

THE ANTIDOTE

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TO OUR READERS

That no one may accuse us of any desire of springing a surprise upon them, our readers are hereby notified that it is not our intention to continue the publication of the "Antidote" after the close of its year, the 10th day of June, 1898.

The chief object sought to be attained in launching the "Antidote" is tolerably well known to many of our citizens, especially to the managers of the various insurance companies who generously put their hands in their own pockets and responded to the appeals made to them for patronage by a former co-worker, since appointed to a more profitable position. It is not necessary to enter into any explanation of the causes standing in the way of success; suffice it to say that the support, however generous, did not aggregate sufficient to warrant a continuance. Paper, printing, engraving, and commissions cost money, not to mention the other expenses on a paper of the kind; and with all this is to be reckoned the fact—notwithstanding what some writers claim—that one enterprise of a literary character is usually as much as one man can expect to conduct and do it justice. That the "Antidote" had not been discontinued some months ago is due to the natural wish to keep faith with subscribers, of whom the vast majority sent in their names early. Those who subscribed later on may have any unearned balance returned to them on application on or after the close of the year.

The propletor still maintains the belief that a paper of the kind will some day find a permanent field in Montreal, but there are few men with the proper qualifications for it whose ambition would be satisfied with the possible returns from such a periodical in this country.

Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well.

It had been hard for him that spoke it to put more truth and untruth together in few words than in that speech—"Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well." If it had not pleased one of our English essayists to use this exordium about something else, one would have wished to have invented it here; for the speech quoted is full of truth and untruth, hard to gainsay and very deceptive. It seems to put in strong epitome the whole laws of industry, and it is directly responsible for more waste of time than all the "Dolce far niente" fascinations and philosophes put together.

The fallacy of the saying lies in the word "well." Substitute "fitly" for the word "well" and the moral cannot be refuted; but in the customary reading of a proverb well means "thoroughly"—to do, what is worth doing well, means to do it with pains and strenuousness, and it is absolutely untrue that everything we may wisely spend a while upon deserves such a doing. There are moments in which to blow away the down from the dandelion's "clock" may be more worth doing than any work, but it would be another matter to make a duty of perfection in the achievement. And many necessary and serviceable tasks which are efficiently performed with a rough-and-ready easiness would be no wit the better, and very likely worse for a dogged taking trouble.

In days when scamping and vamping take the place of honest effort, with such detriment to so many crafts and arts, such weakening to vanishing-point of the will and purpose without which craftsman or artist is of less value than a piece of machinery. It seems almost dangerous to say a word against any sort of labouriousness; but the mischief of futile labouriousness is not slight; and it is frequent among us. The gift of taking pains is too good to be fritted away, as it is, upon results to last a day, and a nice completion of nothing. So used it is not merely a waste of power, but to its possessor an injury, for nothing is more

cramping and narrowing to the mind than prolonged industry in pettiness.

The victim of the vice is beguiled into thinking it a virtue; if you are doing nothing in the bona fide way you are amenable to being ashamed if necessary; but if you are doing nothing by help of energetic pottering and a resolution to do it well, you have your conscience triumphant and you can scorn the sluggard. The sluggard has yawned and wondered how there came to be such a fine crop of weeds in his garden, and you have polished several score of pins almost brighter than new; you will keep on polishing pins as the hope and use of life, and the sluggard may some day go to the ant, consider her ways and be wise. If he never does—why, then he will have yawned and you will have polished pins. And there is every reason to suppose that he will not be so conscious of those who do not yawn, but you, one may fear, will have your opinion of those who are incompetent in pins.



SWINBURNE'S LATEST POEM.

William Waldorf Astor's new London monthly, the Pall Mall Magazine—its first—marks it as a publication one may take up with no little interest. Among its contributors are the poet Swinburne, Rhoda Broughton, the Countess of Cork, and the editor himself. Mr. Swinburne's poem is here reproduced:

Astrophel.

After reading Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia" in the garden of an old English manor house

I.

A star in the silence that follows
The song of the death of the sun
Speaks music in heaven, and the hollows
And heights of the world are as one;
One lyre that outsings and outlightens
The rapture of sunset, and thrills
Mute night till the sense of it brightens
The soul that it fills.

The flowers of the sun that is sunken
Haug heavy of heart as of head;
The bees that have eaten and drunken
The soul of their sweetness are fled;
But a sunflower of song, on whose honey
My spirit has fed as a bee,
Makes sunnier than morning was sunny
The twilight for me.