

Literary.

(From the Sun.)
Mechanics' Institute.

The President in the Chair.
Judge Marshall's promised Lecture was read by him on Wednesday evening, 4th inst., at the Mechanics' Institute; subject—
"Intellectual Improvement."

The Lecturer said:—
"This, Mr. President, is a most important and interesting topic, of paramount interest to every individual, and to every class and condition in Society. Knowledge is power, wealth, and honour—or rather it is the means by which man attains these objects, which are coveted by all,—it is the main spring of and incentive to all human action. The first most desirable species of mental improvement, is the knowledge which relates to the attributes of that eternal and glorious being, the creator and sustainer of the universe; it is no less man's duty to make himself acquainted with his visible works, and more especially with that revelation which he has graciously afforded us. We should rightly ascertain the nature and qualities of our minds; our passions, propensities, dispositions and feelings; and the design and end of our being. This inquiry has, however, no connection with the present Lecture; it being designed only to touch upon the circumstances and affairs of the present life, with reference to ourselves and others. A knowledge of some branches of this department is necessary for our existence and comfort—whilst others affect our own improvement and happiness, as well as that of all to whom it may be imparted. The first species refers to that which leads us to obtain the requisites for bare subsistence. Clothing for the body, and the other essentials of mere animal support and existence; to this all are instinctively led; the second is boundless as the earth, and whilst it purifies our own hearts and elevates our own minds, it compasses in its means of usefulness, the wide extent of this fair Globe with all its millions. But the fruits produced by the tree of knowledge are diversified; those which expand and enlarge the intellect, are blended on it with those whose tendency is to demoralize and debase; the latter class is a numerous one; to which Romance, the Stage, the Gamester, or the feats of the Juggler, and their innumerable concomitants belong. The mind being so constituted that it must be exercised on either one or other of these pursuits, each one should conquer every tendency towards the wrong, and strengthen each tie which binds him to the right course. There are two subjects with which it is absolutely necessary every man should be acquainted; first—Religion, and secondly that particular occupation or employment by which he obtains subsistence. Another species of knowledge comprehended in the exclamation of the wise Heathen, "know thyself," is an indispensable pre-requisite to success, while all are interested in becoming acquainted with the various characters by which they are surrounded in the busy, bustling world; this latter branch is to be acquired chiefly by attentive observation and the light of experience. Among those branches necessary or beneficial for, and which may be acquired by all, I class History, more especially that of their own land,—Geography, Astronomy, so far as it relates to those general laws which govern the heavenly bodies; some of the most useful mathematical sciences; a general knowledge of the Governments and laws under which they live, and an acquaintance with the trade and other important interests of the country.—To these may be added—a slight knowledge of those general sciences not already mentioned, and the ordinary and most useful arts of civilized life. Though the Lawyer or Merchant cannot be expected to be proficient in the industrial branches—nor the Mechanic to be thoroughly acquainted with law, commerce, or physic, yet an acquaintance with the general laws and principles by which each branch is governed, may materially aid the success of either in their respective spheres.
The consideration next arises as to the means by which this knowledge may be ob-

tained. Many believe that its acquirement depends entirely upon following out a regular course of instruction under the tuition of those capable of imparting the knowledge; this is a fatal mistake. The instruction of those skilled in all knowledge is, no doubt, highly desirable—but man may obtain much information, nay, he may become a proficient in many arts, by exerting the powers of his own mind, independently of any outward or extrinsic aid. To do this, however, it is necessary that a fixed desire for the acquirement and retention of information exist in the student's breast; works upon all these subjects may be chiefly and readily obtained, but their perusal will be of no avail unless subsequent thought, a thorough analysis of what had been read, follows: If some men were wise, in proportion to what they have read, they would be wise indeed; fixed and continuous thought should discipline the mind for action—without this I do not hesitate to say no man ever attained eminence or extensive success. He who sets out to travel the path of science, often halts on the way, deterred by the vast fields opened up to him, and the extent of the labour he will be obliged to perform ere he can reach the goal. But, let him not flinch from his post; as he progresses the difficulties gradually are swept away; the mind becomes strengthened, and success, certain success, is the result.

