

the mind of the child a degree of fickleness which will not only disqualify him for any position of trial or trust, but will render him mere gossamer, to be carried hither and thither at the will of the wind. How many there are who are easily frustrated, who stumble at a straw, and to whom it may be said, 'unstable as water, thou shalt not excel!' How unlike such persons was the Emperor Napoleon, who, from his boyhood days, had one leading purpose, namely, the acquisition of military glory; and whose energies, exploits and success in that direction were the astonishment of the world! Again: while a Sherman and a Franklin rose to eminence in the world, many with equal endowments and better advantages remained in obscurity; and among the various causes leading to this result, irregularity of attendance at school may have been conspicuous.

9. In this connection we are naturally led to consider *the loss to the world of the influence of many a brilliant intellect*. Many young men and women of bright and towering genius go forth into the world with no fixed purpose; and, like Byron, they become 'wandering stars', to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. An attempt to estimate or describe the magnitude of this loss to the world would be too absurd to contemplate; for who could judge of the operations of cause and effect so as to form any correct opinion? But if even this *negative* view were the *only* one that we might take, we might rejoice. But when we remember that the words of Him who 'spake as never man spake'—'He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad'—apply with force to such persons, the thought is overwhelming. And yet all this may result from irregularity of attendance at school.

Having thus endeavored to point out some of the most prominent of the numerous evils of the first class, let us now proceed to consider.

Secondly, The Evils of Tardiness.

As some of the evils already mentioned may be predicated also of tardiness, I shall not speak of them again in the present enumeration, but will include only *some of the most prominent* that come under this head in particular. And before proceeding let us assume the proposition that no person can voluntarily yield himself to the performance of a wrong act, or the non-performance of a known duty, without thereby opening the way for still greater sins; and that the slight deviations of childhood will, unless speedily corrected, result in a ruined and degraded manhood.

1. Thus, the habit of tardiness once formed, its numerous and deplorable evils extend with ever-increasing growth far down into the future; and not only is its existence the prolific cause of aggravation and injury to its victim; but, by his want of punctuality, he is ever an annoyance—a source of disappointment—a broken reed—a thorn in the hand to all who are depending upon him.

Is he to start on a journey by public conveyance? As he reaches the starting-point he finds that the stage, the train, or the steamer, has just gone. By his *tardiness* he is *too late*; and, chagrined and disappointed, and perhaps suffering loss by his failure, he is compelled to return home.

Is he to dine with a friend? Just as the repast, which, perhaps, has long been delayed for him, is finished, he arrives.

Is he a teacher? He is late in all his school exercises; thus teaching his pupils a lesson of evil. Is he to transact business at the Bank? He arrives one minute too late; the Bank has closed! Is he to address an audience? They are kept in suspense by his delay until all patience is exhausted, and the mind thereby prepared for an unfavorable reception of what truth he may present.

But it is needless to enlarge upon this point, as these few items are sufficient to call the attention of the reader to the multitude of evils of the same class so distinctly visible and painfully real in every day's experience and observation.

2. Again: as like begets like, and as each evil will be not only an ally to, but the prolific source of other evils; so, akin to the habit of tardiness, and depending upon it, as its legitimate offspring, is *negligence*: so that whatever evils may be comprehended under this term, may be attributed directly or indirectly to the habit of tardiness.

And to negligence may be added *indolence*. The consequences to society, resulting from the existence of these evils, and manifest in those scenes of filth, poverty, and pinching want, and the like, which exist all around us, are too many and too common-place to justify an enumeration or description; and yet they all may result from a habit of tardiness formed at school. It may not be amiss, before we pass, to mention one fact more that may be predicated of these evils, viz: a great proportion of the *disappointments, pecuniary embarrassments, accidents, losses, casualties, etc., etc.*, that occur or exist around us, result from *indolence, or negligence, or both*; and hence may properly ascribe their origin to the habit of tardiness.

