

John Kitching, A Lecture addressed to Working Men, on the opportunities which they have for improving their minds (York 1860)

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A LECTURE

ADDRESSED TO

WORKING MEN,

ON THE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH THEY HAVE

FOR IMPROVING THEIR MINDS.

BY JOHN KITCHING,

Medical Superintendent of the Friends' Retreat.

YORK:

THOMAS BRADY, BOOKSELLER, 15, LOW OUSEGATE.

1860.



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PREFACE.

THE following address is published in the hope that it may awaken the attention of those Working Men into whose hands it may fall, to the subject of their own intellectual culture.

Many persons neglect the cultivation of their minds from not appreciating the importance of it. They do not see how intimately it bears upon their own happiness, and that of their families. Some think that if the pursuit of knowledge does not lead to their advancement in life, or to the increase of their property, it is therefore a barren and unprofitable labour. Others again think they have neither time nor opportunity for improving their minds, or cultivating their intellectual faculties.

It is the aim of the writer to shew these persons that they are mistaken, to shew them that labour of every description is most intimately connected with intellectual exertion, and that it appeals directly to the understanding of the workman.

Great efforts are now being made to afford to the rising generation of all classes the means of a sound education, and parents are called upon by every motive that can actuate reasonable men to second these efforts by the force of their own example, in order

that they may avoid the shame and confusion of being a stumbling-block to their children.

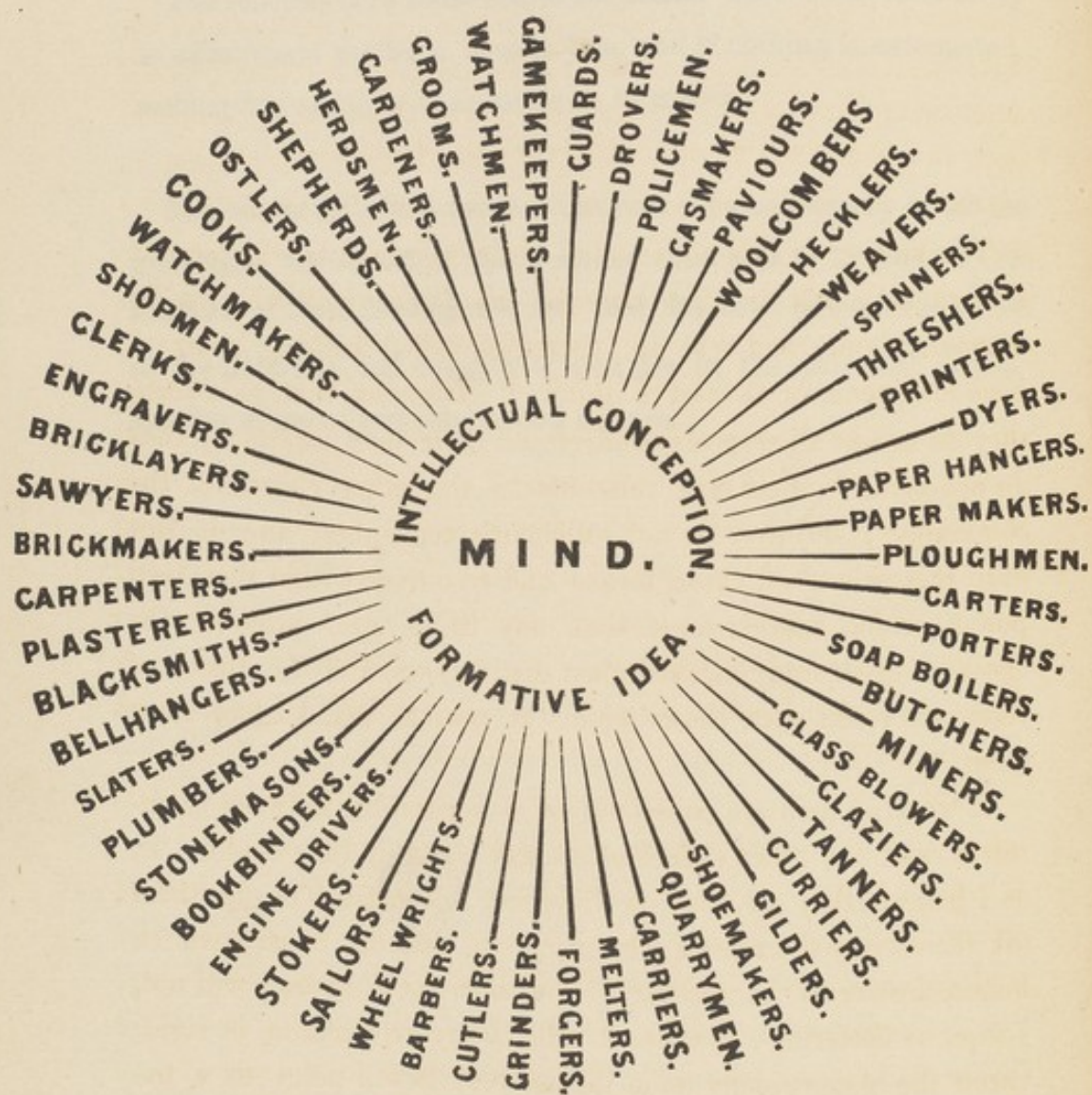
The remarks here addressed to the reader have been dictated by an affectionate desire to benefit him, and if nothing is extenuated, nothing has certainly been set down in malice.

The writer fully believes that the most effectual remedy for all the grievances which afflict the working classes, is to be found in the increase of their intelligence, and that the most powerful assertion of the fraternity and equality of men lies in the universal demonstration of moral and intellectual culture.

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A LECTURE,

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THE subject of this address has been suggested by the interest I have long felt in that class of my fellow men who live by manual labour, and who are, therefore, called working men. I have long seen, or at least I think I have seen, that, as a class, they do not in all respects, understand their own interests; they do not perceive their true relations to the other classes of the community; and they do not sufficiently remember, and do not avail themselves of, those means and resources within their own power, which would, more than any thing else, promote the abolition of strongly marked class distinctions, and the fusion of their own ranks with those which at present stand aloof from them.

If working men are conscious of a separation between themselves and the other classes of society; and if they deplore it, as I believe they do, and as I believe all classes do, let them ask themselves the reason why it is so, and let them give an honest answer to the question. The answer, if honest, will not, I fear, be flattering; because it will, if my explanation is right, throw the blame chiefly upon themselves; it will point to a too great forgetfulness on the part of the working man to his true relation to the great community of which he forms so important a part. It will point to a too ready surrender of himself to influences which, whilst they increase this forgetfulness, render him uncongenial as a companion to all but associates of his own class.

The source of these evils may be traced, as it seems to me, to

the working man's forgetfulness of the part he performs in the great business of society, and of the station he ought to fill in the great fraternity of a nation. If he resign himself to the position of a mere drudge; if he regard himself simply as a creature endowed with bodily strength and capacities for manual labour, having no responsibilities to his fellow-men beyond that of doing them no bodily harm; as called upon to contribute nothing to the moral and intellectual profit of his race; and that when he has completed his task of muscular toil, and received his wages, he has discharged his obligations to society, and society to him, and he is therefore free to throw himself upon the stream of momentary impulse, and float away in careless abandonment till recalled to his daily task;—if this be the estimate he forms of his position and of his duties, we cannot wonder if a fixed line still continues to mark the path of the working man from the rest of his fellow citizens. This is the position of a being but little raised above a human animal: it is not the position of a reasonable and accountable man. If this be the estimate working men form of themselves, they have grievously misunderstood their vocation; and in misunderstanding their vocation, have lost sight of the real dignity and significance both of labour and of themselves as labourers.

I intend to maintain in this address that labour is not only honourable and dignified, but that it is also compatible with a large degree of mental cultivation and refinement: labour, if properly understood and wisely pursued, not only offers no bar to mental improvement, but may be made to contribute to it; may be even made to promote it. The workman should never entertain the idea, that there is necessarily anything in labour which either degrades him, or which shuts him out from communion with those who are benefiting the human race by the propagation of religious truth, or by the cultivation and promotion of science, literature, or art. All the useful among mankind are labourers; none but the worthless are idle; the only difference

amongst workers consists in the kind of labour which they perform.

"Rich or poor," says Violeau, "the law of labour is common to all; for in every position, in default of a trade, an art or employment, we can and we ought, to contrive for ourselves a useful occupation. It is melancholy to hear some men constantly murmuring against this law, when the observance of it is not only an act of obedience to the Divine Will, but is also essential to the application and development of the understanding, that gift peculiar to man, but which becomes pernicious to him in a state of idleness." In the same strain writes Paxton Hood, "The idea floats about that it is elegant to be idle, to appear full-dressed, to walk through the world as through a Ball-room, or a Saloon; that it is most inelegant to plead guilty to the crime of dirty fingers, or hard hands, and to an acquaintance with forges, factories and threshing-floors. Now before any man can be a true man, he must be cured of this Insanity, he must learn that the dishonourable thing is to endeavour to skulk through the world without working, and the attempt of this little book is to show that mental labour may very frequently combine nobly with manual labour: and that in illustration of this, it is noticeable that there have been many men confined to the Loom, to the Flail and the Hammer, whose intellectual attainments have been amazing, and who, from the various departments they have worthily filled, have added to the stores and treasures of their country's genius and intellectual worth."