The advantages flowing from knowledge are multifarious and manifold; the light of religion and science shines brightly around their votaries, and man's duty and his happiness are so intimately blended that he cannot pursue one without obtaining the other. He who studies deeply and with a legitimate end in view—raises up an effectual barrier, to the gratification of his animal passions or propensities. By the exercise of the powers of his mind he penetrates into the recesses of nature or art, and each new and valuable truth which he brings to light incites him to fresh and renewed exertion. In the senate and the Camp—the bar or pulpit—the laboratory of the physician—the counting house of the merchant—the workshop of the mechanic—on the wild waters, or in the green field—among all classes and conditions of men, the learned universally possess the greatest amount of influence;—in proof of this I need but cite the names of such men as Archimedes and Plato—Zenophon and Cæsar—Alfred and Columbus.

(The learned lecturer here compared the position of the savage and civilised nations of the world—contrasting the degradation and misery of the first, with the advantages and high social enjoyments of the latter; referring to the superiority of Egyptian and Chaldean—Grecian and Roman nations, as compared with the other nations of their era,—and that of the European over the Asiatic and African nations, or the Aborigines of North America—as illustrative of the power which superior intelligence never fails to confer equally upon the nation and the individual. He referred to the influence of free conversation, laying down many useful rules for the guidance of those engaging in it; declaring that he believed it to be the duty of all to throw aside any natural diffidence they might possess, and freely to mingle in social converse—taking care, however, to have their ideas maturely and deliberately weighed, prior to expression—and concluded by saying)—

And now in drawing to a close, on the supposition that some may be inclined to view this address more in the light of a moral essay than as one upon Intellectual Improvement, I may observe that these two subjects should never be severed—but carried on together in just and harmonious proportions. With regard to my own views, I may say that I could not have been satisfied to yield the time and attention necessary in preparing this essay, without endeavouring, in some small degree, to make it conducive equally to moral as mental improvement.

To abjure any degree of information, because we cannot grasp the whole circle of the sciences, or sound the depths of erudition, appears to be just about as sensible as if we were to shut up our windows, because they are too narrow, or because the glass has not the power of a telescope.

Family Circle.

My Mother.

It has been truly said, "The first being that rushes to the recollection of a soldier or a sailor, in his heart's difficulty, is his mother. She clings to his memory and affection in the midst of all the forgetfulness and hardihood induced by a roving life.—The last message he leaves is for her; his last whisper breathes her name. The mother, as she instils the lessons of piety and filial obligation into the heart of her infant son, should always feel that her labour is not in vain. She may drop into her grave, but she has left behind her influences that will work for her. The bow is broken, but the arrow is sped, and will do its office."

In one of the very interesting reports recently presented to the Board of the New-York City Tract Society, a missionary says, "I gave a soldier the tract entitled 'I have not Time.' 'Well, sir,' said he, 'that is very curious; it is what I have often said; yes, very often I have said I have not time; but I won't say it now; I will read this tract, and I thank you for it.' I then reminded him that he had refused to obey the voice of God, calling upon him to think of his ways, and to turn unto him; and that in the confession he had just made he had condemned himself. He heard me without making any reply, while I set before him his need as a sinner, and the all-sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour. Then in a very familiar manner he took my hand, and said, 'Sir, I thank you; every word you have said is quite true. I thank you, indeed I do. From this time I will think of these things, and try, God helping me, to live a new life. I wish my mother had heard you, for she is a praying woman. I have often said to her, 'I have not time.' I have not seen her for several years, but I am sure she prays for me; and she would have prayed for you too, sir, if she had heard you talk to me.' He could hold no longer, but gave vent to his emotions, as his tears flowed freely, he said, 'I shall never see you again, sir; but I am glad that I have met with you. Don't forget me, but do pray for me!'"

The same missionary says, "One morning, lately, I had a long conversation with a sailor, who was going to California, and he appeared to be much affected. I gave him some tracts, and promised that in the afternoon I would give him other religious works to read on his voyage. As I conversed with him he evidently struggled with his feelings; but when I had spoken the word *mother*, his sleeve was immediately wiped, and he used it frequently. 'Ah, sir,' said he, 'my mother prays for me.—You were right when you said perhaps I had a praying mother. Yes I have; she prays for me every night and morning. O I am a very wicked fellow. I don't think God can forgive me; I feel as if he ought not to do it. What can I do? Sir, do pray for me.' 'I will, I will,' I replied, 'but you need not despair, for Jesus Christ is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.' 'I know it,' said he, 'for the Bible says so, and my mother told me the same a thousand times; but it is one thing to hear it, and quite another thing to feel it as I wish to do.' After much other conversation, in which I endeavoured to set before him the cross of Christ, a little hope dawned upon his mind; and when I saw him in the afternoon, he thanked me for having conversed with him, and said, 'I took your advice at dinner-time, and tried to pray: I used some of my poor old mother's words, for I had none of my own. God help me to pray better!' He then asked my name, that he might send it to his mother, 'for,' said he, 'I will write to her, and tell her all about it, and ask her to pray for you; and I am sure that she will do it.'"

