

practice tends, besides, to disorganise the school, and it adds grievously to the labour and vexation of the teacher. Another cause of the low state of education is attributable to the books very commonly in use, being utterly unsuited either to the *youthful capacity*, or the *end in view* in an efficient education. But generally parents manifest an utter disregard to the *kind* of book they put into the hands of the scholar; with the majority *price is everything—quality, nothing*. It is owing to the same indifference, that we meet with such a variety of books in the same department. It is quite common, for instance, to find four or five different kinds of spelling-books, where one only should be found. In short, every thing seems so foreign to what ought to be aimed at, that one is tempted to think that here is a system of things designed to prevent *thinking*, or any expansion of the mind by acquiring an understanding of the object of study. It is not to be wondered that bad reading should be so prevalent, since, from the nature of the books, it must be a mechanical exercise only, and not one in which the understanding has any share.

#### REVERENCE FOR THE DEAD.—COMMON BURIAL GROUND AT NAPLES.

An old man opened the iron door, and we entered a clean, spacious, and well-paved area, with long rows of iron rings in the heavy slabs of the pavement. Without asking a question, the old man walked across to the further corner, where stood a moveable lever, and, fastening the chain into the fixture, raised the massive stone cover of a pit. He requested us to stand back for a few minutes to give the effluvia time to escape, and then, sheltering our eyes with our hats, we looked in. You have read, of course, that there are 365 pits in this place, one of which is opened every day for the dead of the city. They are thrown in without shroud or coffin, and the pit is sealed up at night, for a year. They are thirty or forty feet deep, and each would contain, perhaps, 200 bodies.

It was some time before we could distinguish anything in the darkness of the abyss. Fixing my eyes on one spot, however, the outlines of a body became defined gradually, and in a few minutes, sheltering my eyes completely from the sun above, I could see all the horrors of the scene but too distinctly. Eight corpses, all of grown persons, lay in a confused heap together, as they had been thrown in one after another in the course of the day. The last was a powerfully made, grey old man, who had fallen flat on his back, with his right hand lying across and half covering the face of a woman. By his full limbs and chest, and the darker colour of his legs below the knee, he was probably one of the *lazzaroni*, and had met with a sudden death. His right heel lay on the forehead of a young man emaciated to the last degree, his chest thrown up as he lay, and his ribs shewing like a skeleton covered with a skin. The close black curls of the latter, as his head rested on another body, were in such strong relief that I could have counted them. Off to the right, quite distinct from the heap, lay, in a beautiful attitude, a girl, as well as I could judge, of not more than nineteen or twenty. She had fallen on the pile and rolled or slid away. Her hair was very long, and covered her left shoulder and bosom; her arm was across her body; and if her mother had laid her down to sleep, she could not have disposed her limbs more decently. The head had fallen a little way to the right, and the feet, which were small, even for a lady, were pressed one against the other, as if she were about turning on her side. The sexton said that a young man had come with the body, and was very ill for some time after it was thrown in. We asked him if respectable people were brought here? "Yes," he said, "many. None but the rich would go to the expense of a separate grave for their relations. People were often brought in handsome grave-clothes, but they were always stripped before they were left. The shroud, whenever there was one, was the perquisite of the undertakers."

And thus are flung into this noisome pit, like beasts, the greater part of the inhabitants of this vast city, the young and the old,—the vicious and the virtuous,—together, without the decency even of a rag to keep up the distinctions of life! Can human beings thus be thrown away?—men like ourselves,—women, children, like our sisters and brothers? I never was so humiliated in my life as by this horrid spectacle. I did not think a man, a felon even, or a leper—what you will, that is guilty or debased—I did

not think anything that had been human could be so recklessly abandoned. Pah! it makes one sick at heart! God grant I may never die at Naples!

While we were recovering from our disgust, the old man lifted the stone from the pit destined to receive the dead of the following day. We looked in. The bottom was strewn with bones already fleshless and dry. He wished us to see the dead of several previous days; but my stomach was already tried to its utmost. We paid our gratuity, and hurried away. A few steps from the gate we met a man bearing a coffin on his head. Seeing that we came from the cemetery, he asked us if we wished to look into it. He set it down, and the lid opening with a hinge, we were horror-struck with the sight of seven dead infants; the youngest was at least three months old; the eldest, perhaps, a year; and they lay heaped together like so many puppies, one or two of them spotted with disease, and all wasted to baby skeletons. While we were looking at them, six or seven noisy children ran out from a small house at the road-side and surrounded the coffin. One was a fine girl of twelve years of age, and, instead of being at all shocked at the sight, she lifted the whitest of the dead things, and looked at its face very earnestly, loading it with all the tenderest diminutives of the language. The others were busy in pointing to those they thought had been the prettiest, and none of them betrayed fear or disgust. In answer to a question of my friend about the marks of disease, the man rudely pulled out one by the foot that lay below the rest, and, holding it up to shew the marks upon it, tossed it again carelessly into the coffin. He had brought them from the hospital for infants, and they had died that morning. The coffin was worn with use. He shut down the lid, and, lifting it again upon his head, went on to the cemetery to empty it like so much oil upon the heap we had seen.—*Willis' "Pencilings by the Way."*

#### A WORD TO THE YOUNG.

The time of life which is now passing over you is of immense and inconceivable importance. I cannot think of your entering on the busy scenes and numerous temptations of the world without feeling for you the greatest solicitude. Every step you take is decisive—every action you perform is critical—every idea you form is likely to become a principle, influencing your future destiny: God knows the consequences and results. You remind me of what I have often witnessed with inexpressible delight in the days of my youth—a fine vessel launched upon the waters, its streamer waving in the wind, acclamations rending the air as it passed triumphantly along, expectation and delight beaming from every countenance. But who could tell its future story—the storms that were to pass over it, the rocks that were to endanger it, or the unknown sighs and lamentations that were to fill the minds and awaken the solicitudes of its inhabitants? And often have I heard of the wreck of the very vessel which I had seen launched: others have returned shattered and almost wrecked by the dangers which they had encountered. Of such thoughts and anxieties it is natural to be possessed on the present occasion. You, my young friends, are just launched; the gale of hope swells your sails; you are looking forward to years of happiness and delight. Oh, let me ask you a few questions of infinite moment to your peace. Who is your pilot? What is your chart? How will you steer your course? What is your destined haven? You would deem him ill fitted to superintend maritime or nautical concerns who was not possessed of all skill, and foresight, and prudence—who did not anticipate what was likely to happen, and aim to make suitable preparation. What, then, must be the folly of that youth who is thinking only of the passing moment, only of immediate provision—the delight of the day which is floating over him! who manifests no anxiety in reference to the future—the eternal concerns of his soul!—*Fletcher*.

The Swedish Government, in order to put a stop to the increasing progress of drunkenness in Norway, has appointed a Missionary for each of the four provinces of that kingdom, to travel through them, preaching forbearance from strong liquors, and promoting the establishment and extension of temperance societies. Compensation is again offered to all such distillers as shall resign their licenses for making brandy, and entirely relinquish their business.