to open the book, and compare what we have written with the style of the author. Such an exercise will, by comparison, shew us where the defects of our style lie—will lead us to the proper attentions for rectifying them—and among the different ways in which the same thought may be expressed, will make us perceive that which is the most beautiful.*

2. But I now proceed to the second grand requisite in enabling us to acquire a good English style; and it is, that we should first make ourselves master of the subject on which we mean to write. Now, that clearness of conception is favorable to eloquence, will appear, by referring to those instances in which it is allowed by all, that men have expressed themselves with the greatest force and feeling. When is it, for example, that the Barrister speaks with the greatest precision? Every one will at once admit, that it is only after he has mastered his cause. When is it that he rises to the highest strains of eloquence? It is, when roused by his sensibilities, he is pleading the cause, it may be, of injured innocence, and demanding reparation at the bar of justice.—When was it that the celebrated statesman, Mr. Wilberforce, a man of considerable powers of eloquence, outrivalled himself and shone the brightest among a whole galaxy of orators? It was after he had been furnished with the evidence of the wrongs of Africa, and when his whole heart and mind was filled with a sense of their reality. It was after he had made himself thoroughly conversant with the aggregate amount of misery which that section of the globe suffered in consequence of the traffic in slaves. It was after giving days and nights to a careful summing up of the whole statistics of crime, suffering and death, which resulted from trading in human flesh, that that celebrated person, year after year, in the British Senate, exhibited the noblest displays of fervid oratory. The truth is thought is the basis of a good style—and if that is awanting, the finest collocation of words, in so far as effect is concerned, is utterly without avail. The minds of men are now so discipliped by education, that if we would succeed in gaining their attention, we must have wherewith to convince the judgment as

* Dr. Blair.

well as to charm the ear. Accordingly, all writers on education have urged the work of independent thought and reflection as a matter of primary importance in learning to compose well. "A writer is often obliged" says Dr. Blair, "to prune the luxuriance of his imagination—seeing that an excessive amount of embellishment encumbers rather than illustrates good writing; but information, good sense, sound and judicious observation, must form the basis of all good writing." Do not attempt then to separate the eloquence of words from the eloquence of thought, by seeking after fine expressions, when you should rather be seeking after clear conceptions of your subject. The truth is language, adheres as it were naturally to thought, and every good writer will admit that he seizes the expressions he uses rather through the medium of thought, than the thought through the medium of expression. By accurate and premeditated thought, previous to taking up the pen, our composition comes to have a certain continuity running through it; and the ornaments which belong to it are all the more graceful, that they are interwoven as if naturally with it. Dr. Blair considers that the first and most important direction which can be given is, to "study clear ideas on the subject concerning which we are to write or speak. This is a direction which may at first appear to have small relation to style. Its relation to it, however, is extremely close. The foundation of all good style is good sense, accompanied with a lively imagination; whenever the impressions of things upon our minds are faint and indistinct, or perplexed and confused, our style in treating of such things will infallibly be so too. Whereas, what we conceive clearly, and feel strongly, we shall naturally express ourselves with clearness and with strength." Here, then, gentlemen, be assured, is an admirable rule in introducing you to the acquirement of a good style. Think closely on the subject till you have attained a full and distinct view of the matter you are to clothe in words—till your attention is awakened and your whole soul becomes interested in it—and not till then will you find expression begin to flow. Horace in his art of poetry gives an opinion in conformity with all that has now been said—"a thorough knowledge of our subject is both the principle and source of writing well, and words not unwillingly will follow well premeditated thought."

There are some writers also who advise not merely careful reflection on the subject about which we are to write, but the importance of drawing up a rough outline of the chief topics we intend to handle; and there can be no doubt this practice will be highly subservient to our forming a full and accurate conception of the whole subject of discourse,

as well as to our discussing it in a lucid manner. This applies, however, rather to more formal compositions which the student may be required to write, than to lighter productions, such as familiar epistles and the like, which being of the nature of conversation in writing between friends, even the absence of methodical arrangement is more natural and becoming. In those essays, however, which you may write for this class, you will find the method proposed a great help in training you to accurate and perspicuous writing. "It is highly important," says Dr. Blair, "that the attention of the student in his first attempts, should be directed to the management of his subject. I would require of him to exhibit a plan or skeleton, stating the precise object he had in view, the divisions he proposes to make with reference to this point, and the manner he designs to enlarge on each head. In this way he will not only be aided in forming habits of methodically arranging his thoughts, but will be led to adopt the easiest and most direct method of proceeding in writing on any subject."

3. The third grand requisite to our acquiring a good English style is, to be natural. There is every reason to believe, although a certain correspondence exists among all minds, yet there is none that is precisely alike. In the human countenance, though the outline is much the same in every member of the human family, yet there is no one that has precisely the same expression—there is an endless variety. Every one has what may be called an *individuality* about it, which makes it to differ from all others. The same is true of the human mind. The general faculties correspond in all men, and yet withal there is an endless diversity. In these circumstances it is of the utmost importance that every student should have that degree of confidence in himself which is requisite in leading him to follow what is natural at least to him, that thus the language he uses may be a perfect transcript of his thought. I consider, gentlemen, that this principle, though of the last importance in acquiring a good English style, has been too little attended to in practice; and the consequence has been, that the art of writing has become too often a matter of servile imitation. This is very manifest in the influence which those writers who flourished during the reign of Queen Anne had for a long period over the literature of England. "The writers of that age," as Chambers observes, "were unquestionably finished scholars—men of knowledge, art, and refinement,—and one cannot help admiring their skill in the use of words, their rich figurative language, and the smoothness and harmony of their periods." Now all these qualities might be very becoming among the court circles in which they moved, for in these the manner is more cultivated than truth and nature—still, the writings of not a few of these authors were set down for a long time as

the only standards of excellency; and he who would come forth as the candidate for literary honors, must do little else than servilely imitate Pope or Addison. The consequence was, as the same author proceeds: "Writers scarcely dared to trust to their own observations of nature, but wrote in slavish imitation of both the style of prose and of verse, which they found already so highly approved by the public taste. They wanted that proper confidence in themselves which every upright mind ought to possess. They were imitators of men, and their aim was lower than it would have been had they imitated nature; and hence we find freedom from faults. A negative sort of excellence was the object at which they aimed, and in their painful efforts for polish and refinement of style, they forgot to think for themselves and nobly speak their thoughts" * You are aware, gentlemen, I have recommended good models of writing as worthy of your attention—but not in the way of teaching you such a slavish submission to authority in this matter, that you are merely to imitate their phrases or turns of expression—the works of distinguished writers are rather to be read for the purpose of acquiring a copious vocabulary, of stimulating the powers of taste and of imagination in the student—but never so to overawe him by their authority, that he cannot look on nature except through their spectacles. Though I have spoken of the school of Pope and Addison as exercising an undue authority over their successors for a considerable period, I am far from thinking that we are wholly emancipated from the spirit which produced this. The truth is, there seems to be a despotism in matters of taste as much as in politics; authors are not satisfied with being read and esteemed—they wish also to be masters—and if we have thus far emancipated ourselves from the stiffness and artificial polish of the times of Queen Anne, that it is no longer held to be a proof that an author is unworthy of public estimation because he does not write after the style and manner of one or other of the great wits who penned the Spectator—still, in our day, we need to be upon our guard lest we be drawn into the same error, since through the blinding influence of fashion, men are ever prone to think their own times the most enlightened of all that went before, and in unduly prizing some favorite writer, to imitate his defects rather than his beauties. There are many misconceptions in the minds of young men which stand in the way of their acquiring the noble art of composing well; but most of these we apprehend may be traced up to the want of that proper confidence in themselves which is indispensable to their progress both in literature and science. Mr. Newman has attended to some of these misconceptions. "It not unfrequently happens," he observes, "that the efforts of the student have taken some wrong direction.

† See Chambers' History.

He has some erroneous impressions as to the nature of style, or as to the manner in which a good style may be formed. It may be that he is labouring too much on the choice and arrangement of his words, or the construction of his sentences; or assigning undue importance to the ornaments of style; he may be seeking principally after what is figurative, and the elegance of expression; or again, with false notions of what is original and forcible, he may be striving after what is sententious and striking. Sometimes too, there exists a fastidiousness of taste, which is detrimental. The student is kept from doing anything, because he is unable to do anything better than he can do. In other instances there is an injurious propensity to imitation. The student has fixed upon some writer as his model, and servilely copying his master, his own native powers are neglected."* These, gentlemen, are common errors into which young students more especially are apt to fall; and we shall best avoid them by keeping in remembrance that a correct style is a perfect representation of the ideas of the mind, and of the order in which these have been arranged; consequently we shall come nearer to the classical model according as we approximate to that noble simplicity of diction which, by the testimony of the men of all ages, is the truest echo of the voice within. In this way, more than in any other, composition will become easy and agreeable; and should it lack the showy ornaments which those who are ambitious of fine writing are ever attempting to portray, these will be amply compensated by that varied and genuine eloquence which wells forth from the recesses of thought and of feeling.