The Reason Why.

A little fellow came running into the house exclaiming, "Oh! sister Mary, I've such a pretty thing. It's a piece of glass, and it's all red. When I look through it everything looks red, too—the trees, houses, green grass, and your face, and even your blue eyes."

"Yes, John," replied Mary, "it is very beautiful, and let me show you that you can learn a useful lesson from this pretty thing. You remember the other day you thought everybody was cross to you. You said father, mother and I were all the time finding fault with you. Now you were like this piece of glass. Because it is red, every thing seen through it looks red; you were cross, so you thought every body around you was cross too. But when you get up in the morning in a good humour, loving and helping everybody, they too will seem kind and loving toward you. Now, remember, brother, and always be what you wish others to be—kind, gentle, loving; and they, seen through this beautiful colour of your disposition, will seem more beautiful than ever."

General Miscellany.

Golden Rules of Life.

All the air and the exercise in the universe, and the most generous and liberal table, but poorly suffice to maintain the human stamina if we neglect other co-operatives—namely, the obedience to the laws of abstinence, and those of ordinary gratification. We rise with a headache, and we set about puzzling ourselves to know the cause. We then recollect that we had a hard day of our fatiguing exertion or enjoyment, or that we feasted over-bounteously or that we stayed up very late. Now, this is an occurrence of almost every day happening; and these are the points that run away with the best portion of our life before we find out what is good for us, or evil. Let any single individual review his past life; how instantaneously the blush will colour his cheek, when he thinks of the egregious errors he has unknowingly committed—we say unknowingly, because it never occurred to him, that they were errors until the effects that followed betrayed the cause. All our sickness and ailments, and our brief life, mainly depend upon ourselves. There are thousands who innocently practise errors day after day, and whose prevailing thought is, that every thing which is agreeable and pleasing cannot be hurtful. The slothful man loves his bed; the toper his drink, because it throws him into an exhilarative and exquisite mood; the gourmand makes his stomach his god; and the sensualist thinks his delights imperishable. So we go on, and at last we stumble and break down. We then begin to reflect, and the truth stares us in the face, how much we are to blame.

Lottery Gambling.

The extent to which this vice is carried on in the city of New-York is astonishing, and ought to rouse the ministers of justice as well as the friends of morals. We had no idea of the magnitude of the evil until our attention was called to it a few days ago. The chief seat of the evil is in the offices where policies are sold, securing to the holder a prize if the specified number is drawn. They are sold for sums as low as three cents, and thousands of the poorest classes of people consume their entire earnings in the purchase of these policies, which are often fraudulent, and always in the long run ruinous. A correspondent of the *Journal of Commerce* says:—

"In Broadway and Chatham-street are several of these offices, which, to the casual observer, are nothing more than brokers' exchange offices. In other parts of our city are innumerable small dens, (for they deserve no better name,) where the lowest and vilest, and consequently, poorest, of our population, are in the habit of going, to waste their earnings upon the thriftless trade of small sale gambling in tickets. I am personally, though slightly, acquainted with one person here, who has squandered about \$50,000, of which \$30,000 was a prize; and this sum, "born of good luck," as it is called, was all lost in about one year. Another acquaintance, in good circumstances, after parting with all other available means, actually mortgaged a piece of real estate (his comfortable homestead,) worth \$7,000, and fooled away the proceeds in the same infatuated traffic. Still another—a noble young man, of generous impulses, liberal to a fault—has lost about \$14,000, and is now absolutely beggared, without a decent wardrobe, his entire clothing being on his back, except what is in the clutches of the pawn-broker."

Good all Round.

Mr. Buckingham in his reminiscences, states that during the first session of Congress, the late Benjamin Russell, who had done so much in the Centre towards the adoption of the Federal