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"HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

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## POETRY.

### THE WIDOW'S PRAYER.

BY LYDIA H. SIGOURNEY.

The youthful maid--the gentle bride--  
The happy wife, her husband's pride,  
Who meekly kneel, at morning ray,  
The incense of their vows to pay,  
Or pour, amid their household train,  
From love's full heart, the vesper-strain,  
What know they of her anguish'd cry,  
Who lonely lifts the tearful eye?  
No sympathizing glance, to view  
Her alter'd cheek's unearthly hue--  
No soothing tone, to quell the power  
Of grief that bursts at midnight hour;  
Oh, God! her heart is pierc'd and bare--  
Have mercy on the Widow's prayer!

Not like that mother's heavenward sigh,  
Who see's her fond protector nigh,  
As hers, who, rest of earthly trust,  
Hath laid her bosom's lord in dust.  
Sleeps her young babe? but who shall share  
Its waking charms--its holy care?  
Who shield the daughter's opening bloom,  
Whose father moulders in the tomb?  
Her son the treacherous world beguiles,  
What voice shall warn him of its wiles?  
What strong hand break the deadly snare?  
Oh, answer, heaven! the Widow's prayer!

For not the breath of prosperous days,  
Tho' warm with joy, or wing'd with praise,  
E'er kindled such a living coal  
Of deep devotion in the soul,  
As that wild blast which bore away  
Its idol, to relentless clay;  
And for the wreath that crown'd the brow,  
Left bitter herbs, and hyssop bough--  
A lonely couch--a sever'd tie--  
A tear that time can never dry--  
Unutter'd woe--unpitied care--  
Oh, God! regard the Widow's prayer!

## EDUCATION.

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

That education, if based upon religion, may be expected to produce very different results from education left to run riot for itself, or left only under the flimsy guidance of intellectual cultivation, is self-evident. The great cause of the total inefficiency of the latter for preservation, viz. the extremely small portion of mankind over whom it ever can exercise any sensible influence, compared with the multitude with whom pleasure and excitement are the ruling principles, is no ways applicable to religious feeling. Every man has not an understanding capable of cultivation; but every man has a soul to be saved. Universal as is the stimulus of the senses and passions, as universal, if early awakened, are the reproaches of conscience, and the terrors of judgment to come. The gospel was, in an especial manner, preached to the poor; not only are its leading principles obvious to every understanding, but its principle incidents find their way to every heart. Doubtless there are great numbers in every age, and especially in every opulent age, to whom all its exhortations will be addressed in vain, and in whom the seductions of present interest or pleasure will completely extinguish all the effect of the most pointed denunciations of future dangers either in this world or the next. But still, the number of those whom religion can prevent from sinning, or reclaim from vice, is incomparably greater than those whom science or philosophy can affect. The proof of this is decisive. Every age of the world has shown numerous examples of nations convulsed, sometimes to the last degree, by religious fervour and sectarian enthusiasm: but nobody ever heard of the masses being moved by science and philosophy. Chemistry and mechanics are very good things, but they will never set the world on fire. It is self-evident, therefore, that as the dangers of unregulated education consist in this, that works which are to do the people good, appear like the paths of virtue, dull and uninviting in the outset, and are felt to be beneficial only in the end; while deleterious and exciting productions, like the temptations of vice, are exciting and agreeable in the outset, and to every capacity, and are perceived only

to lead to sackcloth and ashes, when it is too late for any effectual amendment of life or manners--we must look for an antidote to this general and enormous evil, in some counteracting principle of equally universal application and equally powerful efficacy. The experience of ages, not less than the feelings of our own hearts, tells us, that the only antidote to this evil is to be found in the intimate blending of education with religious instruction. It is by this union alone, that the antagonist powers of good and evil can be equally developed by the powers of education; that the attractions of sin can be counteracted by opposite principles of equal force and general efficacy; that we can give its true development to the principles of Christianity, and screen public instruction from the obvious reproach of adding force to the dissolving powers in the many, and imparting strength to the counteracting forces only in the few. These, accordingly, are the principles of M. Cousin on this subject. "Religion is, in my eyes, the best, perhaps the only basis of popular instruction. I know a little of Europe, and have never witnessed any good popular schools where christianity was wanting. The more I reflect on the subject, the more I am convinced, with the directors of the *écoles normales* and the ministerial counsellors, that we must go hand in hand with the clergy, in order to instruct the people, and make religious education a special and large part of instruction in our primary schools. I am not ignorant that these suggestions will sound ill in the ears of some, and that in Paris I shall be looked upon as excessively devout; but it is from Berlin, nevertheless, not Rome, that I write. He who speaks to you is a philosopher, one looked upon with an evil eye, and even persecuted by the priesthood; but who knows human nature and history too well not to regard religion as an indestructible power, and christianity, when rightly inculcated, as an essential instrument for civilising mankind, and a necessary support to those on whom society imposes hard and humble duties, uncheered by the hope of future fortune, or the consolations of self-love. Even if this blessed union could be accomplished, although every school in the kingdom was blended with the fundamental principles of Christianity, and every seven hundred persons in the empire had, according to Dr. Chalmers' favourite scheme, a pastor allotted to them, still much would remain to be done to prevent the spread of mere knowledge from being an addition to the lever by which vice undermines the fabric of society; still there would remain to sin the advantage, always great, and in the latter stages of society of peculiar efficacy, that it proposes immediate gratification to its votaries, and invites them to a course of reading from which instantaneous excitement or pleasure is to be obtained. The exciting and dangerous part of the press in short, is in possession of precisely the same allurements by which vice so generally succeeds in overwhelming the suggestions of virtue; and the question betwixt secular and religious education just comes back to the old combat between the antagonist principles of virtue and vice. Firmly believing, as we do, that the main reliance of the friends of humanity in such a conflict, must be laid in the forces and co-operation of religion, we are by no means so sanguine as to imagine, that in the greatest possible degree of church extension and religious education, there is to be found any thing like an effectual antidote to the poison which lurks in the fruit of the tree of knowledge. It is to no purpose to refer to instances of rural pastoral districts, where virtue exists almost undisturbed by vices for centuries together in the simplicity of religious belief, and generation after generation pass through their innocent span of life almost unstained by crime. True, they do so; but how long would these same persons, innocent when not led into temptation, withstand the allurements of general education, or a licentious press, ancient opulence, and corrupted cities? Not one week."--*Blackwood's Mag.*