4. The fourth and last grand requisite in acquiring a good English style is, practice in composing. All rules are supposed to be given in order that they may be put in practice, for without this they are comparatively insignificant. The rules of Syntax, for example, are of small importance in themselves—they are of the nature of a practical commentary on a language—or rather they are certain great principles that have been found to characterize it, and which in translating or in writing are intended for our direction—and so also those rules which are laid down by Rhetoricians are of small importance in themselves. They suppose that we are about to begin the task of composition—and they are given not to supersede all labor on our part, which no device of man can do—but to guide us while engaged in it. Rules contribute something towards our acquiring the art of composition, but they do not contribute every thing. In order to their being profitable, we must make a beginning. The ancient Rhetoricians keep this steadily before the student, and in urging him to practice composition, they advise that he should

* See Note B.

make it a daily task—no day without a line. But it may be asked, on what subject are we to write? And I answer, that this must be left very much to the taste of the individual. One remark, however, may occur to yourselves from what I have said above—it should be a subject with which your minds are thoroughly acquainted—for no solecism can be greater than this, to attempt to explain what we do not understand. The daily press may be viewed as giving us a contemporaneous history of the sayings and doings of the leading men in the world. Suppose, then, that the student has been reading the oration of some statesman in behalf of a public or patriotic measure, or of some eminent lawyer in a case of special interest—here, then, is a subject which he has selected for himself—and let him carefully consider all the facts and circumstances which such professional men bring under his attention, the argument or series of arguments by which they wish to carry conviction to those they are addressing, and after he has so digested them in his mind that he comprehends their whole scope and bearing, let him write out a narrative of the case according to that order which appears to him most natural. I cannot, therefore, but think that the complaint which is sometimes made by young students, that they find great difficulty in getting a subject on which to write, may be obviated by calling them to reflect on subjects with which they are daily conversant. But perhaps it may be your wish to have a different choice. You have not confidence enough in your own powers to write on law or public policy even though daily reading about both. Well, then, let us try another class of subjects. It has been frequently observed, that conversation proceeds with most vigor when some controverted point is under discussion. The idea of opposition whets men's faculties, and on occasions of this kind an amount of art and eloquence is elicited which we should have sought for in vain had no controversy arisen. The same principle, I think, applies to composition; and I would advise those of you to whom the exercise above alluded to may appear less suitable, to select the alternative in a question of no great difficulty, and to write in defence of it as fully and clearly as you are able. I need scarcely submit to you any list of questions, as these may be trivial or important, according to the age and mental progress of the student. I would not wish, however, to pass over a very important remark of Dr. Blair's, that students should be careful always to choose that side of the question to which in their own judgment they are most inclined, and defend it by no other arguments than those which they believe to be solid. I have known teachers also recommend their students to write a narrative of the life of some distinguished individual for the purpose of introducing them to the practice of composing; and here I may observe, you have an ample field from which to make your choice; for besides the many special biogra-

phies that have been written of distinguished persons, all history, both ancient and modern, if carefully examined, will be found to consist of little else than a series of biographies. As you have it in your power also to select such as by the fewness of their incidents are peculiarly simple, I would say, that these should form your first essays in this very attractive department of literature. And supposing you have selected some such biography as a theme on which to write, it is proper that you should make yourselves fully master of all the incidents of the story, whether few or many, before you write one sentence of the narrative; for thus taking a comprehensive view of all the parts together, you will be enabled to preserve the relative proportions between facts that are, and facts that are not important; and however compendious your essay may be, to furnish at least a fair outline of the original story. This species of writing possesses numerous recommendations, of which I need allege no other proof than this, that societies have been formed in the Mother Country by gentlemen ambitious of mental improvement, in which the single task required of the members is, to furnish a biographical sketch of some distinguished individual. But should it so happen that there are still some of you who think that the subjects I have suggested are all of a kind too grave and difficult for you to undertake, I would suggest one other class of a lighter kind, but still of much importance in the matter of improving your powers of observation as well as of writing.—Your lot is now cast on the western side of the Atlantic, in this young and thriving country, which I do not hesitate to say, is in very many respects better and more interesting than the one we left on the other side. Here we have all the poetry which the most sublime imagination could long for in our lakes of unrivalled greatness—these seas of a smoother surface and softer outline than those which encircle the British isles—but only on that account the better fitted for our graceful steamers that by their fleetness enable us to peruse their extent—to fix our eyes at one time upon the blue surface of the unfathomed depths, or to range them along shores where all that is beautiful in agriculture, or in thriving villages and cities—all that is magnificent in the hoary forest, or sublime in the thundering cataract, are seen as in a great panorama. If a certain lady could say to the poet Cowper, who had asked for a subject—"When required to write; you need be at no loss for a subject—there is the sofa!" I may surely be allowed to say to the student who makes to me the same complaint—you cannot be at a loss for a subject—there is your adopted country—a wonder in itself, not only for its natural grandeur, but for its rapid increase in wealth, and for the noble works devised, and in the course of being executed, to increase it still more.—Have any of us then been making a tour through any part of the country? The fruit of your observation is the theme on which I would

propose you should write. There are so many topics that you might touch upon, in sketching such a tour, no matter how short it might be, that I should rather think it necessary to guard you against a danger incidental to its being over fruitful in discussion, than suppose you could experience aught of barrenness. Here the skill of the student would, as in a biographical sketch, be apparent in the topics he selected—while telling us, it may be, of the localities he visited, of the company he met, of the individuals he conversed with, of the additions made to his knowledge, of the character of the scenery, of the productiveness of the soil, of the appearance of the farms, of the habits and morals of the people, of the nature of the roads, as well as many other particulars which I need not to enumerate. I cannot, therefore, but think you can at all times command a theme for a short essay. The great matter, as I have already said, is, that you make a beginning; and as the practice will soon approve itself to your own minds to be in all respects excellent and profitable, you will be more easily disposed to adhere to it after it is begun.

It will be of much importance also, that the student furnish himself with a blank book of sufficient size, and that he copy into it, in a clear and legible hand, the exercises he may have written; for this will serve as a record in after years, of his progress in general intelligence, as well as in the art of committing his sentiments to writing. And here, gentlemen, in recommending such exercises as peculiarly suitable to the young student, I need scarcely remark, I am far from advising you to think of commencing the profession of authors. The truth is, the notion that none but professed authors require to bestow any attention on these studies, is an idle prejudice, which greatly retards their more general cultivation. The young student who, it may be, has been distinguished in other departments of study, excuses himself for neglecting composition, by saying, "I never intend professionally to be an author, and therefore why should I begin to write a book?" Now, who does not see the fallacy which exists in this excuse. It supposes there is no motive to cultivate the mind for its own sake, which is certainly a great fallacy, and if followed out, would in a great measure suppress the most precious and interesting parts of education altogether. It supposes there is no motive to write out our own ideas on any subject, unless we intend to send forth the same to the public in the shape of a printed volume.—Now, so far from supposing this, I would have you dismiss altogether from your minds, the idea of becoming author. You will certainly have calls enough for exercising the art of composition though you never write for the public eye. The error of supposing that all who learn to com-

ose, have in view the profession of an author, must, I think, appear bvious enough to you all. Suppose you were wishing to teach a little oy to speak with correctness, and while you told him he must give the roper pronunciation to this and the other word, that he must observe he pauses while reading, and lay aside some unseemly intonation he ad acquired, he should excuse himself from all this trouble by saying, I am not going to be a Preacher, or a Barrister, and what matters it o me either to speak or to read with propriety." The absurdity of such n excuse is very manifest; and yet I do not think it more so than saying, that we need not take much trouble in learning to compose because we do not mean to publish. That composition of the highest order is ttainable only by a few choice spirits who devote themselves to a life f study, I freely admit; but that a respectable proficiency may be acuired by young men of ordinary talents, consistently with a proper ttention to their daily avocations, I conceive to be as certainly true; nd I would therefore repeat to you the counsel I have given already, to egin the task, and prosecute it with vigour. There is much of practical visdom in the injunction of Dr. Johnson to a gentleman who asked him s to the best manner of learning to compose—" *Sit down doggedly to t, Sir!*" was the reply.* Rules, as I have already stated, are of imortance to the student. They are like so many finger posts pointing out e way by which he is to walk; but in order to appreciate their true alue and importance, he must walk on the path-way himself. I have ften known young students complain of the arduousness of the task of omposing. They could commit any thing to memory. They could ncounter any difficulty in the matter of translating from a Greek or atin author. They could follow any demonstration in geometry, but to t down and write, with pen and ink, their cogitations upon paper, in e shape of an essay, was something for which they felt a total inaptiide. They would undergo any drudgery rather than attempt a task so ksome. Now this supposed incapacity is altogether imaginary. It is feeling of the mind originating altogether from a want of practice in e art. I might illustrate the truth of this by referring to the good effects practice in conversation. Compare the case of a person who has ved altogether in retirement, with that of another who has spent his me in mingling with the best society. In talents, information, and veliness of fancy, there may be no real difference between them. But ing them into company, and you will immediately see that the apparnt difference is very great. The man who has lived in retirement, is

* See Note C.

now altogether out of his proper element. He manifests an awkwardness in his manner. He seems as if he scarce possessed the powers of speech and utterance; and if he can so far compose himself as to address those about him, he does it in such a timid, confused, and faultering manner, that every one is well pleased for his own sake he should remain silent. See, however, how another displays himself, who has been often in company—who has practised from his infancy his conversational powers in the social circles. He manifests no confusion in his manner, and no faultering in his utterance. His mind is familiarised to what he is engaged in. He has a hundred times over been in the same scenes before. He has practised the art of being communicative in company so often, that young though he may be, he is a proficient in it. All his mental powers, therefore, are seen at their ease. He talks on subjects grave or gay with the greatest fluency; and such an adept is he in the art of being communicative, that his topics as well as his language, seem really inexhaustible. All this, gentlemen, is to be traced to no other source than to practice; and the like excellent result will be found to attend it in its application to the power of writing as well as of speaking.

I shall now, in conclusion, sum up the chief topics adverted to in the preceding discourse.

1. I have stated that the first requisite in acquiring a good English style was, that you should frequently read the best and most approved authors—that thus, by a process of imitation, you would be led to transfuse their graces into your own compositions, and comparing your performances with theirs, to correct whatever was faulty or defective in the use of language.

2. The second was, that you should always, before writing, make yourselves master of your subject. I have said that this was a matter of special importance; for so intimate is the connection between thought and language, that in order to our writing continuously and well, little else is required, than an accurate apprehension of the subject. I observed also, that in formal essays it was desirable the student should draw up an outline of what he meant to treat of, that thus there might be comprehensiveness and a lucid arrangement in his performance.

3 That the student should have such a confidence in himself, that he should aim at being natural. Although it was important he should have a taste cultivated by the study of the best authors, yet that he

should cultivate a noble simplicity of style, and perspicuity of diction that was really his own,—and therefore the most suitable medium for conveying his sentiments to other minds.

4. The fourth requisite was, that the student should practise the art of composing. I observed, that without practice the best rules were of no avail; but by means of this, composition, so irksome at first, would become comparatively easy. I mentioned certain classes of subjects hat might furnish you with matter for an essay, and I recommended you o have a blank book, in which you should regularly transcribe your essays in the order they were written.