I might multiply quotations to the same effect, but I will merely add a few eloquent words by Dr. Channing, who in his lecture on Self-culture delivered at Boston in 1838, uses the following terms:

"I shall speak occasionally as amongst those who live by the labour of their hands, but I shall not speak as one separated from them. I belong rightfully to the great fraternity of working men. Happily in this community, we are all bred and

born to work ; and this honourable mark set upon us all, should bind together the various portions of the community." Now this great fraternity, in which all the industrial and productive classes are linked together, does not only embrace the intellectual and spiritual labourers amongst men, but it extends to all the common occupations, however dissimilar they may be, which fall to the lot of different classes of workers, binding them together as members of one great working family. In a civilized community, where the arts, manufactures and appliances of daily life are manifold and diversified, a division and sub-division of labour becomes an inevitable consequence of the vast multiplication of things to be done. It is found in an early stage of progressive civilization, that labour can be better performed and at less cost, if each person confines himself to a special branch of labour. As civilization makes further advances, labour becomes increasingly sub-divided, because time becomes more valuable, and mechanical skill more requisite. Competition presses more and more heavily, and has a constant tendency to lessen the remuneration for a given amount of work. From this multiplied sub-division of labour, arises a proportionate contraction of the demand upon the workman's general powers and originality of mind, together with an augmented demand upon his manual dexterity. The inevitable tendency of the progression of this law is, to convert the remoter class of workmen into a kind of human machine ; to exact an increased mechanical skill at the expense of his thinking powers, and thus to banish him further and further from the intellectual origin of his work.

In a low state of civilization, or in a thinly peopled country, where food is easily procured, and the competition of populous places has not arisen, this graduated subdivision of labour is not required; and each man has to perform a great variety of work. He has to be both his own mind, and his own hand. What his mind plans his hand executes, and the operations of both are so intimately blended, that intellectual exercise and manual labour

are less clearly separated. In a populous country, he who plans and invents, does not execute his designs. For instance, if he wishes to build himself a house, by the existing division of labour, a great variety of workmen will be required to carry out his idea; architects will furnish him with the design, and make all the mental calculations necessary to determine the quantity of materials required, and various other needful preliminaries. Then come the builders, then the skilled mechanics, then the labourers. Every man has a distinct department allotted to him. Each knows his work, and keeps his place. The foundations are measured out, the bricks and mortar are piled up, the wood is framed, the slates are laid, and the house is built. The swarms of busy men depart; the owner is furnished with what he desired; the idea is realised, and is represented by a solid material structure.

Now we may take this as a type of all the labour that is carried on in a civilized country. If we analyse it, we come to this result, that all labour is the carrying out of an idea, and every labourer is executing his own part of the idea. Each subordinate and constituent part of the one great idea, is carried out by the workman to whom it is assigned. The whole body of them are engaged in the material realization of an intellectual exercise or conception. The intellectual, generative idea is embodied, through the instrumentality of labour, in a material representative. The whole operation is a combination of intellectual and physical power exerted to a definite, pre-conceived result. The mind works out an abstract conception, labour endows it with a material and visible form. The abstract idea may be conceived in a single mind, but it must be communicated in separate parts to the several workmen by whom it is to be respectively executed. This is the origin of labour, and when viewed in this light, every kind of work assumes an intellectual character, because every workman represents a productive idea, and his work, though manual, has an intellectual origin. It has, therefore, an intel-

lectual character, and it might have an intellectual influence. If it have not this influence, it is because the workman does not consider what he is doing, and does not trace and keep up that chain by which the humblest office he performs, connects itself, by a succession of links, with the highest speculations of the philosopher, and the brightest efforts of creative genius. If he does consider and keep in mind the bearing of what he is doing, he will feel that his labour has a dignity of which he would not otherwise suspect it, and that he himself has a character and an importance in a sphere from which he might otherwise think himself shut out.

So long as the workman is oblivious of his true relation to the other parts of the grand combination concerned in every exertion of productive labour, he is apt to consider himself as a mere physical machine, having no other connexion with the pervading mind which originates, and presides over all labour, than that of giving so much mechanical skill in exchange for so much money. He supposes himself placed at too great a distance from the moving springs and higher departments of the undertaking, to have any direct connection with them. The sub-division of labour has banished him to so great a distance from these evidently intellectual and more important relations, that he comes at last to disregard them altogether. But if we view the position of the working man in its true light, it will be evident that no idea or intellectual conception can be fully carried out, unless every part of it is executed "according to the pattern." When the Divine Architect planned the Tabernacle, which was to be the place of His Presence in the Wilderness, and enjoined upon Moses, the Builder, "See thou make it according to the pattern shewed to thee in the Mount," he did not overlook the smallest details; and do you suppose that the Divine idea was not to be equally regarded in the minutest and farthest particulars, as well as in those which, to our imperfect sight, seem the most important? Just so in labour having a human origin,

every part, however insignificant and remote from the creative source it may seem, is yet essential to the completion of the work, and equally a part of the comprehensive idea. Nothing helps a man so much to maintain his consistency through the manifold and distracting influences of the world, as a frequent recurrence in his mind to first principles. It is often necessary to break through the clouds which prejudice and routine collect around us, and look steadily through to the first principles by which we profess to be guided. If the workman break away from before him the obstructions which habit and the somnolent influence of routine have engendered, he will see in the distance, as the guiding star of what he is doing, that first creative intellectual conception, to the realization of which he is as essential as the one who seems placed the nearest to it. He will thus feel himself indissolubly allied to that conception, and as much entitled to a participation in its intellectual character, whilst assisting to give it a material form, as those in the more immediate vicinity of its origin. It follows that if he feel himself so allied, he will also recognise the obligation under which he lies to sustain his position by manifesting a character in accordance with his claim. This, then, is the true spirit in which labour should be conducted. Labour performed without this spirit is dead. If a constant regard be not maintained to this vivifying and elevating influence, labour degenerates into a lifeless routine of mechanical exertion; it becomes like an automaton set in motion by clockwork, and then relapsing into a dull, dead mass of wood and metal.

If we represent the intellectual conception, the formative, or creative idea presiding over every undertaking which labour carries out, as occupying a definite place or position, it will then assume the nature of a centre, and the physical workers by whom the idea is invested with a material shape or representative, will occupy the points of the circumference, according to the many divisions into which labour separates itself. This is rather an

old-fashioned way of talking, but I must confess I like this way of illustrating ideas by outward representatives; and if the diagrams are not too fanciful, or far-fetched, I think they bring clearness and precision to our minds.

With this feeling, I submit the diagram at the commencement to your notice. Here, in the centre of the circle is the idea—the originating intellect—the creative mind, which calls into action the various classes of workmen ranged around it; which clothes itself with this circumference of busy and industrious artizans. The centre is the generative power; the circumference is the executive power, and the radii are the bonds of connexion between them. This, then, being the present relation between the employer and the employed, as the respective parties are often called, it is the interest of the latter to contract the circle to its smallest limits. If he hold true to the spirit of his labour, and keep in view the intellectual, generative idea which sets him to work, the connecting radii are shortened. If he lose sight of these attracting principles, he then lengthens them. The circle is enlarged, the separation between the different classes of society is widened; their mutual sympathy is weakened, the workman becomes more exclusively a hand, and in becoming so, renounces the highest privilege of his position.

Seeing that labour of some sort is the essential condition of existence in this world, it is evident there must be many gradations in the intellectual constituent of it, and that a large proportion of the working class must occupy themselves mainly with its physical element. Some must inevitably toil around the circumference of the industrial circle. In actual life we find a frequent interchange going on between the occupiers of the different stations here assigned to the workers. We see those who have once been conspicuous as the motive springs of all these outside activities, going away down one or other of these rails, till they occupy the verge of that circle which once surrounded them. On the other hand, we much more frequently find those whom

the first events of life have placed at one or other of these outposts, creeping up these centripetal rays till they gain the central throne towards which they all converge. "How many workmen do we not see," says a writer to whom I have previously referred, "become masters, directors of manufactories, without any original capital but their activity and their good conduct. Do you wish to know what some of the richest capitalists of the present century were when they began life? They were workmen, to be sure."

