

your lessons. Let none of you shirk what work is necessary, and see to it that each one brings into the meetings of the society his very best work. Promise me this, my young friends, and I will prophesy that you will have one of the best Literary Societies the school has ever known.

Now, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, so far I have been pointing out the straight high road which will lead to success. Kindly bear with me a little longer, while I indicate some byways and cross paths, down which you may wander and lose yourselves. Perhaps by talking so seriously as I have done, about the work that must be done, I have damped your ardor, have, as it were, thrown a wet blanket over the anticipations of pleasure you expected to get by being members of the society. I shall be very sorry if this is the effect of my remarks; it need not be. In your meetings, usefulness must have its place, and pleasure, too, must have its place, but I would give useful improvement the first place, and pleasure the second. If you reverse these positions, and make pleasure the all in all of your society, why then, by all means call things by their right names and change the title Literary Society into Pleasure-loving or Fun-seeking Society. I speak thus, because this is one of the bye-ways, down which some previous societies have come to grief and ended in failure, so far as mental improvement is concerned. Of course your society has no such members, but I have known boys and girls—I should say young ladies and gentlemen—join a Literary Society purely for the sake of having what they called “a good time;” and a “good time” as they understood it, was a time of unrestrained fun, noise and frolic. Should it be your misfortune to have any such members my advice would be, to weed them out, they will hinder and not

help, their influence will tend to wreck the society. On the principle that “all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,” your meetings must be pleasurable, but seek to find your pleasure in the social intercourse, in the music and singing, in the wit and vivacity of the remarks; play pleasant music, sing pleasant songs—I would like to know that the boys make the house ring with the echo of the grand old college songs, songs which will come to their lips in after years in far distant lands. Have pleasure by all means, but don't let it usurp the chief place.

Your mental improvement and your advance in elocutionary and oratorical power, and in the accessories of gesture, tone of voice, etc., will depend very much on your critic. He or she must set high the standard of excellence, must hopefully encourage whatever tends to reach that standard and kindly deprecate every retrograde tendency, and your duty will be to profit all you can, week by week, by the criticisms. With a critic having the correct notions of propriety and the refined literary tastes of the one it is your good fortune to possess in your lady teacher, there is scarcely need for me to warn you of another crossroad—I refer to the temptation there is in young people to select for reading or reciting only pieces that are funny and amusing. The temptation to select such pieces lies in the fact that every reader or speaker naturally likes the approval of the audience, and that pieces of this nature always bring down the house. Let your Programme Committee keep a jealous eye upon such pieces when offered; they may now and then find that some are, to say the least, not elevating. Speaking of applause leads me to advise you to be sparing in the means of showing approbation. I have known literary meetings that noisily applauded all and everything.