I have only a few general observations to make before concluding his Lecture. It will now appear very manifest to all of you, that the rt of writing well supposes not only a facility of expression, but a clear nowledge of our subject. This is the substance of all good writing, and e who would distinguish himself in this, requires to be given to study nd reflection. He requires to have the habit of sustaining his attention. t is said of the famous Sir Isaac Newton, that being asked on one occaion, by some of his friends, wherein it was that he so differed from other ien, that it was reserved for him to make those notable discoveries hich had escaped the notice of all other men,—he is reported to have iid, with that noble modesty and wisdom which might be expected from great a philosopher,—that he was not conscious of any particular difrence between himself and other men; but if there was any, he ought it was only this, that he had acquired a greater power of keeping p his attention on any given subject. Here, then, we find the secret of iat force of mind which enabled the great British philosopher to solve ie true principle which maintains the planets in their orbits. This, ntlemen, is the germ of all intellectual proficiency; and it will be of uch importance to keep in mind, that the cultivation of this faculty of tention belongs as much to the heart as to the understanding. There thus an inseparable connexion between virtuous feelings and mental gor; and for this reason, even though there was no other, we would precate in the student all immoral or dissolute habits, seeing that his ind will neither be directed to the steady contemplation of truth, nor to e unwearied prosecution of higher attainments, who cherishes passions together earthly and debasing. In fine, we shall make but small adncement in the art of composing, by merely gathering a collection of cts and heaping them up in the memory—by reading the history of the ast toknow all the strange things that have turned up in the world—

the number of battles that may have been fought, or dynasties that may have fallen,—all these things may be laid up in the memory, and yet we may be deficient in those powers of invention which furnish materials for good writing. We must, therefore, gentlemen, cultivate the art of thinking always for ourselves—we must appreciate the dignity of our nature—I mean that part of it which is spiritual, and whose proper food is not meat and drink, but thought and reflection—whose pleasures are not those corporeal ones which endure for a moment, but that internal joy which arises from a perception of the beauty of intellectual truth or external nature. It is to these ennobling objects your attention is now directed; and sure I am, that those hours which you may be enabled to spare from your professional avocations, to studies such as these, wil not be regretted by you in your after years.

LECTURE II.

ON THE EMOTIONS OF THE BEAUTIFUL AND SUBLIME.

THE present age is eminently utilitarian in all its tastes and feelings, and seems to look with scorn on every discussion except that which relates to physical advantage. Hence it is we find in some men a sort of keen appetite for everything that savors of the material rather than the spiritual. A discussion on a steam engine, or a grist mill, or even on the simple matter of a pump,—no matter how tedious or even insignificant in its real practical bearing it may be,—yet inasmuch as it agrees with their imaginary standard of utility, and perhaps also because it bears a reference to man's corporeal organs, is conceived to be something that is supremely excellent—and he who produces essays of this sort, however great a theorist he may be otherwise, is looked upon almost with the same grateful feelings as if he had laid a bale of useful articles at our door. The public taste is so insatiable in these matters, that everything else seems worthless in comparison of them. It would seem, indeed, that our extraordinary ambition for possessing territory, and lands, and the produce of lands, houses and steamboats, money and cutlery, cotton goods, bacon and wheat, had so affected our imaginations, that the very shadows of such things are hugged to our hearts with all the joy with which the miser hugs his money-bags to his insane bosom; and as the mind of man cannot be supposed to love two objects at one and the same moment, so all discussions which savor of material things, are lauded to the skies, while those of a philosophical kind are thought to have come well off if they receive a cold and formal hearing. Now, without referring to the repetitions and endless common-places which are served up to the public in the shape of science, and which have really no practical force or bearing at all, neither originating nor aiding the ingenuity of the operative, nor yet strengthening the might of his right

hand—and in all respects as innocent in regard to practical efficacy as a theory on dreaming—I am willing to admit that there is really some ground for that aversion which not a few cherish to discussions of a metaphysical kind, and which have led to an undue depreciation of their importance. This is the unsatisfactory nature of the conclusions to which metaphysicians have come in their discussions, and originating, as I apprehend, from a desire of being esteemed philosophical, when their highest ambition should have been to be wise.

There are few subjects on which a greater amount of logomachy has been manifested than on this which I have chosen as the subject of Lecture—namely, the Emotions of the Sublime and Beautiful. It has been discussed with not a little of the keenness of partizanship, being intimately connected with the question, whether there is a standard of taste—a question which the literary men of a certain school imagine to be of peculiar importance in upholding their influence. Now, that there is such a power in the human mind, is manifest from the appeals we constantly hear made to it—what do you think of this poem, of this painting, of this scene, of this description, or the like? First of all then, I commence by observing, that man is not purely an intellectual or reasoning being: I mean, he is not a being whose single faculty is engaged in tracing out the connection between causes and their consequences.—We have indeed heard of men who approximated to such a character. We have heard of men who kept themselves in seclusion from the joys of life, and whose single object was the solution of difficult problems in mathematics or in science, and who looked with contempt on every occupation except their own. Men of this sort approximate to the mental character which we have referred to—that is, of beings who have no sympathy with aught save abstract truth—and yet, even in their case, nature vindicates her supremacy—for what is the motive which keeps such persons in a course of such self-denying labors. The mole may mine its way in the earth, with no other motive than to find food, but man possesses a more exalted nature; and even in those cases in which the prosecution of the abstract sciences seems as if it had such potency over the spirit of man, that the development of abstract truth seems to be his undivided aim—there is a current of feeling too deep and strong to remain unobserved. Has the mathematician, I might ask, no emotion when he has reached the goal of his laborious efforts, and solved some theorem over which he had wasted the midnight-oil apparently in vain? Has he no emotion when he has elaborated his way through the mazes of a demonstration which had puzzled the intellects of men of less acumen than his? Could we penetrate the recesses of his bosom, we should see it was far otherwise, and that there was a joy that sprung up

in his mind, which, by its vividness served to indicate that the intellectual faculty after all, was the servant rather than the master. Even the miser, who may seem to have approached the nearest to the case of a being without emotion, employing himself in the single object of counting over his ever-increasing treasures, or devising schemes by which they may be increased a hundred fold, even in this case of a spirit enslaved and corrupted by avarice, we might see, could we only mark the imaginations of the thoughts, the earnest longings for power, and the self congratulations arising from a fancied superiority, as often as he contemplates his money in his chest. A purely intellectual being is a conception of the mind rather than a real existence. At least, in this sublunary world, if there is one attribute which belongs to men, and which is characteristic of them as spiritual beings, it is that they have emotions.

The first class of emotions may be ranked under those which are of a moral kind. The nature of these may be easily illustrated. Suppose that a man is placed under some strong temptation to commit a crime. I have been entrusted with a large sum of money which a dying parent put into my hands to divide among those he has left behind—his widow and his children. Did I wish to retain possession of this treasure, I have nothing more to do than merely to keep silence. No one knows the secret of its being entrusted to me, save him who has now gone to that bourne from which no traveller returns. I am therefore in perfect security, as far as man is concerned, to keep the treasure if I have a mind. But suppose that, moved by a sense of what is just—by an honorable compassion to a family ready to sink into poverty—and seeking to do what is equitable in all my dealings with my fellow men, I reject the temptation, and pay the money in full tale to its rightful owners. In this case I experience a grateful emotion—I feel an inward satisfaction that in this matter at least I have done my duty—and all who are made aware of this deed of honest dealing look upon me with a similar feeling of complacency. Here, then, are a class of emotions, and they have been ranked under the class of moral, because they arise from a perception of what is morally excellent in the character and conduct of a good man. To the same class also belong those emotions which arise in our minds at the contemplation of deeds of wrong or cruelty. Suppose I am presented with the sight of a man who has been guilty of deeds of atrocious wickedness. Here is a man so filled with the lust of having, that he has not patience to wait and to labor until by means of his industry he reaches the goal of an honest and honorable competency. He is a malignant and cruel demon rather than a man. His feet are swift to shed blood. He comes upon his innocent neighbor in the silence of the night, when sleep has closed his eyes—he plunges

into his bosom the dagger—and he robs him of all his wealth. Now, who does not know that it needs nothing more than the mere recital of this deed to excite in every bosom in a neighborhood the emotion of high minded detestation against the wretch who has acted such a treacherous and cruel part towards a brother man. Let me add one other illustration to the same purpose. Suppose I am witness to a case of atrocious oppression. I see the rich man who has plenty of flocks and herds—and I see residing in his neighborhood the poor man, who has only one little lamb, which eats at his table, and is to him in the stead of a daughter—and see, when a stranger has called at the door of the rich man, he is so enslaved with the love of gain, that he cannot find it in his heart to yield up one of his own lambs to furnish an entertainment to his guest, but he sends and he seizes the lamb of the poor man, which was his all—he slays it, and he eats it with his friend. Let us imagine such a scene as this which the prophet Nathan presented to King David—and who would not feel his anger kindled against the rich oppressor, and be ready to say, that he who could compass such a deed of injustice was worthy of death? These emotions which lead us to ascribe praise, or blame, merit or demerit, to ourselves as well as to others, according to our own or their conduct are, as I have just observed, classed under the emotions that are moral.

But secondly, there is another class of emotions which are not necessarily of a moral kind—of these are the emotions of fear, of hope, and the like. It is usual with writers to class such under the general head of the passions. It is not, however, my purpose to enter into any minute discussion as to their peculiar character. I speak of them for the present only as falling under a more general classification of the mental phenomena. An illustration will put you in possession of what their real nature is. Suppose I am walking at midnight alone in a solitary place. I am distant many miles from a human dwelling. The dark cloud of night is over my head and around me. Who can tell but danger may beset my next footstep? Behind the next tree may lurk some horrid beast of prey thirsting for blood. Or, it may be, there are spirits that walk the earth, and now is the time when their spectral forms are seen,—and their shrieks are heard. In such, or similar circumstances, who has not been the subject of fear which he could not easily allay,—of alarms, which, though reasoned down for a time, the shaking of a leaf might awaken into extacy, and cause him to pause in the way, or recoil backwards, as if from danger:—

"He knew not why,
Even at the sound himself had made."

