

work. Either they commence without any clear notion of their aim, and in that case they could not possibly have a distinct idea of the route by which they should reach it; or else they have merely made up their minds as to the object which they mean to attain without taking the trouble to consider where they must begin and how they must proceed in order to success. They catch up their work anywhere and anyhow, and go on in any kind of order or disorder. This accounts for a great deal of the loose thinking with which the world is afflicted. It starts from no distinct premises. It conforms to no recognized principles of thought. It is tossed to and fro by its own incoherency. It is filled with contradictions which are mutually destructive, and so it leads to no certain results and produces no settled convictions. It is the same with men's work. It is done with no method, it is carried on with no sort of order, and consequently it is marked by no real progress. It is a simple fact of experience that nothing of any value has ever been accomplished in this manner. What terrible mistakes men make on this subject! Some who are afflicted with the delusion that they are great men, or that some day they must turn out to be great men—certainly one of the most melancholy of all delusions—are often tempted to imagine that want of method, and what seems to them a kind of picturesque disorderliness, are signs of greatness. "It is your little men," so they reason, "who are neat, orderly, methodical: a great mind cannot descend to such trifles." And they are not at all little, and cannot adopt the ways of such. As though the Alexanders, the Cæsars, the Fredericks, the Napoleons, the Wellingtons had thus built up their military genius, had thus gained their splendid victories! Follow the histories of these men and you will see how

ludicrous is such an error. What was the chief part of all the mighty power which they wielded, but the power of order? Did they gain their victories by bringing up cavalry, infantry, artillery at haphazard, by mere dashing bravery, inspiring their men by their transcendent genius. Doubtless a great part of the power of a general lies in his being able to inspire his men with confidence and enthusiasm. But this very confidence is begotten, in no small measure, by the men's assurance that their leader will do the best thing that can be done. They know that he will see at a glance where and when and how to strike, so as to make the best and most effectual use of the means at his disposal. If an order is given to stand fast or to advance, there is in his mind a rigorous necessity for that disposition of his forces. Just as there is one best place for the pawn in the game of chess, that which is prescribed by the law of the game, so in the game of war, or in any other game or work, order is heaven's first law. And the man who cannot make up his mind in respect to master himself, to submit himself to methodical action and work, is declining to take the first step towards success, whatever be the enterprise which he has in hand.

(2) Not remotely connected with this requirement is the second, the necessity of giving *attention to the least things as well as to the greatest*. It is an error akin to that of which we have just spoken, an error too of little minds, to pay attention to things which seem to us great and important, and to neglect or give little heed to those which seem small and insignificant. The error is a very natural one. But it is in all respects most grievous. Illustrations of this point must crowd upon us. The neglect to perfect the smallest part of some intricate machine may throw its work-