It would be very interesting to trace the causes which lead to the changes thus frequently presented to our observation. We are much more concerned with those who leave the circumference than with those who begin at the centre, and end at the circumference; but still our limits do not permit us to enter into such details. Many causes may concur to favour this transposition; but whatever these may be, we may lay it down as a certain axiom, that the first and chief cause lies in the prosecution of some species of self-culture, in the way which it is the object of the present address to recommend. I might, if time permitted, illustrate this assertion by the production of many bright and glorious names—the names of those who were enrolled, at the outset of their career, among the ranks of working men—who, by a steady appropriation of the opportunities and means within their grasp, have emerged from the working classes, and won a position, in some instances, among the Merchant Princes of their country; in others, among the mechanical and engineering luminaries of their age, or amongst artists, manufacturers, discoverers, or inventors. Many more, whose names have never ornamented the roll of Fame, have pursued a steady, bright and consistent path, adorned with the light of intellect, and sanctified with the beauty of piety; making their homes the abode of happiness and refinement, diffusing a kindly and benignant influence throughout their limited and humble sphere, and giving evidence of that unpatented nobility of which Paxton Hood so

feelingly and poetically descants in his discourse on the "Peerage of Poverty." For some instances of these high attainments amongst working men, it may be sufficient to refer to a class of books, which seem peculiarly abundant just now, and which afford admirable proof of mental culture and social advancement attained by working men, under the titles of "The Heroes of the Workshop," "The Peerage of Poverty," "Self Help," "Men who have Risen," &c.; also that delightful little book called "The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties."

I will only stop to make one more remark on this branch of my subject. It is by no means to be considered that the only evidence of a working man's success in the cultivation of his mind, consists in the elevation of his social position, or the increase of his emoluments. I do not wish to be understood as implying that a workman should look for his advancement from the circumference to the centre of the circle, as the ultimate object, or necessary result of his mental cultivation. Nor should he himself propose this change of position as the only incentive to his mental improvement. This object is very rarely gained without assiduous mental culture, and it is one of the rewards which often follows that culture, but it is neither the principal object to be held in view, nor does it by any means come as an ordinary consequence. From the nature of the case there must be a preponderating number of workers over that of directors. The circumference of the circle is much more extensive than the centre. It is a happy circumstance under this inevitable condition of things, that there are much higher rewards and enjoyments to be obtained by mental cultivation than any addition to our wealth, or any mere change of social position. As it is true that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," so it is equally true that as much happiness may be found in a cottage as in a mansion. In what degree soever of life a man may be, if he has acquired a taste for intellectual pursuits; if he is striving to obtain for himself the treasures

of wisdom and knowledge, he has laid a firmer foundation of happiness, even in the narrow bounds of a little cottage, than any that would arise from mere increase of wealth, or a somewhat enlarged scale of domestic economy. A large portion of the working men of this country have still to learn the extent to which their present circumstances are compatible with the highest pleasures that any class of men can enjoy.

It is now time for us to proceed to the consideration of those means which the working man is to adopt, in order to maintain his proper place in the intellectual scale, or to improve his social position, and thus to emancipate himself from that mental serfdom so long as he remains under which, he is only useful to the rest of the community, as he is the possessor of muscular strength, and is thus comparable to a living machine adapted to carrying out the ideas of others, but unable to plan, contrive, or originate anything himself.

If a working man were to ask me why this description is applicable to him, I should reply, because he does not cultivate his intellectual powers as he ought to do, and according to the opportunities he possesses. It is very likely that some may rather doubt whether they may have mental abilities sufficient to raise them above what they are. They are conscious of no longings after knowledge; they feel no intellectual aspirations, from the satisfying of which, poverty and hard work are the two iron hands that hold them back. They have never sipped at any fountain whose waters were so sweet and elevating, that they long to return thither, and luxuriate in the inspiring draught. Their spirit has never soared into those intellectual realms where science and philosophy seemed within their grasp, if stern necessity for labour, and earning their bread by the sweat of their brow, had not withheld them from revelling in their delights. They look upon science and philosophy, as luxuries for men who are above them in wealth and station, in education and ability. If these are the thoughts of any, that man requires to be reminded that all

knowledge is science—all principle is philosophy—and I tell the working man, that both science and philosophy are made for him, and are, in a large measure, within his reach; and besides, that he has the capacities by which he may acquire them; and that he ought to acquire them.

As a preliminary step to the elucidation of these remarks, let me try to dispel the discouragement which often arises from the want of a better early education. It is quite a mistake to suppose that because you have not been to boarding schools or colleges you cannot become educated. Boarding schools and colleges are most valuable assistants and promoters of education, but they are neither essential to it, nor do they always accomplish the end they have in view. They can do little or nothing for a person who will not work for himself—education is a process which can be forced upon no one. It is a process which every person must carry on for himself; no one else can do it for him. It is by his own application, that a man must learn; by his own comprehension, he must understand; by his own thought and reflection, he must arrange, digest and utilize what he acquires; and all this he may do without schools and colleges, by summoning up his own energies, and giving of his own resolution, that attention to his studies, which is extracted at schools by the fear of impending punishment or by the hope of rewards. Talk of being educated by others—who educated Erasmus, when he was resorting nightly to the street lamps of Paris, too poor to buy a candle, for the purpose of studying his Latin grammar? Who educated the celebrated Hebrew scholar, Dr. Lee, when he was shaving away at the carpenter's bench, and storing his mind with the riches of Oriental literature? Who, again, educated the missionary, Carey, when he was vending his hob-nailed shoes in Northamptonshire, and spending the hours, after his labours were done, in studies which fitted him for his wide sphere of subsequent usefulness in the East? These men did not sit down all their lives in intellectual darkness, whining their regrets that they had not received a

better education. No! they rose up in that self-reliant determination which every man may feel, and set to work to educate themselves. They sought light and found it; and every man may find it; and most of those who do find it love it, and covet more of it.

Let no man, then, consider himself excused from exercising and improving his intellectual powers, because he has not received a school education. What others have not tried to do for him, let him determine to do for himself. He will find the self-respect which the determination to do so brings him, an abundant reward for many little trials and perplexities which may attend his self-guided path; and let him be assured that every step he gains will render the succeeding one easier.

There are few men above the grade of idiots, who do not know that they are made up of two distinct parts, one outward, material and visible, the body; and the other, inward, immaterial and invisible, the mind. This everybody knows. The nature and capacities of the body are made familiar to us by the daily experience of what we can do, and cannot do. Every man knows how tall and stout he is, how much he can carry, how much food and drink will satisfy his appetite. These are facts acquired by the exercise of our bodily powers, in the ordinary duties of life; they are forced upon us by the very conditions under which human beings live:—but it is not so with the mind. A person may grow up, discharge all the duties of some humble calling, and sink into an aged grave, without having learned that he had intelligent faculties beyond what were essential to the daily exercise of his almost automatic avocations. He may have little suspected that he has carried through life, locked up in a casket, the key to which was in his own possession, powers of mind which would have enabled him to understand the courses of the planets as they roll in their heavenly path; to comprehend the wonders of Geology, to master many of the details of Natural History, or to experience the refining influences of literature

and art. To how many such persons who go through life in this unawakened state, are the lines of Gray applicable :

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;
Hands that the rod of Empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll ;
Chill poverty repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

"But knowledge to their eyes her ample page rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll." Why did not knowledge unroll to them her ample page, rich with the spoils of time? Just for this reason—that they did not unroll it for themselves. To whom does knowledge unroll her ample page—to none but those who take the book and turn over its pages for themselves.

Now if the old man to whom I have alluded, had looked into the world of his own constitution, he would have discovered these faculties for himself; and having discovered them, he would scarcely have been willing to leave them, like a beautiful, unexplored region, that was all his own, uninvestigated and unimproved.

This looking inward is the very first step necessary to all self-improvement, to discover what we are, and what is the nature of that latent mind, with which a very little self-examination shews us that we are endowed. Here I would just observe, that I do not imply that all men have an equal amount of intellectual capacity; or that the whole difference between men is owing to the different degrees to which they have been cultivated, or have improved their minds. No one should run away with the idea, that he might have been a Newton, a Shakespere, a Milton or a Brougham, had he enjoyed their opportunities. This is as great

a fallacy as to suppose that some have no capacity for improvement. God has arranged that the minds and abilities of men shall vary through a very wide scale. He has endowed some with large and splendid abilities, and others with humble and weak capacities. It has not suited his Divine plans to intrust five talents to all his servants,—to some he has given two, to others only one,—but in no case does he exact from the humble, the same return that he expects from the more gifted. He does, however, exact from all that they turn to the best account the gifts he has bestowed upon them, and he looks for an account of the stewardship according to the measure confided to each. How shall we face that day, when in giving our final account, we shall simply dig up our talent from the ground and say, “Lord, there thou hast that is thine.” Now the mind is that talent, and if we restore it after a life abounding in opportunities for its useful occupation and improvement, unemployed and unimproved, how shall we escape that awful answer, “Thou wicked and slothful servant.”