And then to illustrate the emotion of hope we need only to take an incident recorded in the life of the celebrated African traveller, Mungo Park. —We are told that on one occasion he was faint and weary in the African desert—he has travelled far, and his strength is now unable to support him further in his journey. He is not only exhausted by fatigue, he is fainting with thirst. All refuge has failed him, and he lays himself down to die. It was at this moment when we may suppose him looking around to bid farewell to the pleasant light of day, and all terrestrial things, that his eye caught one solitary floweret blooming green and fresh in the desert. He looked again, and mysterious is the chain of associated thoughts in the heart of man, the little flower probably reminds him of a passage in Holy Writ which he had learned when a child, that the lilies of the field should read a lesson to man not to despair. Hope rises in his breast, and this, as we may well believe, awakened many a thrilling association connected with his far distant home, over which an oblivious sleep seemed for ever to have fallen. For such is the power of this emotion —

> "Still it whispered promised pleasure,
> And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail."

He rose from the sand on which he lay; he made one effort more, and it is scarce needful to add, he was not disappointed.

But besides these, man is possessed of a class of emotions which belong neither to the passions nor yet to that other class which are called moral. These are the emotions of the beautiful, the grand, and the sublime. Mr. Newman, of Bowdoin College, has an interesting passage in his practical system of Rhetoric, presenting illustrations of these emotions from their imperfect to their highest state; and I need make no apology for the length of the quotation. It is as follows:— "When the sun goes down in the west, the surrounding clouds reflect to our view a rich variety of colors. We gaze on the splendid scene and there is a pleasant emotion excited in our minds. In reading the story of the two friends, Damon and Pythias, who were the objects of the cruelty of Dionysius, we are struck with the closeness of their friendship, and while we think on the fidelity of the returning friend, and on their mutual contest for death, a pleasing emotion arises in the mind. It will be observed in these examples, that the emotion excited is not strong, that it is of a grateful kind, and that it may continue for sometime. This is called *an emotion of beauty.*

"The traveller when he stands on the banks of the Mississippi, and looks upon that noble river, flowing on with the power of collected

waters, and bearing on its bosom the wealth of the surrounding regions, is conscious of emotions, which, as they rise and swell within his breast, correspond to the scene on which he looks. Burke has given the following biographical notice of Howard, the celebrated philanthrophist. 'He has visited all Europe, not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples—not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur—not to form a scale of the curiosities of modern art—not to collect medals, or collate manuscripts—but to dive into the depths of dungeons—to plunge into the infection of hospitals—to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain—to take the guage and dimensions of misery, depression and contempt—to visit the forsaken—and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original; and is as full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery—a circumnavigation of charity'. No one can read this passage and not feel a high degree of admiration in view of the devotedness and elevation of purpose it describes. When the orator stands up before collected thousands, and for an hour sways them at his will, by the powers of his eloquence—who in that vast throng can regard the speaker before him, and feel no admiration of his genius. The emotions excited in them and similar instances have been called emotions of grandeur. They differ from those of beauty in that they are more elevating and ennobling. Byron, in his description of a thunder-storm in the Alps, has the following passage:—

'Far along,
From peak to peak the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder!—not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue—
And Jura answers through her misty shroud
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud.'

"Who in the midst of Alpine scenery can thus listen to the voice of the leaping thunder and not start with strong emotion?

"We are told that when General Washington appeared before Congress, to resign his military power, at the close of the war, he was received as the founder and guardian of the republic. They silently retraced the scenes of danger and distress through which they had passed together. They recalled to mind the blessings of freedom and peace purchased by his arm. Every heart was big with emotion. Tears of admiration and gratitude burst from every eye. In the presence of this august assembly, the Commander-in-Chief of the armies of the United States, after piously recounting the blessings which Divine Providence had conferred on his country, and commending that country to the continued care of its Almighty Protector, advanced and resigned the great

powers which had been committed to his trust. How much must this closing act have added to the deep interest of the scene!

"We are told that when Newton drew near to the close of those calculations which confirmed his discovery of the laws by which the planets are bound in their courses, he was so overwhelmed with emotion that he could not proceed, and was obliged to ask the assistance of a friend. No one can think of the mighty intellectual work that was then accomplished, and not feel as he did, an overpowering emotion.—To the emotions excited in these last-mentioned examples, is applied the epithet sublime. They are less permanent than those of grandeur, but more thrilling and exalting."

In such of these illustrations as refer to natural scenery, it is very manifest that the emotion which is excited cannot arise from a moral approbation of the objects as virtuous; and neither can it arise from a personal interest in them as affecting our happiness; and the question therefore has been asked, how is it excited? and with this question has been mixed up discussions as to the standard of taste, in which not a few writers have written, to say the least, with small satisfaction.

Now, it will be of importance to attend first to those great elementary things in which men all agree are to be found the lineaments of beauty and sublimity in the highest degree; or at least, which have the undoubted power of exciting these emotions; and I observe, that this material creation, which is around and over us, has the power of calling forth in our minds to a wonderful degree, the emotions of beauty and sublimity. Not a few writers, of no small eminence, have expressed themselves with much ambiguity on this matter. They have sought to find out some first principles in the human mind which might enable it to determine the beautiful and sublime in external nature. They have wished to discover some special faculty to which reference could be made as to all matters of taste, and consulting which, we could determine with absolute uncertainty, whether a work of art or a scene in nature would be universally pleasing; and in the very dubious conclusions to which they have come, the impression left upon the mind of the reader (whether the author meant so or not is of inferior moment) is, that the whole subject is one of dim uncertainty. The truth is, the brilliant discoveries which have been made in physics for a century past, have operated so far injuriously on the philosophy of mind, that they have led men to think that their investigations might be prosecuted to an indefinite extent on this field also. They have supposed too that the mode of enquiry by

analysis, which they saw to be so efficient in laying open the chemical laws of matter, and of reducing it to its elementary substances, would be equally efficient when brought to bear upon mind, just as if that mode of enquiry which was applicable to the one was equally so to the other. The principles on which they set out were false, and they led to miserable results. The most laborious investigations were prosecuted into the nature of the human mind; and it would be singular amid the heaps of inferior ores that were thrown up, if some were not found of a happier vein than the rest; still, speaking generally, the investigations of the mental philosophers, as compared with those of the physical, it is not too much to say, have been altogether a failure—and this applies as much to the subject under our consideration as to any other department of the philosophy of the human mind.

The writers on taste have fallen under the same pernicious influence with those metaphysicians who attempted to discover in what way the mind is made acquainted with the existence of a material world.—Refusing to look on the objects without, and choosing rather to reason on the sensations these produced, they were led at length to doubt whether there was any material creation at all—and whether what are called properties of matter, such as hardness, extension, figure, and the like, were not altogether illusory. In like manner, not satisfied with the fact, that our emotions of the beautiful and sublime rose or subsided according as their own objects were presented or withdrawn, the philosophers on these emotions appeared to have wished to dive somewhat deeper into the arcana of our nature, even as the others, who, not content with the testimony of our senses, wished for deeper proofs of the existence of matter. They were not satisfied with the visible phenomena—as for example, present certain objects to the mind and certain emotions will arise, which is really all that a sound philosophy can take cognizance of. They wished to know, in some way or other, how these emotions arose; and their favorite hypothesis was that of a special faculty determining the beautiful and sublime in nature or art, with all the precision that marks our judgments as to the properties of a circle or of a triangle.—Then again it happened that this conclusion, unwarranted as we think by the evidence on which it rested, being once admitted as a canon by the critics of the day, produced much injury and injustice in its application, and in truth was in danger of reducing our literature to a thing of mere polish and refinement. The public mind, in short, was altogether in an uncomfortable state on this important subject. Theories and principles of taste they had in abundance, but got up by men who had no appreci-

ation of the highest efforts of genius, and least of all of that noble freedom which belongs to it—these, however, served admirably the end of propping up the reputation of a few favorite authors. Not being founded in truth and nature, they fettered for the time being the human mind, rather than helped it in its progress—and perhaps by this very circumstance they paved the way more speedily for that improvement in public taste and sentiment which marks the times in which we live.

There can be no doubt that there are vast fields of knowledge which lie beyond the ken of our faculties, and never is philosophy guilty of a more egregious solecism than when she professes to be capable of unlocking all the mysteries of nature—modern philosophy takes cognizance rather of phenomena as such than of the modes of their existence. On this latter territory, namely, the manner of existences, she is puzzled at every step. She may be able to class all the productions of the vegetable kingdom, so that there might not be one plant in the whole of its domains, that was not known and arranged under its own distinct genus, and yet with a science that embraced every individual of the great botanic family, the true philosopher would confess his ignorance of a thousand mysteries that belonged to it. What is the principle of vegetable life? Has it a distinct subsistence? How does it attach itself to matter? Why does a plant strike its roots in the earth? How is it that these roots are possessed of something like a muscular power in grasping the soil? Why does one class of plants imbibe sweet juices and others bitter? Why is this vegetable grateful to the human system, and another growing in the same soil, a deadly poison? Why such a difference? Questions of this sort might be multiplied indefinitely to which no solution could be given. Still this fact, that certain phenomena connected with the vegetable family lie beyond the reach of scientific investigation, does not prevent the botanist from investigating those that lie within it; and accordingly the science of botany has reached that high degree of consideration which belongs to it, simply by an adherence to this principle. There are questions that might be asked respecting the physiology of the plant, which we cannot solve; but there is one thing which we are capable of investigating—we can examine the plant and discover wherein it agrees or disagrees with others, and classify it accordingly. In the same manner I may be utterly incapable of discovering how it is that external matter becomes an object of perception to the mind; and if my belief in its existence depended on the solution of this question, I would certainly be involved in hopeless perplexity, and might be ready to assent to the scepticism of Hume and others, who appear to have come to the conclusion, that the existence of a material world was altogether imaginary; but no sooner do I stretch forth my arm and grasp a piece of

matter with my hand than all my doubts are dissipated. I need only to withdraw my attention from the delusive arguments of the sceptic, and fix it upon the material things around me to experience the force of a demonstration as to their reality. In like manner, after perusing the discussions that have been written on the subject of that faculty by which we are supposed to judge of the beautiful and sublime, I have been conscious of a feeling of dissatisfaction,—and not only so, but looking to the contrariety of opinions which have been put forth as to what this faculty is, —some asserting that it is an original power of the mind which discerns what is graceful from what is ungraceful, even as the reasoning faculty discerns mathematical truth, and others, that it is a modification of separate and distinct powers of the mind,—I cannot help thinking, whatever the authors may have thought of their own performances, that the effect at least upon the minds of the generality of students, has been rather to darken than give light. It is the remark of a judicious writer,* that there is a moral spirit in every discussion. If a writer evolves a true principle, he instructs the mind; if a false one, in so far as that is concerned, he perplexes it. The latter alternative has been too conspicuous in the various hypothesis that have been put forth respecting this class of emotions. One metaphysician after another has attempted to present us with the philosophy of the subject; and as they have marvellously failed in so doing, or at least as very great obscurity rests on the various conclusions to which they have come, the feeling is natural enough that the same obscurity attaches to the phenomena which attaches to the hypothesis. In other words, in so far as these philosophical discussions have operated, the palpable fact of the material creation, for example, having in its numberless combinations a wonderful power in exciting emotions of the beautiful and sublime, is enveloped in obscurity.

