

way off; and though he is talking to somebody, he seems not to be talking to them. It is hard to listen; and if they take notes (a highly educational process) the notes will be poor: besides, if they need notes, they can buy them later. Why not let the lecture go, and sleep, or carve the furniture, or think about something else (girls, for instance)? These boys are in a poor frame of mind for new methods of instruction; yet new methods of instruction they must have. They must learn to depend upon themselves, to become men; and they must learn that hardest lesson of all—that a man's freedom consists in binding himself: still again, they must learn these things at an age when the average boy has an ill-seasoned body, a half-trained mind, jarred nerves, his first large sum of money, all manner of diverting temptations and a profound sense of his own importance. How can they be taken down, and not taken down too much—thrown, and not thrown too hard? How can they be taught the responsibility of freedom? They face, it may be, an elective system which, at first sight, seems to make elective not this or that study, merely, but the habit of studying at all. Already they have been weakened by the failure of the modern parent and the modern educator to see steadily the power that is born of overcoming difficulties. What the mind indolently shrinks from is readily mistaken, by fond mothers, mercenary tutors and some better people, as not suited to the genius of the boy in question. "It is too much for Jamie to learn those stupid rules of syntax, when he has a passion for natural history;" or, "George never could learn geome-

try—and, after all, we none of us use geometry in later life. He expects to be a lawyer, like his father; and I can't think of any good geometry can do him."

The change "from the sense of study as an obligation to the sense of study as an opportunity" is a noble change for persons mature enough to turn opportunity into obligation; it is not a noble change for those who choose such studies only as they think they can pass with bought notes. Knowledge that does not overcome difficulties, knowledge that merely absorbs what it can without disagreeable effort, is not power; it is not even manly receptivity. Milton, to be sure, patient toiler and conqueror though he was, cried in his pain, "God loves not to plough out the heart of our endeavors with over-hard and sad tasks:" but an over-hard and sad task may be a plain duty; and even Milton, when he said this, was trying to get rid of what some people would call a plain duty—his wife. When we consider the mass and the variety of the Freshman's temptations, and what someone has called the "strain on their higher motives," we wonder more and more at the strength of the temptation to knowledge, whereby so many stand steady and work their way out into clear-headed and trustworthy manhood.

One way to deal with these strange, excited, inexperienced and intensely human things called Freshmen is to let them flounder till they drown or swim; and this way has been advocated by men who have no boys of their own. It is delightfully simple, if we can only shut eye and ear and heart and conscience; and it has a kind of plausibility in the examples of men who through rough usage have achieved strong character. "The objection,"

¹ A student whose name begins with Y told me once that he had never had a good seat in his life.