Let us, then, examine briefly, what are those capacities and powers with which every sound-minded man is endowed. We shall then be led to the means and opportunities which every man has for the cultivation of his faculties, no matter what his previous education may have been, no matter how ignorant he may yet be ; no matter how closely he may be engaged ; how little time he may have to call his own, or what kind of occupation he may follow. In the examination of these powers, I am not going to indulge in any abstruse inquiries, to dwell upon metaphysical subtleties, or enter into refined niceties ; but simply to address the consciousness and ordinary common sense of each individual. By this means I expect best to secure your assent, and conciliate your interest in what I advance.

That which distinguishes man from the brutes is the possession of an intelligent mind, or reason. Without reason, man is an idiot, not a brute, because a brute is perfect in itself—an idiot is an

imperfect man. The brutes are guided through life by an instinct which forms part of their natural constitution, and is incapable of being developed into a rational mind. Man also has his instincts, which lead him to perform many actions necessary to his preservation and perpetuation; but he has something more than instinct—he has reasoning powers. The development of these reasoning powers depends very much upon the cultivation which he bestows upon them. In civilized society it is hardly possible for a man to live without having his reasoning faculties elicited to a certain extent. Nearly every occupation in civilized life by which a man can earn his bread, requires the exercise of some degree of reason. The half demented old pauper that sits breaking stones for the road, exercises a degree of reason in the care which he exerts to place the stone he is about to strike with his hammer securely in its bed before he brings down the blow upon it. Thus, nearly all useful employments call for the exercise of a certain rude reason, and it well merits the attention of the working classes, that as civilization advances, and makes new conquests over nature, science, manufactures, and the arts, the remunerative occupations of life will, in all probability, make increased demands upon the rational faculties of the operative.

The progress of society already has a tendency to diminish the amount of unthinking manual labour, and to perform by machinery that which, in a prior stage, was done by the mechanical skill and bodily strength of the labourer. The labourer becomes less and less employed as a machine, and more and more elevated to the dignity of a superintending mind. In the process of this change, the radii of the circle have a corresponding tendency to contraction; and hence a closer and ever approximating movement of the widely separated, formative idea to the practical executioner of it. Let no working man, therefore, raise a voice, or lift a finger against the progress of civilization, as evinced in the invention of machinery, or any

other of the manifold means by which labour is lightened, or its efficiency increased. Let him be assured that every fresh conquest gained in this direction, lifts him a step higher in the scale of social importance and manly dignity.

Although it may be true, therefore, in politics, that the government ought to wait, before each reform, for the preparation of the people at large, and rather be urged from below, than attempt to drag the people into measures for which they are not adequately ripe, in the sphere of intellectual progress, it is the more advanced classes that must elevate those beneath them. In the early stages of society the labours performed by the humbler classes are such as scarcely require the exercise of any faculties beyond that of muscular power. This condition of the labouring classes is dependent upon a low intellectual development of all the elements of the society which it attends. But even the more advanced communities have not yet done away with the necessity of much human drudgery, which calls for but little more intellectual development than that just described. Persons so employed fall into a kind of mechanical routine. They perform their appointed tasks without having their mental faculties awakened beyond the feeble measure required by their drowsy trade. Having nothing to interest the reason or the thought, except their labour, their intellectual powers remain dormant, and waste, and rust, no external or internal stimulus being applied to them. Now it is just because no outward excitant is applied, that the internal stimulus is the more imperatively needed. By external stimulus I mean that which arises from outward circumstances and avocations; and by internal stimulus, that lively consciousness of the nature and capacity of his intellectual powers, and that determination to develope and improve them, which urge the man to a progressive self-cultivation; giving him a glimpse of the glorious achievements and pleasures, which lie in the regions of mental culture, and impelling him to strive for their attainment.

The difference between these two influences may be illustrated by the position of two schoolmasters. Let one of them undertake the instruction of young men who are mastering successively the highest lessons he can administer to them, and ever looking up to him for still higher instruction; and let the other be confined to the unvaried task of teaching children their letters. What a wide chasm separates the two degrees of intellectual stimulus under which they respectively subsist. In the former case, the mind is kept on the alert, spurred on to fresh advances, in order to keep ahead of his closely pursuing scholars, and urged by every motive that can actuate him, to extend his mental powers. In the other, there being no call on the following day for anything beyond the instruction bestowed on the preceding, and the intellectual art required losing its interest and excitement with each repetition of its exercise, the result is stagnation and inertness of mind; and unless the incentive be supplied from within, the mind becomes barren and stolid. Either the intellectual vigour is not increased, or the mental powers dwindle.

Now let any man turn inward, and endeavour to analyse the means by which he has attained to his present degree of intellectual development; a development which, however limited and short of what it might have been, is still sufficiently beyond that of a mere instinct to prove to him, on the slightest reflection, that he has faculties beyond those of any other kind of animal with which he can become acquainted.

In common with the brutes, we receive impressions of external things through the senses, but our powers of observation are much more discriminating than those of animals; and our powers of remembering our impressions far exceed theirs. These two faculties, viz: observation and memory, are the first and most essential powers in the attainment of any intellectual progress. They are bestowed upon every man in large measure, and they are easily cultivated and improved. And yet strange to say, this universal heritage of rational man is neglected to a degree

which, perhaps, few suspect. The reason of this neglect probably lies in the effort necessary for their improvement; for it must be borne in mind that the mental faculties, from the simplest to the highest, require exercise and voluntary effort in order to strengthen them. Mental improvement does not come unsolicited—mental culture of every kind requires labour, and wherever evidence is afforded of mental culture, there is also proof of labour performed, and work done. The old adage, "Nothing without labour," stands as good in regard to mental cultivation as it does in the world of physics.

Observation and memory serve to furnish the mind with a store of facts, and thus procure, as it were, the capital or material with which the other powers have to deal. Invaluable as collectors and retainers of these materials, their functions end here, and the material thus collected would soon exhaust its interest, and occupy simply the position of a dead weight, if not operated upon by other faculties, which like those concerned in the acquisition of the material, are also greatly amenable to cultivation. These are the powers of comprehension and of reflection.

If I may use so common-place a simile, these powers carry on the process of digesting and assimilating the mental food which the former faculties have collected. Comprehension enables us to understand the nature of that which we have observed, and to interpret its meaning; to analyse its constituent parts, and determine the relation of its parts to each other. It translates to the mind the impressions made upon the senses, just in the same way that the knowledge of a language enables us to comprehend the meaning of that which is spoken or read.

Reflection is that faculty by which the mind retraces the steps which it has previously gone over, and examines the correctness of the conclusions to which it may be led. It is especially concerned in the consideration of the relations which the facts and their interpretation bear to ourselves, and the duties which

arise out of them. It has a very close connexion with the power which I am going to introduce in the next place; but it is not identical with it, inasmuch as it exercises over the reason also much the same oversight and control, that it does over the observing and comprehending faculties; the power I now allude to is that of REASONING, with which may be joined the comparing faculty. These two are not the same, but they are so far allied, that they can scarcely be exercised independently of each other; because whenever we reason, we also compare; so that although reason may go further than comparison, it is always accompanied by the latter for a certain part of its course.

Reason and comparison are the faculties by which the ideas acquired, are placed, as it were, side by side, and the points of resemblance and difference ascertained, with a view to arriving at an inference or conclusion, which cannot be safely embraced till this mental process has been gone through. The successive steps by which a conclusion is arrived at, are said to form the reasons for it. Now from this definition it will be evident, that in order to reason, or in other words to arrive at a sound conclusion on any subject, simple or complex, it is necessary that the mind should have collected its facts, should have exercised its powers of observation and comparison, and it is most probable that he who has made the greatest use of his observing faculty, will also give the best reasons for his conclusions. A man may, however, observe, and store his mind with facts, and never put himself to the trouble of reasoning upon them. It seems indeed probable, that many men scarcely reason at all. It is very certain that more men reason badly. This, I believe, does not arise so much from deficient power, as from the limited sphere over which their observations have extended, or in other words, from the limited number of facts they have acquired; so that their conclusions rest upon a narrow and unsafe basis. If I might use a material simile, I would say that drawing a conclusion is like building a pyramid. You first bring together a large number of facts; that