But how opposite to all this is the reality will appear by merely turning our eyes away from the obscure metaphysics to the material things around us. The poets are a class of men who do not reason but feel; and they will supply us with very many illustrations of what we have said, that no obscurity attaches to the fact, that nature in her many moods possesses great power in awakening these pleasing emotions in the breast of man. Do not, therefore, gentlemen, perplex yourselves at present with the question, how nature should be possessed of such a power. As I have already observed, our knowledge of the *modus existendi* of things, if I may be allowed the use of two Latin words, is exceedingly limited. For the present turn aside from the dissertation of the metaphysician, to the illustration of the poet; and in so far as the true philosophy of these emotions is concerned, the transition will cer-

* A. Fuller.

tainly be as from a region of mist to one of clear sunshine. Dr. Lowth, in his work on Hebrew poetry, observes, that the mountains and vales, the rivers, streams, and other natural phenomena and natural productions of Palestine, are the great sources from which they have borrowed their imagery, shewing clearly that the material creation appeared to them most grand and beautiful, for the nature of their high commission hinders them not from reverting to it. They saw a glory in Lebanon and its ever-green cedars, and a gracefulness in Carmel; and their eye rested upon the peaceful beauty of a landscape where are green pastures and still waters. The truth is, in all ages and countries, the testimony of all true poets has been deep and thrilling as to the potent influence which creation in all its aspects exercises over mind. The illustrious bard of Avon may be supposed to speak as the representative of his tuneful brethren and sisters on this subject:—

> "The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
> And as imagination bodies forth the forms
> Of things unknown, the poet's pen turns
> Them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

Another great English poet, with far more of learning, and equal in sublimity of genius, infuses deep feeling into his verses when he speaks of external nature. This poet also, I mean Milton, is a witness very much in point; and for this reason that at the time he composed his great work, he had been deprived of his sight. Such a change to the worse would have been enough to sink many a man in hopeless depression. To live shut out from that most common but precious blessing, the light of day, must appear to every one a very sad affliction. And yet this was Milton's state while writing his great poem:—

> "Soul-cheering light, most bountiful of things!
> Guide of our way, mysterious comforter!
> Whose sacred influence, spread through earth and heaven,
> We all too thanklessly participate,
> Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him."

Still, though in this state, he had manifestly a high pleasure in recalling to his remembrance those sun-lit scenes which in better days he loved to look upon. I think I even now see the poet seated in his study, with his long tresses silvered over with age, in the very attitude of pouring forth this affecting soliloquy. His eyes are "quenched;" but he preserves a noble composure of mind:—

> "Yet not the more
> Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt—
> Clear stream, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
> Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
> Thee Zion, and the flowery brooks beneath
> That wash thy hallowed feet."

My object at present is not to speak of the poetry of these lines. I cite the author as a witness to a principle of much importance in intellectual training, and which our modern schoolmen have well nigh thrown into utter obscuration. The fidelity of his testimony too is tested in the severest possible manner, by the altered circumstances in which he is placed. A man who has become blind, speaking of the beauties of nature, is a more disinterested witness than a man who has his eyes open, seeing he gives his evidence to a fact, which raises the position of other men and depresses his own—that is, in other words, he makes himself an object of pity; and no man possessing a spark of the nobility of spirit which characterised the author of Paradise Lost, can suppose he had any such wish. The testimony of the poet, therefore, is genuine. It comes forth from the recesses of truth and nature. There is one other remark also which I wish to make on these lines. They shew the enduring nature of the emotions referred to. Milton, when he had the sense of sight like other men, enjoyed, as we know from verses written at this time, the beauties of nature in a high degree. It might be asked, then, are these sensations merely transitory like those of taste or of smell? Do they continue no longer than when the open eye expiates over the amplitudes of nature? Let this organ be marred, and do they cease to exist? The testimony of Milton shews that it is far otherwise. In this recorded experience of the poet, we see most plainly that the image of this beautiful world without, as if by the magic art of the Daguerrotype, was sketched vividly on the tablet of his heart; and now in the absence of the natural sun, there is the sunshine of imagination, reflected, however, upon nature with a certain sombreness, like the light that shines through the arched windows of an ancient cathedral. These are the objects which the poet in fancy revisited oft; and I need not tell most of you how beautiful they are in the English landscape—the clear stream, the shady grove, the sunny hill, the flowery brooks. The poet continues his soliloquy in the following lines, which I may be allowed also to bring under your notice; the deep pathos which runs through them is very remarkable:—

> "Thus with the year
> Seasons return; but not to me return
> Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
> Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
> Or flocks or herds, or human face divine;
> But clouds instead, and ever-during dark
> Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
> Cut off—and for the book of knowledge fair
> Presented with a universal blank
> Of nature's works to me expunged and rased,
> And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out."

Though there are original powers of the human mind, education does much in training them. This is true of the mental powers or sus-

ceptibilities of which we are now speaking. They required to be excited: and in this work much unquestionably is due to the poets. The majority of people are little given to reflection. They live amid the bustle of business or the dissipations of fashion, and for anything that appears to the contrary, they would have remained profoundly ignorant that there was anything remarkable to be seen amid the solitudes of nature, had the poet's song not reached them in their halls and workshops* It may be observed also, that things which are common to all men, and which those who lead the fashions cannot appropriate, are in danger of being utterly neglected. I have been led to make these remarks, before adding one other testimony as to the power which the vast objects in creation wield over the mind of man—and it is the more striking that it represents the feelings of one who had lived in the centre of a great and luxurious city, and moved in the gay circles of an imperial court. The writer, who is a lady, is describing in a letter to a friend the appearance of the glaciers on the summit of one of the Alpine mountains.

"It would be vain in me to enter upon any description of the scene which now opened to our view. Many celebrated writers have failed in their attempt to convey an idea of its grandeur. The sublime confusion which nature here presents—the immense height of the icy peaks, resembling innumerable castles—the enormous chasms shaped like funnels, where one false step must be followed by certain death—the deep silence, broken only by the terrible noise of the avalanches thundering one after another into the gulphs below, or by the plaintive pipes of the shepherds who are exiled to these regions during many months of the year—all excite a feeling of melancholy and admiration. While we contemplated the awful grandeur of the surrounding scene, tears unconsciously gushed from our eyes, and *my fair companions seemed surprized to find their attention engrossed by anything besides the elegance of their dress*, which might adorn, though it could not add to their charms."†

It is my wish, gentlemen, to free myself as far as possible from all discussion as to the metaphysics of this subject, thinking, as I do, that these have served to throw obscurity around the fact of external nature possessing the power of exciting in the mind the emotions of the beautiful and sublime. I may, however, observe, that the mode of operation in this case is in accordance with other phenomena connected with the mind. Thus, for example, do I wish to awaken the principle of conscience in the breast of man, I just present him with its own peculiar

* I once heard a conversation to this effect—"O, Sir, that is a beautiful water-fall that I have been seeing in your neighbourhood" "Indeed, Sir, so every body says, and what every body says must be true, but in my young days I have often rode past it without being aware there was anything remarkable to be seen!" and this doubtless was the feeling not of an individual but a class.

† See Memoirs of the Empress Josephine.

objects that are fitted to excite it. The Apostle Paul was well acquainted with this, as we may gather from his conduct when he stood before the Roman Governor Felix, who was given to all manner of malversations in the administration of his Government. The accomplished preacher just presents to the conscience of the oppressor its own proper object, namely, moral truth. He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. And the effect is immediate—the Governor could not stand unmoved—he trembled, and asked the preacher to leave him alone at this time. In like manner do I wish to excite in the mind the emotion of hope, I present to it likewise its own peculiar object. I lay before the man who is labouring under some sore distemper, the nature of a medicine which has cured others who were in the like affliction—I tell him that this medicine may be easily possessed by him—and supposing what I say to be credible, I immediately excite in his bosom the emotion of hope. In like manner the emotion of anger is excited by bringing before the mind a case of wrong or oppression, inflicted by some lordly oppresser upon helpless innocence. I may have before me the case of a man of wealth, or power, in the mere wantonness of a cruel disposition, inflicting ruin and wretchedness upon a victim whose only injury was an uncompromising adherence to the cause of honest patriotism; and in such a case, if my sensibilities are true, the emotion of anger will glow and kindle in my breast against the man who has heedlessly sported with the dearest interests of humanity. In a word, to awaken the emotion of anger in our breasts, it is only needful to present before us a manifest instance of wrong and injustice perpetrated upon the innocent—upon those who may be too feeble to defend themselves; and with all the invariableness of the law of affinity in chemistry, our feelings seem to adhere to the particulars of the story, and they seem to pour forth fires of vengeance upon the head of the oppressor. It is in precise accordance with the same law that our emotions of the sublime and beautiful are called forth,—these emotions like those of anger, hope, conscience and the like, have objects which properly belong to them; and one great class of objects is the magnificent works of creation around us—the woods, the rivers, the streams, the lakes, the hills and vales, and flowery meadows—the pure vault of heaven, irradiated by the light of the sun by day, or the moon and stars by night—the eye never rests on these objects without the emotion of beauty, grandeur, and sublimity being felt to a greater or less degree in our breasts. It is with justice therefore an anonymous poet exclaimed:—

"Ever charming, ever new,
When will the landscape tire the view?