### DANGER OF IGNORANCE.

There are few villages in the country, which do not present us specimens of the uneducated; we meet him in the gin-shop and in the street; he is an idler, a drunkard, and a quarrelor: we hear of him in every riot, he is an aider and abettor in every outrage. His family are slovenly; reckless, debased, wretched. He is a quarrelor because a drunkard; and he is a drunkard because he is idle. But why is he idle? Because he has never felt the value of labour, the pleasure of thinking, the joy of a good conscience. He

has never been habituated to form judgments of these things. The powers necessary to form such judgments have been neglected. He has never been taught to examine, to inquire, to attend. He has become passive. He feels the pressure of want brought on by his own habits; but how does he try to remedy it? All his life he has been taught to spare, as much as possible, his own exertions, and to hang, beggar-like, as much as possible, on those of others. He is the slave, from laziness, of authority. It is not in a sudden emergency he is likely to throw it off. All his life he has sacrificed, with the short-sighted selfishness of ignorance, the future to the present, and every interest, public and private, to his own. He is turbulent, but not independent: he talks of freedom, and is a slave to every man and thing around. But indolence is not a merely passive vice. Better to "wear out" than to "rust out" has been truly said; but he who "rusts out" "wears out" too. No greater burden than sloth; no greater consumer of the spirit and body of man, than doing nothing and having nothing to do. Every day spent in inactivity, renders action more difficult; every hour which does not add steals away some instrument of virtue and happiness, and leaves the sluggard more at the mercy of those visitations of sickness and want, to which even the industrious are exposed. Nor is this all. Omission of duty soon becomes commission of crime. Painful reflections now beset him. They are sought to be extinguished, but not by reform. Conscience drives him to fresh vice. This goes on for a time; but health, means, companions, must at last fail. Then it is that he sees, for the first time, how bootlessly he has squandered away the healthy morning-tide, the working hours of life. He has paid down existence, and all that makes existence a glory and a good in advance. Body and soul are spent. He becomes sullen and sour. Disappointments thicken upon him, and they are all of his own causing. His farm is covered with weeds, his shop deserted, his children profligate and rebels, his household a hell. He gradually becomes an enemy to all social ordinances, to law, justice, truth, good faith--to all that makes community to man. He envies and hates the good and happy; he looks on every check as a wrong, on every prosperous man as a foe. Whether is he to rush for rescue from these encompassing evils? The gospel he never understood, and therefore never practised. His religion is an hypocrisy or a superstition. It affords him now no direction in his errors, no consolations in his afflictions. He finds in it neither warmth nor light. The religion he learned never penetrated to the spirit: it was a tinkling cymbal, a jargon of meaningless and profitless words. But crime, which had long been ripe in thought, is at last on the point of bursting into act. He is at last ready for every desperate attempt. Education has been held up as the great principle of all modern restlessness and disorder. Is this the case? Let facts answer. Here are men uneducated enough, ignorant enough, to procure the most perfect quiet, if ignorance and absence of education could produce it. Yet it is from materials like these, that you are to expect the tranquility and prosperity of a great nation? Is it in the nature of things, that out of materials so utterly evil, peace and happiness should emanate? Private vice has but to make a few steps, and a few proselytes, and it becomes public corruption; individual discontent wants only time and circumstance, to spread out into general disorder. Such indeed, are the real revolutionists; men bad and blind--blind because they are bad--a huge Polyphemus, sightless cause they are bad--a huge Polyphemus, sightless and strong, waiting only some crafty guide, to lead the monster on against society. Nor is such want likely to remain long unsupplied.--*Wyse on Education.*

### REGISTER OF MERITORIOUS SABBATH SCHOLARS.

The Committee of Sabbath School teachers in this city, acting under the direction of the last two annual meetings of the teachers and other friends of Sabbath school instruction, have opened a registry for the names of meritorious scholars, male and female, desirous of becoming apprentices or servants, and have issued schedules to the teachers of the various parochial and district Societies, to be filled up with names, &c. of applicants.--The registry is to be kept in the Religious Institution Rooms, George Square, and may be resorted to by masters and mistresses who are in want of young persons to occupy situations at their disposal.

We observe, from a copy of the schedule, that the utmost caution will be required on the part of teachers in giving in their recommendations, so that employers may depend upon a rigid scrutiny before the