is your first course of foundation stones; you then go on successively rejecting those that have no relation to each other, building in those that have, till you are brought finally to the summit, which is the point or conclusion of your argument. For every process of reasoning is an argumentation carried on silently in a man's mind. Now it is evident that the more facts a man can bring to his arguments, the more likely he is to be correct in his conclusions. If we suppose two men whose powers are equal, but one of them has acquired twice as much knowledge as the other, it is probable that the more ignorant of the two will be in the wrong, whenever they differ in opinion. Thus it is that the man who stores his mind with knowledge, gains an ascendancy over his more ignorant fellow; and the latter feels this inferiority and weakness, and inwardly subscribes to the maxim that "Knowledge is power." The art of correct reasoning is one of the highest attainments of the human mind. The working classes of this country have not attained much proficiency in it, because they have not vigorously undertaken the cultivation of those other faculties whose aid is essential to enable them to attain it. So long as this remains to be the case, their conclusions will be based on insufficient grounds; and however correct the conclusions may be, according to the limited data from which they are drawn, they will not be accepted by the more educated classes till a larger basis is formed in a more extended general knowledge. It does not belong to the scope of this lecture to give a metaphysical analysis of the mental powers; and I shall, therefore, pass over those other faculties of imagination, fancy, abstraction, and some others which belong more to the higher regions of mental exercise, and are not essential to a good practical amount of intellectual culture. There is one other, however, to which I must not omit to direct your notice. It is that power which enables the mind to concentrate itself upon a particular subject; to exclude foreign or irrelevant thoughts and feelings, and fix itself upon what it is doing. This is the power of

attention, that faculty which the phrenologists call concentrativeness. Some men suffer greatly in their intellectual progress from an imperfect power of attending to the subject they are engaged upon. It is the fault generally of neglect; for like the other powers of the mind, this is capable of great improvement by practice. The cultivation of this faculty is almost inevitably attended with the improvement of the rest. It presides over them, and regulates them; and it is one of the chief constituents of a good memory. The retentive and attentive powers are not identical, but the former cannot exist without the latter, and the improvement of the one is generally coincident with that of the other. To so remarkable a degree has the power of attention in some instances been developed, that it has rendered persons insensible to the strongest impressions made upon the senses, even to the infliction of severe pain. The old story of Archimedes at the capture of Syracuse, is but a type of many other striking instances of the intensity of this power.

These are all the faculties to which it seems necessary for me to claim your especial attention. They form the common, broad foundation upon which all the ordinary, as well as all the most rare and exalted attainments of mind, are based. They are possessed by every man to whom the Creator has assigned a responsible position in the world, and by them every man can raise himself to that station which the Creator intends he should occupy—to the dignity of an intellectual being; to a capacity to enjoy richly the beauties of the outward creation, and to enjoy, in a much higher measure, the beauties of the intellectual and spiritual world. Such are the blessings which these faculties enable us to attain in our present state of existence; but these blessings are to be unfolded in a far more abundant degree, in that future state which is promised to those who use their faculties in this life worthily of the high destinies assigned to the human race.

Seeing, then, that every man is endowed with capacities to fit him for such a position in this world, and for such an inheritance

in the next, how shall we explain the fact that so little use is made of these admirable powers? How is it that so few, comparatively, of those who are engaged in manual labour, rise above the degree of intelligence necessary to the performance of their daily tasks, without a thought beyond the satisfying of their temporal and physical wants, or an aspiration beyond the gratification of their sensual desires? It is not that any outward necessity compels them to renounce the nobler life of the mind—that they are under any iron tyranny which lays its cold, hard hand upon their mental powers, and forbids them to expand and luxuriate in the rich enjoyment of the intellectual world. The reason lies, according to my belief, exclusively in the men themselves. They do not rouse themselves up to be anything but what they are. They submit willingly to an intellectual lethargy, they vegetate in a self-inflicted palsy of the noblest and grandest parts of their nature. They fail to recognise their own greatness. They will not acknowledge the divinity that stirs within them. You may talk about social inequality and political privation—you may aspire after the franchise, and rail against the partiality of aristocratic governments—you may form trade-societies, and plot strikes—but my conviction is, that the working classes will never be materially benefited by political enfranchisement, or the realization of any of their socio-political schemes, or by any arrangements whatever that others may make for them, unless it be such as may render it easier for them to acquire a better education. They will never be better off than they are—they will never have more influence in society—they will never be treated with more consideration than they are now, till they have done for themselves what no one can do for them, till they become more rational and intellectual; till they possess more general knowledge, and acquire more refined tastes than prevail amongst them at present. The instruments with which this elevation is to be accomplished, are abundantly in their possession, and the opportunity within their grasp.

Let us proceed to the application of the views I have just put forth, and see how it is practically in the power of a working man to carry them out. Let it be shown, if it can, how a man who is engaged for ten hours a day in manual labour, can give so much attention to his mental improvement as to maintain his faculties in a lively and vigorous condition, and to acquire intellectual tastes.

I must again draw your attention for a moment to the great principle which pervades all labour, from the most menial to that which seems the least so, that it is all engaged in carrying out an idea, in giving substantial reality to an intellectual conception. It seems almost idle to bring forward an illustration of so trite a position; but let us take an instance which it is most pleasant to think upon. Let us dwell for a moment upon the mighty enterprise of building the Great Eastern steam-ship, or the Crystal Palace of 1851. I have always thought the origin of the Crystal Palace one of the most exquisite events of our day; and many a time in my mind's eye have I seen Sir Joseph Paxton, then unknown to fame, except as the skilful gardener to the Duke of Devonshire, seated at that table with a piece of blotting-paper before him, on which he was tracing the outlines embodying one of the grandest conceptions that ever occurred to a practical man. "Why not make it," said he, "of glass and iron?" and when the majestic idea had taken a definite shape, how many hundred men started up, and put their strong hands to the work, and the structure rose, and all the world came to see it, and what they most admired was the idea of which the splendid building was the representation. Or look at Brunel, whose brain had teemed with so many magnificent conceptions, gradually working out in his mind all the constituents of the mighty steam-ship! How he must have exulted as these constituents grew into harmonious unison, until they compacted themselves into a grand unit of size and power, unequalled since the inspired ship-builder before the Flood carried out the idea by which a destroyed, primæval race was connected with a regenerated world.

Must we not think that each workman, as he wrought at the Great Eastern, felt a portion of that enthusiasm which the grand idea was so calculated to inspire? We cannot imagine that the exalted fervour with which Noah joined his timbers together, was felt by every ship-wright who drove the rivets into the Great Eastern, but we may well suppose each man to have felt that he was in some degree contributing to the embodiment of an intellectual triumph. I can hardly imagine that any man who was engaged, however subordinately, in the great enterprise, did not catch some fragment of the intellectual greatness he was aiding to realise—and that he did not date from that undertaking an impulse in his intellectual career. He must have felt himself more in the world of mind than of matter, and intimately connected with the genius that originated his work.

These illustrations are introduced simply to show how manual labour may, in every case, be connected with the formative idea of which it is the physical expression—and how a connection may be kept up by the workman with the intellectual processes which devise and originate his work. It is necessary to bear this in mind, in order to see the connexion between the great circumference of labour and the centre which creates and sets it in action.

Now it is precisely the maintenance of this connexion between the centre and the circumference, which is the great desideratum in the mind of the working man—it is the one thing required for his intellectual elevation. If he could thoroughly take home to himself this consciousness, and keep it close to him in all his labours—if he would identify himself with the mind of his employers, and the principles of his labour, he would do himself a far greater service than he suspects. He would be advancing with certain steps towards the coveted centre. He would be a mind as well as a hand.

There are, therefore, two great principles or rules which seem to lie at the root of all self-improvement by working men, and form the foundation both of the cultivation of their minds and of their

advancement in life. I believe few, if any, have ever made any considerable progress in either the one or the other of these great objects without having diligently observed both the following rules :

1. The first is, that every man should strive to acquire a thorough knowledge of his own business ; to master all the details of his occupation, and to acquire a knowledge of the principles or science on which his operations are based.

2. The second, which is necessary to the carrying out of the first, is to make an intellectual use of his leisure time.

A little reflection on these two plain directions will show the extensive nature of their application. There are few occupations carried on, either in the open air or indoors, which are not concerned with materials, or conducted on principles, the investigation and study of which afford ample scope for the employment of all the intellectual faculties. In most cases they have engaged the highest powers and research of deep-thinking men.

A large proportion of workmen are concerned with the care, regulation or action of machinery, or mechanical engines, most of which are the results of close and persevering study ; and many of them involving and illustrating abstruse principles.

What a field for study is a Steam Engine—a Railway Locomotive ! what a wonderful assemblage of details ! What a marvellous combination of particulars, arranged with mathematical precision, and all subordinated to the production of a single grand and effective result—that of rapid progression against violent resistance ! No man who thoroughly understands a steam engine, is a totally uneducated man ; but if a man who thoroughly understands a steam engine, would follow the suggestions which that knowledge cannot fail to make, he would be a philosopher.

Then, if we take any of the numerous out-of-door occupations that employ so many of the labouring people, what a multitude of interesting and instructive objects crowd around daily and hourly upon their view, exciting their curiosity, if they have any

curiosity in their nature ; and inviting them to leave the pursuit of low and sordid pleasures, and yield to the higher and purer pursuits of knowledge and truth.

