

Young - Friends' - Review.

"Neglect Not the Gift that is in Thee."

VOL. XIV.

LONDON, ONT., CANADA, SIXTH MONTH, 1898.

No. 6

AN ORATION

GIVEN AT SWARTHMORE COLLEGE BY
A. DAVIS JACKSON.

"Here is the warp, God help you fill in the woof."

Weaving is the art of forming a web. In weaving, two sets of threads are used. The threads extending through the entire fabric are the warp. These threads, the ground work of the cloth, are fixed in the loom and seldom changed until the piece is finished. The strength and breadth of the fabric are determined by the warp. The threads running crosswise are called the weft or woof. As the weaver's work progresses he selects these threads from the supply at his command, and they determine the quality and beauty of the cloth. With a good straight warp and plenty of material for woof, it is the weaver's duty to follow faithfully his design and make a perfect web.

We are all weavers, but the product of our looms is not the rare lace of Flanders; not the transparent muslin of India; not the Egyptian and Hebrew tapestry with mythological design; but the web we weave is character, whose authentic design portrays every influence from our most trivial thought to our most heroic deed. In the formation of character two kinds of influences are at work. Those of heredity and early environment pervading our entire life are the warp of this complex web of character. These influences, fixed by our ancestors, lay the foundation of our character and are not subject to our control. The range of our influence, and the trend of our development, are largely owing to these inherited qualities and conditions. It is our inheritance that

our parental characteristics, social position, moral inclinations, and the intellectual powers with which we are endowed, should be fixed for us as our warp.

And now may God help you fill in the woof. Until the power of selection begins to develop in the child, his web contains no cross fibres, but when he begins to choose his playmates and his books, he weaves, at first unsteadily and in colors crude and inharmonious, but as the years go by and he reaches maturity he learns to know the design, and it remains for him to select the influences which shall determine his character. The beauty of our character, the good we may do, and the service we may render, are limited only by our selection of virtues. Virtues that we weave into our web, day by day, as the shuttle of time goes to and fro carrying threads of thought and habit, gained from books and associates, the result of voluntary contact. Friendships are the strongest influence, not only in social but in political and commercial life. "Happiness, success and destiny largely turn upon friendship. By their friendships, men are measured. They are the silver threads that tie the hearts of the world." Direct inspiration and generous deeds are the royal tints, the threads of gold that never tarnish.

Books are our steadfast friends, a constant influence, the joy of the child and the comforting companions of the aged, they creep in and become a part of us and our fabric, presenting pictures that can never be erased.

Amusements play an important part in coloring this magic web. They are the lighter threads, the medium tints that soften the stronger hues. They