

"I was placed by my father with a worthy clergyman who resided about fifty miles from town, where with five other lads of my own age, I enjoyed the advantages of education and the sweets of domestic comfort. How much more should I have profited by the instructions I there received, had it not been for my inattention to punctuality; but I will not speak of the reprimands I called forth, nor of my neglected studies. I will turn to circumstances of deeper moment. One evening while passing a cottage whose sick inmate my esteemed preceptor often visited, a little girl ran out and asked me to request him to call on her mother as soon as possible, as she wished to see him once more before she died. I promised, and turned towards home, but instead of proceeding directly thither, as I should have done, I stepped in on my road to look at a rabbit which I was going to purchase. This was kept at the village post office—I there found a letter from my father—hastened home to peruse it, and thought no more of the dying cottager till early next morning. As soon as I did remember it, it was but the work of a few minutes to hasten to the chamber of Mr. E. and tell him the particulars; and, in half an hour he was on his way to the widow's residence—but he was too late—she had expired!

"At the end of the field in which we were allowed to play, was a small but deep pond, round which railings were thickly placed. Some oxen from a neighbouring field, had one evening broken the enclosure and made themselves a passage. I was charged to go the next morning to the village carpenter, to order him to repair the damage; this I engaged to do, but when the morning came, I procrastinated and delayed till it was time for study; ashamed to confess my delinquency, I said nothing about it, determining to go immediately—my books were all laid aside—in the meanwhile, my tutor's youngest child a sweet little girl of four years of age, had wandered to the side of the pond—had fallen in, and but for the providential assistance afforded by our neighbour's Newfoundland dog, I should have had to reproach myself with little Emma's death.

"This was but a few months before I returned to town; having finished my education, and as my inclinations were directed to the sea, my friends would not oppose my wishes. By means of my uncle, a post captain in the navy, I had the promise of sailing with him as midshipman, but was requested to call on Admiral B—at an hour appointed. I was as usual too late; another was appointed in my stead; my uncle sailed without me, and I had to wait several months before another vessel was fitted out; even then I left England with a strange captain, and with not one person on board that I could call my friend. How-

ever I was soon reconciled to my situation, and as I was enthusiastically fond of a sailor's life, I made it my study to excel in my profession.

"Even thro' the same habit followed me and retarded my preferment. Once I was left on an uninhabited island—having wandered from my messmates when on an excursion into the interior for water, and neglected to return in time, and had not the ship been detained by stress of weather, instead of addressing my young friends here, I might have been wandering like another Crusoe, on that delightful but deserted isle.

"I need not repeat the details of my numerous voyages, my shipwreck, nor the wound which disabled me for active service. I was graciously directed by a superintending Providence to this sequestered spot where I first heard the glad sound of Mercy, and where the Dayspring from on high first dawned on my benighted spirit, and taught me my need of that Saviour who died, the just for the unjust, to bring sinners to himself. It was then that I discovered my own weakness and where to apply for strength, but still notwithstanding the influence which divine grace has, I trust had on my heart, I have often to lament this early-acquired habit. Opportunities of retirement and devotion lost, the public ordinances of religion neglected, or my fellow worshippers disturbed, and my own mind unhinged by late attendance, these and many other evil consequences often lead me to cry, 'Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.'

Edward closed the book in silence, but with an expression of deep thoughtfulness on his countenance; and from that day strove more and more to beware of Procrastination, and to remember the maxim suggested by his Father, "Leave not till to-morrow, what can be done to-day."

#### SELF-EDUCATION.

BY WILLIAM WIRT.

And this leads me, gentlemen, to another remark, to which I invite your attention. It is this:—The education, moral and intellectual, of every individual, must chiefly be his own work. There is a prevailing and fatal mistake on this subject. It seems to be supposed, that if a young man be sent, first to a grammar school, and then to college, he must of course become a scholar; and the pupil himself is apt to imagine that he is to be the mere passive recipient of instruction, as he is of the light and atmosphere which surround him. But this dream of indolence must be dissipated, and you must be awakened to the important truth, that, if you aspire to excellence, you must become active and vigorous co-operators with your teachers, and work out your own distinction with an ardor that cannot be quenched—a perseverance that considers

nothing done whilst any thing yet remains to be done. Rely upon it that the ancients were right—*Quisque sue fortunæ faber*, both in morals and intellect, we give their final shape to our own characters and thus become, emphatically, the architects of our own fortunes. How else should it happen that young men, who have had precisely the same opportunities, should be continually presenting us with such different results, and rushing to such opposite destinies? Difference of talent will not solve it, because that difference is very often in favor of the disappointed candidate. You shall see issuing from the walls of the same school—nay, sometimes from the bosom of the same family—two young men, of whom one shall be admitted to be a genius of high order; the other, scarcely above the point of mediocrity; yet you shall see the genius sinking and perishing in poverty, obscurity and wretchedness; while, on the other hand, you will observe the mediocre plodding his slow but sure way up the hill of life, gaining steadfast footing at every step, and mounting at length to eminence and distinction, an ornament to his family, a blessing to his country. Now, whose work is this?—Manifestly their own. *They* are the architects of their respective fortunes. The best seminary of learning that can open its portals to you, can do no more than afford you the opportunity of instruction, but it must depend, at last, on yourselves, whether you will be instructed or not, or to what point you will push your instruction. And of this be assured—I speak from observation a certain truth:—There is no excellence without great labor. It is the fiat of Fate, from which no power of genius can absolve youth. Genius unexerted, is like the poor moth that flutters around a candle till it scorches itself to death. If genius be desirous at all, it is only of that great and magnanimous kind, which, like the condor of South America, pitches from the summit of Chimborazo, above the clouds, and sustains itself at pleasure, in that empyreal region, with an energy rather invigorated than weakened by the effort. It is his capacity for high and long continued exertion—this vigorous power of profound and searching investigation—the careering and wide-sweeping comprehension of mind—and these long reaches of thought, that

Pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon,  
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,  
Where fathom-line can never touch the ground,  
And drag up crowned honor by the locks.

This is the proves and these the hardy achievements which are to enrol your names among the great men of the earth.

But how are you to gain the nerve and the courage for enterprise of this pith and moment? I will tell you:—As Milo gained that *hoc signo vinces*: for this must be your work, not that of your teachers. Be you not wanting to yourselves, and you