The pleasant seat, the ruined tower,
The naked rock, the shady bower,
The town and village, dome and farm,
Each gives each a double charm."

It is true there are other objects than external nature which excite these emotions; but I choose to limit my attention to this for the present, in order to give you a clearer view of the true nature of this class of mental phenomena, which appear to me to have been unnecessarily mystified by all the writers on Rhetoric that I have consulted. If the question then should be asked, who is the poet whose writings will be always pleasing? Without entering more minutely into the question, we would answer, that it is he, who, possessing a mental constitution more alive than other men to the beauties of nature, has kindled with a warmer glow as his eye expatiated over them. Other men might experience the same feelings in kind, but they were different in degree. They were more languid, and consequently more transitory. They might have the outline, but they wanted the well-defined figures and vivid coloring which are essential to a true representation. The consequence was, their emotions soon faded, and left no other trace save the remembrance that for the time they were pleased. The true poet, however, like an inspired prophet of old, is constrained by a noble impulse to pour out his soul in language fresh and appropriate. His art, if art it may be called, is not what many suppose it to be, the mere capacity of expressing himself magniloquently on common things; and of so selecting terms that the last of every second or third line may have a similarity of sound. One who writes thus, writes not from the fulness of his heart, but from a principle of imitation. It would be an interesting discussion to point out the adaptations which exist between external nature and man's mental constitution—this, however, would lead me too far away from the immediate object of this lecture—it may be enough to say, that such an adaptation exists, and the soul of the true poet responds not less truly to the graceful and the sublime in the natural world than do the cords of a well tuned instrument to the hand of the performer. True poetry is of the nature of a testimony. And neither does it seem to matter what shape it assumes —whether the author speaks in his own person, or conjures up imaginary beings who speak as if of themselves, he is never withdrawn; and I doubt not could we know the private history of the Author of some Epic such as the Aeneid, Paradise Lost, or Telemachus, we should see that there was less of mystery in the matter of originality and invention than the reading public had been taught by critics to believe—and that the author whether he was describing things spoken by Gods, Angels, or Men—by Kings or Commons—whether he transported them to another world or limited them to this one, was all the while borrowing from ordi-

nary scenes and incidents that had turned up around him. And neither does this detract from the merit of poets, any more than it does from the merit of painters, that their imaginary groups are generally made up of the portraits of living men. At all events the dignity of philosophy requires that the light of truth should be poured in upon this subject as far as may be, and the important interests of a purer system of mental training require it.

Adverting then to the principle that the emotions of the sublime and beautiful are awakened by presenting before the eye the objects of external nature, it is well known that original poets have not been so much reading as reflecting men. They have come forth and seen and given us their impressions of things. The poet Burns is reported by one of his own friends to have been so much in love with the appearances of natural scenery, that he has known him to stand for an hour together looking upon the corn-fields of his native land, and seeming to peruse as in a great volume, the features of the varied and noble landscape; and it is just this susceptibility of being impressed by the things without, that enters largely into what is understood by genius. There is perhaps not a human being possessing his faculties in a sound state, whose soul would not swell with emotion in beholding a noble river, such as the Niagara, rolling onward in silent majesty amid magnificent woods,—at one time spreading out its unruffled waters to the sun, like a glorious mirror,—at another time, rolling down the terrible rapids, or thundering in one vast volume over the awful precipice into the yawning abyss,—a scene of this stupendous kind awakens the souls of the dullest of men. All pronounce it to be most beautiful and magnificent; but the feelings of the man of genius needs not such a lavish display of nature's glories to awaken them. Whatever other powers characterise the man of genius, one thing is certain, he is a man of sensibility in the best sense. Hannah More has well expressed this in one of her poems:—

> "Cold and inert the mental powers would be
> Without this quickening spark of Deity!
> To give immortal mind its finest tone,
> Oh, sensibility, is all thine own.
> This is the eternal flame which lights and warms,
> In song enchants us, and in action charms."

All the authors who have excelled in writing poetry, will be found, if their writings are examined, to have been possessed of this quality in no small degree. Gray's elegy, written in a country church-yard—a poem which is in most men's libraries, might be taken as an illustration of this; and as I should wish you to verify for yourselves the accuracy of our principles, I would recommend this poem to your careful perusal, as

a befitting example, amid all its felicity of expression and harmonious numbers, of that peculiar sensibility which belongs to genuine poets, and which has perhaps the greatest share in making up the melody of their song. There is another example which I would not willingly pass over —it is to be found in the sacred scriptures. I refer to that hymn written by the Hebrew prophet, when raising his eyes to the boundless vault of heaven, and beholding the far distant orbs which enlighten our dark nights, he breaks out into these sublime expressions—" When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, then say I, what is man that thou art mindful of him?"

It is of much importance, therefore, gentlemen, to keep in mind the principle we have endeavored to develop, namely, that our emotions are excited by their own peculiar objects; and that the emotions of the beautiful and sublime are no exception. I have carefully abstained from any discussion as to the *modus existendi* of these emotions, thinking as I do, that a discussion of this kind has proved unfavorable to their due development, seeing those who have entered upon it have darkened the whole subject of enquiry by the mists of a sceptical philosophy. I have thought it enough to shew, that the emotions of the beautiful and sublime are subject to the same law which belongs to the other emotions of the human mind. They have their objects; and it would be just as rational a subject for investigation, how it comes about that I should feel any emotion of anger in seeing a cruel man oppressing the innocent; or how I should feel any emotion of veneration at the sight of a man remarkable for his virtues, as that how a beautiful or sublime object should excite in me the corresponding emotions of sublimity or beauty. What binds an effect with its cause may be simply the will of the Creator—or there may be some intermediate vincula which we have not faculties to discern—but one thing is certain, all that we know of cause and effect, amounts to nothing more than invariable sequence. The chemist proceeds on this as a first principle, in all his enquiries.—No reason can be assigned why two bodies, when brought together, unite together and form a new substance. The most we can say of it is just this—so it is; but we can say absolutely nothing on the question, how it is. Indeed all our knowledge of physics, at least in our present state of being, amounts to this, that one thing is a cause, and another is a consequence. Shew me a beautiful rose, or a beautiful landscape, and I experience an emotion of beauty. The rose or the landscape is the antecedent, and the grateful feeling is the consequent; and this, gentlemen, as far as I understand the subject, is the amount of our knowledge regarding it. I would have you then to discard that sceptical philoso-

phy which teaches that there is a great error in saying that there is beauty in a rose or sublimity in the Falls of Niagara. This is a wisdom which is of the schools, and leads to nothing that is fresh and elevating either in feeling or in poetry. It has led those who embraced it into a species of mental abstraction, which bears but little congeniality with the glorious system of things which is around us; and it stript our poetry of all its luxuriance and strength, and made it a tame and artificial thing, until, to use the figurative language of a modern writer, "the vein was fairly wrought out."* The modern school of poetry, which is certainly superior in point of vigour and variety to that which went before it, has acquired this pre-eminence by the masters of song, coming under the influence of this purer mental discipline which I now urge upon you. They had not recourse to the dissertation of the philosopher as to the beautiful forms which charm the eye and imagination, but they went to the living reality. Lord Byron may be considered as illustrating this principle of cultivating our feelings, by looking upon objects as they lie presented to us:—

"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
  To slowly trace the forest's shady scene
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
  And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been—
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen
  With the wild flock that never needs a fold,
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean—
  This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
  Converse with nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled."

The poet Burns also, to whom allusion has been already made, affords a suitable illustration of the truth of what we have said. At the time that this remarkable man appeared, criticism had become too much a thing of rule. The great poets of the Elizabethan age had sunk into comparative neglect; and the productions which were most esteemed among persons of rank, were so glossed and polished, that nature and genius seemed alike forgotten. It was amid the pedants of this school that the Ayrshire ploughman made his appearance. How far opposed to the Pope school of poetry every one who has paid some attention to the history of our literature must know, were the following verses addressed to a mountain daisy, which the poet had turned up with his plough:—

"Wee modest crimson-tipped flower,
Thou's met me in an evil hour,
For I maun crush amang the stoure
  Thy slender stem—
To spare thee now is past my power,
  Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! its no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet
  Wi' speckl'd breast,
When upward springing, blyth to greet
  The purpling east."

* Chambers.