We might follow almost every occupation with which human ingenuity has provided human industry, and discover the same intellectual resources underlying every one of them. Every article on which the hand can be placed, is suggestive to the awakened and thoughtful mind, of a vast field of investigation and information, which it would require the devotion of a life to pursue. The great defect in us is, that our minds are so slow to be awakened !

Looking now at the scope which surrounds a working man for the exercise and cultivation of his mental faculties, according to the arrangement of them with which I have just presented you, let us advert for a moment to his power of storing the mind with facts by careful observation, first of the materials upon which he works, and of the means by which he operates upon them, and secondly, by observing what passes around him.

The position of a working man seems eminently favourable for the development of his powers of observation. Many working men do make good use of them to a certain extent. Their observations are valuable and correct as far as they go. But they generally stop short of the extent they might be carried to.

Supposing every man were determined to become thoroughly acquainted with the trade or business which he carries on, in the manner above recommended, what a wide field it would open out for the exercise of his mental powers ! No one need feel in the least at a loss where to find scope for their exercise. The means lie around him in profuse abundance, almost distracting by their multiplicity and variety, and inviting him in every direction. The difficulty lies rather in the selection, than in the poverty of the attractions.

I may illustrate my meaning by the instance of a joiner and

carpenter, one who works in wood, and saws, and planes, and shapes it. A man who should be well versed in all the materials and principles involved in the daily operations of a carpenter would be a highly educated man. He has large scope for close and lively observation in the various kinds of wood which he uses in his trade, in the curious forms, and ingenious adaptations of the numerous tools he employs; in the mechanical contrivances by which the heavier parts of his work are facilitated; in the variety of the buildings he assists in constructing, each arranged to meet some requirement of social, industrial, or intellectual life, and suggesting in a thousand ways to a thoughtful mind, facts and principles which he has never examined. A carpenter will tell by the graining and marks of a piece of wood to what species of timber it belongs, with a precision at which I have often been surprised. But if surprise is felt at his proficiency in one talent, a corresponding surprise is excited at his deficiency in another. The observation remains barren; it leads to nothing—it brings forth nothing. Observation is the collecting of material for the other faculties of the mind to work upon, but it does not compel the action of the other faculties—though upon it depends, to a great extent, the profitable activity of the rest.

Now if the joiner I have referred to be a man of lively mind, and if he be desirous of extending his knowledge, he will reflect upon the observations he has been making. The marks in the wood he has been tooling, have attracted his notice. These differ in different kinds of wood. They differ also according to the direction in which the wood is cut, and yet there is a kind of general resemblance or agreement amongst all kinds of wood, which seems to point to a common principle or design. What is that principle or design? has his curiosity ever been excited sufficiently to induce him to inquire into it? Has he reflected upon the subject? Now if he reflects upon what he has seen, he will be led to the conclusion, that these structural marks

have some reference to the functions, and some connexion with the form and quality, of the tree which they characterise; and if he reason on the subject, he will probably feel an assurance that these differences in the internal structure of the tree, must be accompanied by some corresponding differences in the soil, climate, and outward condition of the tree. He will aspire to some knowledge of these manifold significances. He will be led to desire some acquaintance with the natural history of trees. If he give way to this desire, and follow it up, he has opened to himself a track of intellectual research and improvement, in the pursuit of which he will find perpetual sources of interest. But this is only one of the directions in which he may be led by the suggestive observation of his business. The dressing and fitting of wood, as practiced by the carpenter, is intimately connected with most important physical and mechanical principles, some knowledge of which is essential to him, and an increase of familiarity with which would greatly raise his value as a workman, and promote his advancement in life. If the observations I have made on the condition of workmen be correct, I find that those men who rise to be foremen, and get promoted from one rank to another, till they leave the class of operatives altogether, becoming, as the case may be, superintendents or overlookers, or clerks of works, and so on, do not rise mainly by their superior strength, or their mechanical quickness, but by the use they make of their observing and reflective faculties, that is, by following the path I have just indicated. They have acquired some knowledge of the principles on which their work is conducted, and hence they become judges of it, and directors of other workmen. Every thing that passes around us bears testimony to the fact, that it is by the use of the mind we advance, more than by the skill of the hand.

The remarks just made with regard to him who works in wood, apply with equal force to those who work in iron, or any other substance. Every craft carried on in civilized life, is connected,

by intimate association, with vast intellectual regions, extending farther than any one man has length of life, and capacity sufficient fully to explore.

Since I wrote the greater part of this address, a little book on Self Education, by Thomas Robinson, has fallen into my hands for the first time, and I was greatly interested to find that in one part of it he falls into a train of thought precisely corresponding with my own. Very appropriately to the subject I am now dealing with, he says: "The Operatives in every manufactory have an opportunity of witnessing those great physical agents which generally elude vulgar observation, and the knowledge of which is accounted true philosophy; and of seeing the wonderful application of that scientific genius, which has brought these agents under human control, made them obedient to most intricate laws, and subservient to practical purposes, delicate, complex, and important in the highest degree. Even the tiller of the soil occupies a position from which he commands an extensive view of the physical world; he has opportunities of acquiring a personal acquaintance with various species of plants and animals, and with numberless facts illustrative of chemical science. The foreign merchant, the sailor and the traveller are situated still more favourably for acquiring knowledge by observation; they see the world on a large scale, are perpetually encountering new objects and appearances, and may therefore amass a large store of curious and useful information. And even the humble craftsman, who rarely travels beyond the precincts of his native village, and not often out of his workshop, may, by inspecting his own heart and character, and that sample of his fellow-creatures which he finds in his own neighbourhood, obtain a pretty extensive knowledge of human nature."

These observations are, I think, sound and valuable. They accord so much with my views, that I need say very little more on this branch of my subject. I will merely add one more remark in reference to the exercise of the observing faculties

by working men ; and that is in reference to the Astronomical phenomena which are presented to our view, and claim our attention by a voice though silent, yet energetic and solemn beyond all others, except the still small voice of God, which speaks in the secret of every man's conscience. All men have the opportunity, to some extent, of witnessing these phenomena, for they cannot entirely escape the observation of any, however secluded their daily work may be. Although shut up from "morn to dewy eve" in the recesses of some dark warehouse or workshop, no person can fail to notice the regularity and periodicity of the relative duration of daylight and darkness ; and as he walks home through the streets of the gas-lit town, or through the country lane illuminated by the lamps of heaven, has the varying aspect and brilliancy of the moon as she rides in the vault above, "unveiling her peerless light," never raised his thoughts to the contemplation of that wondrous mechanism, and those celestial arrangements, by which these effects are produced. The sublime and majestic march of the Heavenly bodies, with the periodic changes in their positions, are, from their regularity, too apt to be overlooked, or but cursorily noticed ; and it may be only when some striking comet, with its streaming tail, bursts upon our sight, that our interest is awakened, for the first time, to the grandeur and magnificence of the universe we inhabit, and the laws by which the planets roll, and the sun and moon rule the day and night. Nothing in physical science more elevating can be presented to the contemplation of man, than the phenomena of the planetary and sidereal heavens. If he have once become interested in the details of astronomy, and bent upon studying them, he has entered the portals of philosophy, and begun the work of mental culture. Yet how few comparatively receive any impulse from this sublime appeal to their intellectual powers. To how few comparatively does the full moon, or the new moon, suggest any other idea or association than that of a light, or dark night. Here then is one

source of profitable observation, reflection and study, open alike to the poorest peasant, and the most opulent person. What hinders that both should derive the same benefit from it, the awakening of an intellectual taste, or the pursuit of an elevating enquiry. What was it that prompted David when he kept his father's sheep, but the sensitiveness of his own mind to the influence of those mighty manifestations, whose effect upon him he commemorated when he had become the "sweet singer of Israel," in the glowing words: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" and in allusion to the same phenomena he testified that "day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge."

There is another important consideration bearing, in the strongest manner, upon the intellectual improvement of the working man, on which I must say a few words. Most men, who reflect at all, will have discovered, that their minds have a tendency to incessant activity, and that if their attention be not wholly absorbed by what they are doing, it will be concerned with something else. The prevailing tendency of the mind of most men is to be concerned with its preceding ideas or occupations. The subjects on which the mind is the most prone to dwell, are those which are supplied to it by the memory. The fact is, that a large share of the manual labour which a man performs, is so familiar to him, that his mental faculties are so little absorbed by it as to leave them at liberty to engage in conversation with his fellow workman, or to carry on processes of thought unconnected with his handy work. Hence the factory resounds with the merry joke, the cheerful laugh, and the lively talk of the workmen. Far be it from me to desire that any of these should be banished from the workshop, if the subjects which call them forth are of a harmless character. But I would strongly impress upon the working man, if I could, the extreme importance to himself and those within his influence, of the kind of conversation in which he

permits himself to indulge. Conversation is one of the most powerful means we have, of either improving our minds, or degrading them, and it is a means possessed and used for good or ill by all. It is chiefly through the medium of conversation that we become acquainted with the diversities of human character, and the differences in the qualifications and tastes of each other. By conversation we may also become acquainted with the experience and acquirements of our companions, and gain information on a great variety of topics that we could not investigate for ourselves.

