

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RIGHT WAY OF STUDYING.*

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Your principal gave me but short notice when he set me the task of preparing the initiatory lecture of the college course for a year which cannot lose any of its historical importance in being the last school year of the century. I am not going to say that the time was insufficient, had the time been at my disposal, or had I been working under a well-arranged time table in which periods of study had any place.* This is the busiest season in my office at Quebec, and to run from letter-writing and statistical tables to the taking up of a thesis that would interest a crowd of young people brimming over with holiday chaffings and chafferings, and staid people anxious to know what really is and what really is not good for the rising generation (especially the latter), to run from the terribly practical to the still more terribly philosophical, with such a gap to fill in between the varying intelligences of my audience, I found, and at present find, to be no easy task. Nothing, however, is so readily forgotten as pain; and if you, my audience, forget the pain of listening to me after such a long period of pleasure-getting, as your long holiday no doubt brought to you, as easily as I forget the pain of preparation in the pleasure of being at Stanstead again, I feel assured that when the morrow comes you will be willing to let bygones be bygones. Not that I am anxious to have my message to you this evening go in at the one ear and out at the other, for that would be tantamount to my saying that I have no message to bear to you; and I can think of no more terrible after-agon-

than the agony of having talked for an hour or so in public and said nothing. Indeed it is because I think I have a message for you that I propose to address you in a deliberative tone, so that you may possibly be willing afterwards to read and digest the advice I have to give.

There are many turning points in the lives of men and women, after they have left school or college, just as there are many turning-points in the lives of boys and girls before they enter school or college. The latter converge towards the school period of life, the former diverge from it; and as I stand here before you all, with my message yet undelivered, I want you to recognise the ground of convergency on which you have now set foot, to be one that ought to become as sacred to you as was the holy ground to Moses, from which he received his call to prepare for his momentous mission of life. This spot here, centred in a district of unsurpassed natural beauty, with an inner environment that cannot but take coloring from the picturesque to be seen everywhere within a circuit of many miles, this point of present convergency will ere long become a point of divergency, and as the holy ground of the present with all the possibilities of your lives within reach, it will continue to be all through your lives an object of interest or regret according as you have here made use of your opportunities or neglected them. This has possibly been said in your hearing before in many other ways; but I would repeat it and repeat it until its repetition would become an emphasis that would burn, into the in-

*An address given to the students of Stanstead College at the opening of that institution in September, 1899.