The principle which in the above observations I have endeavoured to develop, namely, that the emotions of the sublime and beautiful have their own proper objects, and that by the presentation of such to the mind, these emotions will be awakened, is one that would admit of many rich applications in its bearing on mental cultivation. Do you wish then to enjoy that intellectual treat which the domains of creation present in common to the peasant and to the philosopher?—those mild and innocent joys which the glorious forms in external nature are fitted to infuse into the spirit of man? I certainly would not have you seek assistance from the metaphysician speculating on the arcana of the mind, and attempting to discover there a standard of taste about which they have not to this day been able to agree. If books are to be used as helps at all, I would say, you should rather go to a class of writers who, without philosophizing upon the matter, are really in possession of the true philosophy—to those who have opened an unclouded eye upon creation, and described what they have seen with more or less of the eloquence of truth. I would have you peruse the writings of that class of observers who have "looked on nature with a poet's eye"—and who may therefore be supposed apt teachers in pointing out forms and combinations which had escaped our duller organs. But a still better species of mental training than even this will be found in going to nature herself, and with organs unbedimmed by a vulgar familiarity on the one hand, or by the scepticism of philosophy on the other, peruse her bright and wondrous volume. In this way you will enjoy that rich entertainment,—may I not say those devotional feelings,—which such a pleasing exercise is fitted to call forth. This, gentlemen, is the true philosophy of our emotions; and in the language of a great English poet, it will enable you to

"Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

Education is indispensable to the well-being of cities. The tendency of the increase of capital (and it has been, and still is on the increase in the mother country) is to extend the division of labor to the greatest possible extent—to substitute machinery for manual labor, until the task of the operative is reduced to a few operations, and his hand acquires somewhat of the routine and rapidity of a machine. This arises from the competition of capitalists among themselves; and the object is to obtain the greatest amount of produce at the least possible expense. But the tendency of this *regime* is far less favorable to a sound, moral, and intellectual state among the workmen than the operations of agriculture. There is much in the processes of agriculture fitted to invigorate the human mind. These have a certain greatness and variety in them, to inspire comprehensive thought, as well as in an eminent degree to teach providence of the future. Compare with all this the case of the operative in a large city, who is confined in a workshop, and has frequently little more to do than turn a wheel or the like, and the inference is unavoidable—there is little or nothing in his employment to interest or stimulate his mind. On the contrary, in so far as its tendency operates, it is to reduce him to act the part of a machine himself. But this cannot be done without a grievous neglect of the intellectual faculties. The operative will have excitement in his own way in the hours of relaxation—and with no resources in himself, where will he find it? very probably in haunts of dissipation. Without an improved system of intellectual training, therefore, the great mass of the population of our cities would be, in respect to habits of thought and of providence, much below the inhabitants of the country. Our cities would be filled with a multitude of human beings possessing physical powers, it is true, but in all that respects the exercise of mind, sadly degraded. And who will say this is a desirable state of things? What is the compensatory process then to enable such a numerous class of inhabitants of a city to make head against the necessary consequence of an ever-increasing capital in limiting the operations of their hands? How will the artizan, in short, be enabled to hold an equal position with the agriculturist? My answer unhesitatingly is, give him a superior education to the agriculturist, and then you will compensate for his more unfavorable position. Discipline his mind with science, and with those branches of literature that are useful and interesting, and then let capital do its worst—let it reduce his operations to the narrowest possible range—the man has then materials for thought and reflection infused into him; and the very circumstance that his work is of the most mechanical kind, will only leave his mind the more free and undisturbed to reflect on the principles in which he has been instructed. Indeed, I cannot but help thinking, though certain eminent individuals took the lead in promoting Schools of Art in England, that the chief cause of their rapid progress is to be ascribed to the felt necessity on the part of the operatives themselves for a higher state of intellectual training. The vast capitals accumulated, the division of labor, the introduction of machinery, tended to sink them in the scale of rational beings. But there is a benevolent Providence that rules in the affairs of men; and the rise of these institutions in our own times is an illustration of it. They have introduced a higher kind of education among our citizens, and have thus, it is not too much to hope, been instrumental in sustaining their intellectual and moral character against influences which would otherwise have subverted both.

The above Note contains a compendious view of the argument for supporting Schools of Art in large towns; and as I took occasion to expand the same in a Lecture delivered in Toronto, I subjoin the following extract, for the purpose of elucidating more fully the soundness of the principles on which it rests:—

"It is usual, in comparing the intellectual condition of families residing in large towns with those located in rural districts, to give the precedence to the former; and although I am not disposed to dispute this, yet it ought to be known what are the respective influences of these two modes of living upon the intellectual character, because from this a powerful argument may be deduced in favor of extending and improving our educational institutions in large towns. I observe, first of all then, that it does not necessarily follow from their respective employments that the agriculturist is inferior to the artizan. On the contrary, I apprehend that the tendencies are all the other way; and that but for certain compensatory processes, the inhabitants of large towns, in respect of general intelligence and vigor of mind, would rather be behind than before an agricultural population. There can be no doubt that the nature of a man's daily employment influences very considerably his mental development; and if so, then there is much, very much in the avocations of an agriculturist that is favorable to the enlargement of the faculties. Not to speak of the importance of his calling, (which stamps him with a certain independence of mind) seeing it is he who provides the most important article needful for the subsistence of man—there is a greatness in those powers of nature with which he comes into immediate contact in all his plans and operations. If the machine of nature is magnificent in respect to power and wisdom, he co-operates with it in the benevolent end of providing produce for the maintenance of man, and of those animals which he has domesticated for his use. A personal interest in any thing sharpens observation as well as all the powers of the human mind. Now, an agriculturist cannot be an inattentive observer of nature. Just to take an illustration—what object in nature has excited more attention than the sun in the heavens? The powers of language have been exhausted in the attempt to portray its "surpassing glory." But what an interesting object is the sun to the agriculturist.—It is all in vain that he has labored his fields, and made them like a garden, and sowed the precious seed, if the vivifying warmth from that luminary be not communicated, Unless he brings his piercing rays and mighty influence to bear upon the well-prepared farm, the labor is utterly without avail. The agriculturist never rises from his bed and looks forth from his cottage door to the forest trees that bound his horizon, but his employment directs his eye upwards to the eastern sky, and constrains him to mark the rising of that luminary

"At whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads."

I cannot, therefore, but think, that in the soul of a good man who follows this calling, there is a noble development of the powers of imagination. And not only does he come into contact with the magnificent things of nature, but with things that are graceful also—the tender plant, as it unfolds its leaves to inhale the refreshing influence of light and heat, is marked by him from its incipient to its mature form—the refreshing dews, the alternations of shade and of sunshine, the cycle of the seasons, which in one revolution works such wonderful changes both on his cultivated fields and on the forest. For around his dwelling, it may be truly said in the words of the poet,

"The young spring
Looks ever bright with leaves and blossoming,
And winter always wends his sullen horn,
And the wild autumn, with a look forlorn,
Dies in his stormy manhood; and the skies
Weep, and flowers sicken, when the summer flies."

Now if it is true that the things without impress the mind even as the seal does the pliant wax, the inference is unavoidable; the agriculturist whose feelings are not deadened by sensual indulgence, must be a man of sensibility—a man whose imagination glows with forms the most sublime and lively—a man, in short, in whose bosom reposes many a sunny influence gladdening the minds of those who know him best. But not only is the employment of the agriculturist fitted to awaken sensibility and imagination, it is fitted to teach him much activity and foresight in a manner sufficiently impressive. The seasons proceed in a kind of progression—the showers of spring are succeded by the heats of summer—and these again by the ripening influence of autumn—and then comes the desolating winter. None of these seasons individually are sufficient for the operations of the agriculurist—the growth and maturity of his crops require them all. Suppose that he omitted to sow his field in spring, it would be too late to begin to do so in summer; and if the operations of summer are neglected, the harvest may come

in vain. The nature of his employment thus requires the exercise of activity and foresight; and these qualities I need hardly say, are the elements of all practical wisdom. Such being the nature of those influences under which the agriculturist is placed, the inference is unavoidable he must be a man impressed with the attributes of thought and reflection.

Now contrast with this the case of the artizan immersed in the heart of a populous city; and had we leisure to follow it out, we might easily shew that his position was naturally less advantageous in the matter of mental training. Without adverting to the inferiority of the powers he has to do with—the extent to which in manufactures labour is divided, and the introduction of machinery has limited his attention to a very few operations. The great end at which the capitalist aims is so to simplify the task of the workman that his hand may acquire all the precision and rapidity of a machine. Hence the extent to which machinery is introduced in manufactures; whereas in the processes of agriculture, it is found in a great measure inapplicable. The object of the capitalist, in this division of labour, and introduction of machinery, is to obtain the greatest amount of produce at the least possible expense. And assuredly the measures he adopts are most wisely adapted to accomplish the end proposed. But it comes to to be a very important question what are the bearings of this *regime* on the intellectual habits of the people? and to my mind it appears very manifest, that if no remedial measures were applied, its tendency would be so pernicious, that the bulk of our city population, in point of intelligence and morals, would sink greatly below the same class in agricultural districts. And for the sake of illustration, let us suppose a workman whose attention is confined to the single operation of turning a wheel. He plies his task unremittingly from day to day, and from week to week, all the year round. It is very obvious there is nothing in this employment as there is in that of the agriculturist to expand and invigorate the faculties. On the contrary, on the supposition that the man has never received the benefit of any mental training, his employment is utterly impotent in raising him to the rank of a reflecting being. In so far as that operates, the man, though he is possessed of a soul endowed with noble faculties, may remain all his life long a mere machine. The agricultural laborer is a man of many avocations. His occupations vary with the progress of our planet in its annual revolution. He is forced to be a close observer of the seasons and of the wondrous energy with which they operate; for his great aim is, so to lay out his labour that he may secure their co-operation. In all this it is very manifest there is a certain room allowed for the play of the faculties. It would be an abuse of language to say that such a person was either weak-minded or ignorant—he must be a man of reflection. But the artizan whose whole occupation is narrowed down to a few mechanical operations—the circuit of whose vision is narrowed by the dimensions of the workshop—has but little either to interest his reasoning faculty or to excite his imagination. It is allowed he must be possessed of mechanical skill and muscular energy. His occupation demands these, and tends to foster them. But it would seem that it had the smallest possible effect in calling into play his mental faculties. True it is, after the toils of the day are over, he may be expected to feel a longing for some kind of mental recreation or other. He is not a machine, though many a politician may be disposed to view him as performing the same functions. He possesses all the mental faculties of the philosopher; and speaking in the average, he possesses them in the same degree. To make an absolute machine of the man is therefore out of the question. He must, during his hours of cessation from toil, have some mental relaxation. But if he has no lecture to attend, no school of art, and no library, it is obvious that whatever may be the nature of his relaxation, it cannot be of an intellectual character; and in the absence of all other means of mental excitement, he may be induced to seek for it among a more vulgar class of institutions which are the bane both of intelligence and of virtue —the haunts of dissipation that abound in cities.