The practical knowledge, the results of each others readings, and the suggestions which a company of workmen might impart to each other by this means, if they were careful to direct their conversation aright, would be invaluable. Whatever tendency there may be either from idleness, or from proneness to indulge in vicious tastes, for conversation to assume an unprofitable character, my own experience of working men induces me to believe, that they generally appreciate, and feel an enjoyment in good conversation, in such conversation as might bear the test which an inspired writer imposes upon us: "Let your conversation" says he, "be such as becometh the gospel." And, again, we are told to avoid profane and vain babblings. These short and plain directions must, at least, be observed by every man who has any care for the improvement of his mind, or the safety of his soul. They will cause him to shun, as he would a plague, every species of talk that is either profane, obscene, or in any other way vicious. And, in proportion as a man is deprived of vicious resources, as he is restricted by principle from a wicked laxity of conversation, he will feel the necessity of supplying his mind with better materials for social intercourse. In this way the social feelings which urge a man to hold converse with his fellows become incentives to intellectual pursuits.

If a man reads an instructive book over night, he will have a stock of fresh knowledge, and new ideas, to converse about the

following day—and the interest he has felt and imparted, in his conversation, will be a strong inducement to that use of his leisure time, to which I am now going to call your attention. Before leaving the subject of conversation, however, there is one idea regarding it, which I have often thought might be of great use—if we always had it in our minds—and it is, that a man should always talk so that he would not object to his daughters, or his children, hearing all that he says. Another very valuable precept which a friend of mine used to lay down for our guidance in conversation is, “that our talk should be of things, and not of persons.” Very much more might be said on this subject; I have only time to throw out a few hints—I would however, most earnestly commend the subject to the serious attention of every working man. It is out of the abundance of the heart that a man speaketh; and we have it on the authority of our Lord Himself, “by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

It is a serious disadvantage to the working classes, that respectable persons in many instances, are afraid to put their children apprentices to mechanical trades, for fear of the moral contamination communicated by the conversation and conduct of those amongst whom they would have to work. The operatives are thus deprived of the benefit they might derive from the society of well educated youths, and of the remoter advantage of more fellow-feeling and union with a class above them in wealth and station. In turning to the second rule which I have quoted, that relating to the intellectual employment of leisure time, I am entering upon a very wide field; but it must be dealt with briefly, in accordance with the limits of time. A working man may think that his leisure hours are too few to be turned to much account. This, in my judgment, is a great mistake. The leisure of a working man has one quality which that of most other people has not, and it is a quality very helpful to the successful pursuit of any object, whether

it be of a studious or a practical nature to which the attention may be devoted. The quality I mean is its regularity. A portion of time, however small, which is regular and periodical, may be turned to great advantage. It is much more valuable than longer periods coming on at uncertain intervals. Regularly recurring leisure enables a man to enter upon an engagement or study with a definite plan of action before him, and to arrange his undertakings with due regard to his power of carrying them out. Half an hour with a pre-arranged plan for its occupation, is more useful than an hour coming unexpectedly, and without any anticipated means of employing it. The working man comes to his leisure with this decided advantage in his favour, that he knows beforehand when his time will be his own, and how much he will have. He also brings with him another advantage, which attaches to his position more than to nearly all other stations in life. He may come to his home and his nook in the chimney-corner with wearied limbs and a tired frame; but he comes home with a brain that has been but little exercised, and all his mental faculties fresh and vigorous. His mind is clear, his intellectual energies have not been corroded by care, or jaded by anxiety, and study will bring him a sense of refreshment and pleasure, under which his bodily fatigue will disappear, and his whole system feel an invigorating excitement.

If we make due and ample allowance for the essential duties connected with personal cleanliness and refreshment, it cannot be an extravagant estimate if we regard it as being within the power of a working man to regularly devote one hour each evening to any purpose for which he may incline to use it, independently of the claims of his domestic duties, and the needful care of his family. We will say, then, that he has one full hour every night at his own absolute disposal, and we may also assert that for the use he makes of this hour each day of his life, he is answerable at the bar both of humanity, and of religion. Some men think that after they have worked, it is necessary,

or at least allowable, to play; in other words, to waste their time in frivolous amusement. Those who think that the needful relaxation from bodily fatigue is only to be procured by the absolute abandonment of every kind of useful exertion, are grievously ignorant both of their own constitution, and of the economy of nature. Men are more refreshed by change of occupation within certain moderate limits, than by following up the fatigue of one set of powers by the repose of them all. Man differs from every other animal by possessing a brain of which a large portion is not called into action by muscular exertion, and the operation of his instincts alone. An animal has a brain adapted to preside over its physical necessities and animal instincts, and beyond the regulation and gratification of these, it has very little scope. But is a man to be considered in the same light as a horse? When a man's arms are wearied, or his legs are tired, has he no other powers regarding which we may ask, are they equally tired and exhausted? He has them; but if he has not been accustomed to call them into exercise, he is scarcely conscious of their existence. Like Byron's heroes of Greece they are "dumb and silent all."

Intellectual supineness, then, renders man ignorant of the noblest of his natural endowments—reduces that fine capacious brow, which has been bestowed upon no other creature but man, to a useless ornament of the physical frame, and robs him of one of his highest prerogatives and purest pleasures. Do not, then, too easily give way to either of these insidious fallacies, either that you have no time for the cultivation of your minds, or if you have time, you have no available strength for it. The effort to make an intellectual use of your evening hours, will soon meet with success; and as the attempt is persisted in, the accomplishment will become easy and delightful. Refreshment and pleasure will be the result of perseverance. A day well spent in the exercise of observation and reflection according to the opportunity afforded, will be followed by the

prosecution of such research or study, as is required for a better understanding of the facts observed, or the explanations suggested. There are many subjects relating to the trade or art practised by a workman during the day, which he cannot become acquainted with by observation alone. He will need the aid of books to assist him in gaining a knowledge of them. A man who has not been accustomed to recognise the duty and advantage of educating himself, will probably find, on opening the first instructive book he may take up, that there are introductory subjects, some knowledge of which would greatly assist him in understanding them. No man ought to be satisfied till he has acquired some knowledge of these common, introductory subjects; and among the most useful of these is arithmetic. Almost all men are driven to acquire some knowledge of arithmetic, in order to understand and arrange their money affairs. Violeau tells an amusing story of a sailor, who, having just received his pay, was lending a considerable sum of money to a friend. So long as he told out the franc pieces, the counting went on very well; but when he came to crown and half-crown pieces, Jack's powers were taxed too severely; so, taking up a heap of money and handing it to his friend, "There," said he, "I've lent you a handful of silver, you pay me back a handful, and we shall be quits."

If a man has got a pretty fair knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic, he may be said to have entered the outer court of the Temple of Knowledge, and he is prepared by the aid of these and of such general knowledge as his observations have supplied him with, to begin the study of any subject that he may wish to prosecute. Those branches of study will yield him the most practical advantage, which bear upon the trade, art, or manufacture that he earns his bread by. As I have said before, these all depend upon principles which he carries out in his work, most likely without understanding the philosophy of them. If we were to examine into the philosophy connected with the

building of a house, we should be taken over a wide range of mechanical and geometrical science concerned in the manner in which its various parts are adjusted—to say nothing of the geological, botanical, and chemical principles, concerned in the materials of which the structure is composed. The necessity for some knowledge of elementary geometry arises at the very outset of these enquiries, and seeing the constant need which builders have for some practical acquaintance with lines, angles and curves, it is surprising that working men do not, more generally seek an acquaintance with geometry.

If a man should say to me, oh very well! grant all that—but where is a working man who has to support a wife and family out of his scanty earnings, to get the money to buy books for all this reading? I reply, books are not only really very cheap, that is they may be got for very little money, but they are the cheapest things you can buy. A few pence laid by every week, I mean literally pence, will keep a man in books for his constant study. When working men are bent upon acquiring an object, it is astonishing what results they can achieve by a determined economy. A friend lately informed me of a working man, a tenant of his, who, having a son with a strong taste for music, actually procured from his own savings a piano that cost him £60. Why, if he had been a reading man, instead of a musician, a fraction of the money would have supplied him with an inexhaustible library.

In order to show you for how small sums books of solid instruction may be bought, I would recommend you to consult the list of those published by the Irish Educational Society. A small sum will buy the entire lot, and you may have books on almost every elementary subject. The publishers of the Illustrated London News have also edited several excellent treatises, which may be purchased for a shilling each.