3. Another evil is indifference to high and noble incentives. That scholar who is so reckless of the value of time as to waste it in tardiness; so regardless of the value of instruction as needlessly to lose it; and so indifferent to the pleasure and excitement of study and recitation as to forego them for a trifle, evinces but a dull apprehension of that which is right and good and desirable, or a fearful predisposition to evil. Hence, all incitement to that which is good, high, pure, elevating and ennobling is of little or no avail.

4. Again: it is evident that he that is so reckless of his own interests will be equally *reckless of the interests of others*. Therefore when he arrives at school he will not be duly careful to avoid disturbance; but will enter and pass to his seat noisily; slamming the door, and treading heavily upon the floor; thus diverting the attention of the scholars and causing a general suspension of study and other exercises. But if this *momentary suspension* were the only result, the evil would be comparatively inconsiderable; but not so, to minds undisciplined and unaccustomed to habits of close and systematic thinking, the evil is highly pernicious; since, if the attention is once diverted, it may require *much time* to collect and concentrate again the scattered thoughts. Hence, the loss resulting to a school from such interruptions is incalculable.

5. Another evil is the *injury of the reputation of the teacher*. People are accustomed to consider the conduct and appearance of the scholar an index to the character of the school; and though there may be some limitations to this rule, yet they know not where to make them. Hence, if the scholars are seen loitering along the way to school, it is said at once 'The teacher fails to interest his pupils, and therefore is deficient in one of the most essential qualities of a good teacher.' Again, all are ready to infer that 'his government is not good, or scholars would be required to be punctual'. Also by his tardiness the scholar misses his lessons, and makes but little advancement; and his deficiency is attributed to the inability of the teacher, etc., etc. Thus in consequence of this evil habit the teacher suffers the injury or loss of his reputation which is of more value to him than silver or gold.

Again: *Tardiness is the parent of vice*. The mind will be active either in the performance or contemplation of good or of evil. Therefore no one can doubt that he that strolls tardily along to school is liable thereby to receive and foster impressions or form habits which may result in overwhelming ruin. And not among the least of these are *deception* and *dishonesty*. It is not to be supposed that the truant will 'make a clean breast' of his faults; but he will endeavor to disguise from his teacher the true cause of his absence, and from his parents the cause of his deficiency in his studies; and in doing this, if he does not state barefaced falsehoods, he will raise frivolous and groundless excuses, the utterance of which is little if any better than downright lying. But the evil rests not here; for others will see that this deception has screened the culprit, and, unapprised of the awful tendency of his course, they will resort to the same method, and thus be imperceptibly drawn within the circle of that maelstrom, the vortex of which is continuous with 'the lake (whatever it may be) that burneth with fire and brimstone'. And in this connection I may add that the tardy hour is to the truant scholar emphatically what the hour of midnight is to the man whose deeds are deeds of darkness; and hence the liability of the tardy one to be drawn by evil associates into deeds of vice not premeditated by him.

7. Again: Habitual tardiness in a scholar lead to an *habitual disregard of obligation* and restraint, and might almost be said to be synonymous with it; for, in fact, there can be no voluntary tardiness without a disregard of obligation; for, even where there is no stated rule of punctuality, the obligation is always supposed to exist; and who does not know, if he but consider, that conscious obligation is paramount to positive requisition? Hence, tardiness may at once be said to be a disregard of obligation. Now, when this latter exists in one instance or direction it may, and probably will in others. Thus, the tendency is, at once, to the entire subversion of that order, arrangement and government, so essential to the existence of a good school. And so strong is this tendency, that where you find a considerable number of scholars habitually tardy, you may safely predict for the school a speedy close or an unprofitable and disorderly continuance. But this disregard of obligation unfortunately develops itself in contempt not only of demand, but of prohibition; so that the wholesome rules of the school to guard against vice and immorality, will be likely to be trampled upon with impunity, especially in the absence of the teacher; and thus will be turned in upon the scholars those dark streams, which, in their rapid and tumultuous flow, sweep so many loved ones down into a dark and direful future. But this disregard of obligation will characterize the conduct of the tardy one, not in the school merely, but at home and elsewhere, thereby causing the shame and sorrow