It would appear then from what I have said, that the increase of capital (which is of such vast importance in the esteem of the financier) unless aided by educational institutions, will be found unfavourable to the mental illumination of a large and important section of the inhabitants of a city. The increase of capital leading to the division of labour and the introduction of machinery, until the labour of a man's hand is so simplified that it requires as little exercise of the mind as if the man himself was a mere automaton—and who will say that this is a desirable condition for human beings endowed with noble powers and faculties to be placed in? To follow out the principle of the capitalist, who too often thinks of nothing but the *materiel*—and to reduce the condition of the operatives in a large city to be merely eating and drinking machines—is to fly in the face of God's image that is stamped upon the poor man as

well as upon the capitalist. The wise king Solomon expresses his sense of the importance of knowledge in its most comprehensive sense to all men, when he says, "that the soul be without knowledge is not good," and accordingly the rise of schools of art for the instruction of the working people in our large towns, is the consequence I doubt not of that longing among themselves for a higher grade of mental exercise than is furnished by their daily avocations. No doubt certain men high in the estimation of the community, such as Lord Brougham and others, took the lead in this great movement, but that which gave steadfastness and universality to it among the cities of England, was the wide-spread demand for a higher kind of mental training. Things had not remained stationary since the educational institutions consequent on the reformation had been introduced. Capital had immensely increased; and this again had introduced every expedient for increasing the productive powers of the labour which it set in motion; and we can easily suppose, from the little that was done for educating the people, that many an overgrown capitalist, when he saw the might and power of his capital in wielding the masses of human beings around him, was disposed to look upon them as only a part of that machinery which he could set in motion—but nature reclaimed against the wrong. The people themselves had felt the noble impulse for a higher intellectual training than they possessed. Though born freemen they found themselves enslaved, not by the triumph of a conquering foe, but by the increase of wealth. They were cooped up in work-shops in the midst of crowded cities—their labor constant, and requiring but small exercise of their faculties—they were in danger of sinking irremediably into a state of ignorance, and of seeking nothing higher than a mere sensual existence. In this state, our cities had become mere sinks of depravity—and the patriotism, the intelligence, and the virtue, had been not in them but in the rural districts. The tendency of an ever-increasing capital to sink the intellectual condition of the working classes in towns is strong; and in so far as this element operates, they should at no distant period be placed on a lower grade than the same class in the country. But in our Educational Institutions, our Institutes, our Libraries, our facilities for mental training, we find a process amply sufficient to compensate to the artizan his otherwise unfavorable position. The truth is, by means of these and of their excellent result in indoctrinating the mind with a taste for literature and science, what seemed adverse to the artizan, namely the narrow arena within which he was confined, and the small demand in the mechanical operations to which his hand was restricted, that was made upon the exercise of thought and reflection—these in the case supposed will be found to be favorable to mental illumination—seeing the mind is left in a great measure at freedom to expatiate on its favorite theme. Another advantage that people living in towns have over country people is, that they are better adapted for attending lectures and such means of improvement. It has been observed by an advocate of these institutions,* that a country man who spends much of his time in the open air, when he comes into a confined place, such as a lecture room, is very apt to fall under the influence of sleep; whereas the artizan who spends his time in the city is as much awake in such a place as he was in his own workshop, consequently the latter class are more likely to receive improvement. Divine Providence thus sharing men's advantages with an equal hand, seeing that the agriculurist who had nature and her processes spread out before him—that magnificent volume which is so fraught with instruction—enjoys in a less degree the capabilities for reading the volume of art; while the artizan, to whom the former was closed, is better fitted for reading the latter. * * * * Seeing then your lot is cast in this young and thriving city, which is, however, subject to all the evils that belong to other cities, let me counsel you to support this institution, that like all other things in this noble province, its progress may be onward; for I have perfect confidence that its safe and salutary results will be vindicated before our rulers, and men of influence, by the superiority both in intellect and virtue of those who have imbibed; whether in its library, or in its lecture room, the lessons which it communicates; and that while its students have become imbued with taste and intelligence, they have lost none of their workmanlike qualities.

NOTE B. p. 15.

The work here quoted, to which reference has already been made, merits the attention of students. It has as much originality as may be expected in an elementary treatise, and as we are informed in a note, it has been reprinted in England, and intro-

* Lord Brougham.

duced into certain schools. Its chief merit lies in containing many very useful practical hints, and it is more interesting that many of the examples which he has chosen to illustrate his principles are selected from modern writers. When the author, however, passes from Rhetoric as a practical art to the philosophy of the subject, he seems not to write with the same intelligence. The following passage occurs in the introduction—"That instruction in this part of rhetoric (taste) is attended with difficulty, no one will deny. The subjects themselves are intricate, *hard to be understood, and still harder to explain*, especially to those whose minds are immature and unaccustomed to philosophical reasonings." One might almost suppose from this, that the author was referring to the mysteries of a transcendantal region, which the English language, with all its plasticity, was a very unfit medium for communicating, especially to the uninitiated. But it is not so. The subject lies within those limits, that are open to philosophical investigation; and the adoption of language which would apply rather to the explication of heavenly mysteries, is not a little incongruous. It may be true, that the opinions of some writers on taste are hard to be understood—so hard indeed, that in rearing their theories on too narrow a basis, they have perplexed the whole matter in the vain attempt of reconciling them with the facts. But then, these, and the strict subject of enquiry are different things—and no apology is admissible for obscure writing, on the pretence that an author feels it hard to make himself intelligible—for no aphorism in rhetoric is more certain than this, that what a writer cannot well explain to others, he does not well understand himself. He has failed in reaching the philosophy of the subject. The truth is, that the emotions comprehended under the general term, taste, are as much first principles of the human mind, as those that are peculiar to conscience, and the real cause of the complaint, that the subject is "hard to be understood," has arisen from this fact being kept in abeyance. I cannot perceive that there is any thing more hard to be understood in the fact, that a flower, statue, painting, or poetical description, that are true to nature, should excite an emotion of the beautiful in the mind, as that the witnessing of a cruel action should excite an emotion of moral aversion. It may be admitted to the Author of the Essays on Taste, that a beautiful object may excite various associated ideas, as of delicacy, purity, sprightliness, or the like; and it may be admitted to Dr. Thomas Brown, that a beautiful edifice approves itself to our love of fitness; but this only shews, as Combe observes, in his Essays on Phrenology, that *there is an association of our faculties*. It does not prove either, that our sense of the beauty of the edifice is resolvable wholly into an idea of its fitness for certain ends, or of the flower, &c. into the associations referred to. These and many other feelings may be concomitants. They may form so many pillars in the temple of beauty; but it has a foundation of its own, and the error has lain in supposing that it rested wholly on one.

NOTE C. p. 19.

I have looked through Boswell's Life of Johnson for the observation here referred to, but have failed in discovering it. I have given it on the authority of a respected professor whose class I attended in the University of Edinburgh. It is, however, so thoroughly *Johnsonian*, that no one acquainted with his manner can doubt its being genuine. The true spirit of an observation of this kind is often lost when not found in the connection in which it was spoken. Regarding the words referred to as really pronounced by the great English Lexicographer, who excelled all the men of his times in conversational powers, let us supply an imaginary context in the absence of the true one, which is probably lost. Let us go back then 70 or 80 years ago, and fancy some young aspirant much concerned to hear Johnson's opinion about a matter on which he had no small misgivings in his own mind. Boswell is in the secret, and the introduction of the subject is committed to him.

Boswell. Don't you think, sir, that a man is not always in the same mood for composing? *Johnson.* Why, yes, sir, just as a man may say he is not in a mood to go with you to the House of Commons or to Covent Garden; but does any one suppose that this means any thing else than merely that he is not willing to go? *Boswell.* But, sir, I was conversing the other day with Goldsmith, who has just published his Deserted Village, and he assured me there were seasons of the year when he could write with more fluency than in others. May this not show, sir, that there is some such thing as an *afflatus* required in order to write well? *Johnson.* No, sir. The ancient poets introduced this mode of talking, and the moderns have servilely imitated them. Why, sir, a foreigner might on the same ground infer that we had lions or tigers in England, because in some of our poets you will meet with similies drawn from

the manner in which these animals attack their prey. These figures, sir, are borrowed from the classics, and in the mouths of writers who have never been out of England, are without meaning. Sir, I would have a young writer dismiss this common but foolish notion from his mind. The best *efflatus*, sir, which we had at school was, that we knew if we did not perform the prescribed task we should be soundly flogged.—*Boswell.* Well, sir, suppose I was to ask you what advice you would give a young man who complained of a difficulty of composing, and who still wished to attain to proficiency in that art. *Johnson.* I would have him sit down doggedly to it, sir.—Here Boswell looked with a smile to his young friend, and with admiration upon the man whom he reverenced as an oracle, and in retiring seemed to say—

"Ah! when along the stream of time thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
Say shall my little bark, attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph and partake the gale."

NOTE D. p. 40.

An ingenious observation is made by a writer in one of the Reviews, that the mathematics in former times had the effect of sustaining the human mind in its reasonings on moral subjects. The same is true of the effective demands of society. These have had no small influence in counteracting the tendency that philosophers have always shown towards what is paradoxical. Both Berkley and Hume would have experienced a certain nervous feeling in making the affirmation that there is hardness in a stone. Not so with that great practical philosopher Macadam. He never doubted this—the chief object with him was to overcome it by means of the hammer, and to cover the country with "roads" caked according to his own peculiar fashion. Another class of philosophers would have told you that you predicated what was very questionable in saying that flowers were beautiful. Not so with the artist. His only aim was to imitate their beautiful forms, and to present them to you in such vivid colors, that the copies might rival, if it were possible, the originals. And here, while on this subject, I may notice a very interesting view which Dr. Ure, author of the Dictionary of Chemistry, gives us of the manner in which a taste for the beautiful is cultivated by a class of operatives in the city of Lyons in France. "The modes in which taste is cultivated at Lyons, deserve particular study and imitation in this country. Among the weavers of this place, the children, and all persons busied in devising patterns, *much attention is devoted to every thing in any way connected with the beautiful either in figure or in color.* Weavers may be seen in their holiday-leisure gathering flowers and grouping them in the most engaging combinations. They are continually suggesting new designs to their employers, and are thus the fruitful source of elegant patterns." "Hence," says Mr. Clark, who quotes this passage in his Essay on Drawing and Perspective, "the French flower patterns are remarkably free from incongruities, being copied from nature with scientific precision." The practice here referred to, contains the germ of all that might be said as to the best method of developing these mental powers, and perhaps on this account may be held to merit the attention of all who are interested in the subject of juvenile training.