But it is not my object to pursue this kind of detail. What I want to show is, that the means of acquiring knowledge are

within the power of the working man—that he has the faculties—that he has the time—in one word, that he has the means within his reach. But what am I to say, if he has not the desire for mental cultivation—if he has no taste for reading—if he prefers to spend his leisure hour, at the close of his toilsome day, lounging with his pipe at the street corner, or sipping at the public house, or carrying on some turbulent game with his comrades, whilst his wife is neglected at home, and his children are running wild picking up vice, faster than pigeons pick barley. If this be the case, I say, that my object is to show him a better way—to excite a desire in his mind for nobler things, and to point out the means by which he may follow them out.

In the course which is now recommended, the first step is, as is the case with all other praiseworthy undertakings, the most difficult. The hardness of the task, for those who have not been accustomed to feel a desire for the improvement of their minds, is to struggle against a disrelish for mental exertion—to beget an abiding and stimulating consciousness of the superiority of intellectual life, over that of the senses and the animal instincts. This is not only the most difficult achievement, but it is also the crowning consummation of the work. For as soon as a man loves study, he will pursue it for its own sake. He is intellectualized, and only intellectualize a man, and you have rescued him from what is vulgar and degrading, and have placed him upon a foundation, resting on which he may take up what study he pleases, and is sure to carry it on. One of the greatest objects of every kind of study is already attained.

Until this process is begun—until the intellectual life is aroused, a man remains ignorant, not only of the higher pleasures lying around within his reach, but he has no perception of that which is most essential to the interests of his family. Let a man have his mind well awakened to the value of mental improvement for himself, and he will be sensible of the value of

it for his children. He will become thoughtful, in a manner he never was before, of the intellectual and moral culture of his offspring. From this will follow an attention to the influence of his own conduct and conversation upon their tastes and pursuits. He will not be content with sending his boys and girls to school, which the great majority of working men are shrewd enough to do now, but he will discern that more than school is wanted. Bad fireside influence may counteract all school impressions. The life of a child should be one continual school—not of head-work at task learning, but of task learning at school intermitted with the impressiveness of a good teaching example at home, from those to whom the child naturally looks up, and by whom he is more readily influenced than by a stranger. The daily schoolmaster has a very hard task to perform, if he has, with each recurrent lesson, to counteract unfavourable influences exerted during the interval. Home influence should be auxiliary and supplementary to that of the school; and a parent whose own mind is awakened for himself, will soon be alive to the importance of this for his children.

Here, then, we open out a large source of sweet and pure intellectual enjoyment for the working man, in the mental and moral training of his children. It is also a duty for the performance or neglect of which, every father is accountable. It is a work which will bestow upon him some of his highest pleasures, and if neglected will draw down upon him some of his bitterest miseries and keenest regrets. A man who was awaiting in York Castle his trial for murder, once told me that he had never seen his father, or his brother, or any member of his family open the Bible for the purpose of reading it. What a natural result, that such a family should come to be acquainted with the criminal's cell! The idea of a father returning from a day's toil, and after having washed, and refreshed himself with the evening meal, calling his children around his table, and instructing them in the rudiments of learning, or making them

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companions of his own studies, interspersing their joint pursuits with the affectionate warnings, or encouragements of parental experience, conveys to my mind one of the most pleasing images which human life can afford. And not only is it delightful to contemplate such a picture, but the engagement is as noble as can be followed in the mansion or the palace. It is a pursuit which raises the peasant to an equality with the peer in all but external accessories. It is a pursuit on which the approbation of good men rests, as well as the smile of the father's own conscience, and above all the favour of his God.

There is one book to which I must direct the attention of working men, as adapted above all others to improve their minds, and to open out, and enlighten their understandings—a book which every working man ought to have, and to study—and which none can be so poor, but they may possess. The British and Foreign Bible Society sells a complete copy of the Bible for 8d., and a New Testament for 4d. No man can be intellectually educated, who has not a tolerable acquaintance with the Bible. No man need be intellectually unenlightened, who possesses a copy of the Holy Scriptures. In them is contained a fund of historical information reaching to a remoter antiquity than any other book can pretend to. They contain narrations of the most important, and the most interesting events the world has ever witnessed. They contain maxims and wise sayings, adapted to all the exigencies and perplexities with which life abounds. They contain the sublimest poetry which the imagination and eloquence of mortal men were ever inspired to utter. They contain the most pathetic, and the most sublime outpourings of the human heart, under every variety of emotion, by which it may be agitated. They contain that which is calculated to console us in adversity to moderate and restrain us in prosperity; they teach us how to give thanks for blessings, how to derive profit from misfortunes, how, in every circumstance, to guide our conduct and regulate our hearts. They contain that to which no other book can pretend

in an equal degree ; whilst they inform the understanding, they enlighten our souls. In this last respect it is not my design principally to speak of them. I recommend the study of the Scriptures for their effect in informing and expanding the intellect ; in enlarging the mental vision, and strengthening the natural understanding. They are also equally adapted to the meanest capacity, as to the most exalted powers. Whilst all can be nourished and improved by them, none can ever master them. The entire leisure of a long life would not suffice to pursue to the end, all the intellectual enquiries opened out by the study of the Scriptures. One who would sit down to follow out the resources opened up in the Bible, would find himself driven to the study of Geology, Geography, Ethnology, Universal History, Philosophy, Poetry, Music, Literature, Science, and every conceivable subject upon which the human mind has ever been employed. A Lady whose biography has recently been published, and who was as eminent for her natural talents and acquirements, as for her spirituality, left this remarkable testimony to the intellectual attributes of the Scriptures : "I have not often" said Hannah C. Backhouse, "been so fond of reading, as of late ; it is true I do not often read much except the Bible ; but when the mind is thoroughly fixed on any one thing, its capacities increase, and I question whether there is any one thing it can more effectually work upon, to enlarge the understanding, than the Holy Scriptures."—*Journal*, p. 111.

What subjects soever may engage the attention of the working man, the Bible must at least have a considerable share in his intellectual pursuits ; and for this reason ;—Because by no other outward means can he equally advance his spiritual interests, whilst he cultivates his mind. By no other means can he acquire the capacity to put out the full force of his parental influence for the moral and spiritual improvement of his children. By no other means can he so effectually ally himself to the great family of good and earnest men, who have got to a position in the world in advance

of himself. By no other means can he rightly expect the sympathy and companionship of those who can most effectually aid him, in promoting his best wishes for those who are near and dear to him ; and finally, by no other means can he reasonably expect to become a partaker in those rich and glorious promises of a future life in blessed and undying pleasure, which no other book holds out to us, nor can point out the way to obtain.

To conclude—have I succeeded in showing how much opportunity the working man has, for the improvement of his natural understanding? In showing how favourable his position is, for acquiring a large store of interesting and important facts, daily presented to him in the execution of his work—in proving to him that by the diligent use of his opportunities, he may maintain a near connexion with that central position from which he sometimes thinks himself irrecoverably banished by the absence of wealth and knowledge? but from which he is much more irretrievably exiled by his own neglect of himself. Above all, have I succeeded in raising in the mind of one workman, a desire for that self-cultivation, which can never be pursued, without a large and abundant return for the labour and self-denial it will impose? If I have succeeded my object is gained.

I cannot absolutely close without a single word on the subject of self-denial. The course I have been endeavouring to point out must be attended with some apparent self-denial. For if a taste has been contracted for idle and exciting habits either of body or mind, these must be checked and abandoned. To such men as have been accustomed to spend their evenings in the drowsy indulgence of the pipe, or in dawdling them away over the police-reports of a newspaper, or the stimulating pages of vicious novels, the exchange of such easy, time-killing pursuits for earnest study, may at first prove a formidable thing. If it do prove so, I would offer the consoling assurance, that they will find the effort become rapidly easier, until it transforms itself into a pleasure, to which they will look forward, as the happiest part of

their day's occupation. Those, again, whose evenings have been passed in jovial companionship, or in that sort of hilarious mirth which leaves nothing behind it, but a craving for stronger indulgence, may find it difficult to exchange this excitement for the comparatively tame work of poring over a good book. It may however be most confidently asserted, that he who courageously leaves the one mode of life, and embraces the other, will not be long in perceiving the vast superiority of the new, over the old plan. It will not be long before the exchange is followed by an abundant reward. He will soon feel a new dignity springing up within him. He will awaken to a higher perception of his social and domestic relations. The welfare of his wife and his children will assume a fresh and enlarged aspect; and the desire will grow increasingly urgent for the right discharge of his responsibilities to them. Under these auspices, his whole domestic condition will soon show the result of his own renovation. The influence of his own transformation, will extend to the whole of his family circle. An intellectual interest will have been created, intensifying the parental and filial affections; and if the lamp of religion be lighted in his house, and the blessing of his Heavenly Father be sought upon his work, there will be no repining at his humble condition in life, and no longing for greater possessions; for as wealth confers upon man no happiness of itself, so a humble station, with virtue, deprives him of no real enjoyment.