

The Tired Foot.

THE potter stood at his daily work,
One patient foot on the ground;
The other, with never slacking speed,
Turning his swift wheel round.
Silent we stood beside him there,
Watching the restless knee,
Till my friend said low, in pitying voice,
"How tired his foot must be!"

The potter never paused in his work,
Shaping the wondrous thing;
'Twas only a common flower-pot,
But perfect in fashioning.
Slowly he raised his patient eyes,
With homely truth inspired:
"No, marm; it isn't the foot that kicks;
The one that stands gets tired!"

What Knowledge is Most Worth to Women?

BY PRINCIPAL AUSTIN.

Delivered to the Students of Alma College, Sept. 11, 1888.

THAT knowledge is of most worth to woman which emancipates her from dependence either on her friends or fortune, and enables her with calm courage to face life, if need be, alone.

Some there are who look upon woman as a born dependent, and consider her doomed to an inferior place and power in society. Woman, according to their view, is a clinging ivy, with no power to stand alone, and destined, if the oak be uprooted, to lie helpless upon the earth. But woman's nature demands work for its true development. Her happiness requires that she should have a life-work, and her character can only be developed properly along the line of self-respect and self-reliance which she can scarcely maintain as a dependent. Idleness, dependence and luxury are the bane of life to thousands of women. The law of labour is stamped on woman's constitution as it is on man's. Woman is called to work suited to her nature and capacity, to a life of usefulness in the Christian church, and to the evangelization of a lost world.

But how can women rise into nobility themselves, or successfully work for others, if they remain dependent on their friends or on the constancy of fickle fortune? To-day, as never before, woman is coming to the front. In home and school and church, are hundreds of employments now open to her, from which she was heretofore excluded. In the professions—in fact in almost every department of human endeavour—there is a call for educated and trained womanhood. And nobly are women throwing off the shackles of false sentiment, and preparing themselves for personal freedom and usefulness. Such education as will tend to lift woman up from idleness to ennobling labour, from dependence to freedom, from the helplessness and servility that must ever accompany dependence upon others, to the self-reliance and self-respect that are inseparable from a life of honourable toil—this is one of the demands of the age.

Without such a practical education, woman's happiness hangs suspended on the will of others, or on the caprices of fortune; and how often has she been forced, by these very circumstances, into an unsuitable partnership for life!

What strength it adds to a woman's character to realize that she is able to earn a living for herself! The mere knowledge of the fact that she holds within herself resources for self-maintenance, gives a woman a conscious freedom and a measure of self-reliance that become a tower of strength to her in life.

Let every woman, then, while earnestly coveting all knowledge, so master some one of its many departments that she can turn her knowledge to practical account in earning a livelihood. A promi-

nent American educator has said that every student should learn "something about everything," and "everything about something," which means, that we should get an outline knowledge of as many subjects as possible, but should completely master one department.

Young ladies, I counsel you to become independent, by preparing yourselves to win, if need be, your livelihood, and to reap the rewards that come only to honest and efficient labour.

That knowledge is of most worth to woman which acquaints her with her own nature, and the laws by which it is governed, and reveals to her the path to the highest perfection of all her powers.

We can much better afford to be ignorant of things above, beneath, and around us; of things past and future; of all the arts and languages, and of all the refinements, than to be unacquainted with this body which we inhabit, which is, indeed, "fearfully and wonderfully made," and of this spiritual nature, which is "opened to the infinite, and destined to the eternal." Sciences that centre in or relate to the body and to physical health—physiology, hygiene, chemistry in its relation to food and drink—are as essential to every woman as the knowledge of navigation to the sailor. Every wife and mother comes to hours of supreme crisis in the home when her own life, or the life of one nearest her heart, depends on the knowledge of these sciences, and a practical acquaintance with the care of the sick and suffering. Many a mother bending over the cot of her sick babe, has been willing to barter all her years of the study of the fine arts, music, and the refinements, for a little practical knowledge of our common nature that would have enabled her to preserve life. By all means let the fine arts, and music, and the languages, form a part of woman's education; but if these are pursued at the expense of those fundamental and indispensable studies, the student will awaken some day to a knowledge of her lamentable mistake.

Whilst this body is only a rough and temporary casement for the spirit, be it borne in mind that much of life's happiness, and very much of life's success, depend on that practical knowledge of physiology and hygiene that enables us to keep a sound body as the tabernacle of a sound mind.

A knowledge of cookery, both practical and theoretical, and of housekeeping, is certainly to be ranked among the absolute necessities in woman's education. There is really no substitute for this. No amount of wealth and luxury—can relieve the "queen of home" from the curse of an ill-kept house, and the innumerable evils that follow in the wake of unsavoury and indigestible food. Certainly, in my judgment at least, she who knows and practises good housekeeping, and the divine art of cooking, has better claim to be considered an educated woman than one who has run the gauntlet of the 'ologies and the "accomplishments" (!) and knows not how to properly make a bed or cook a dinner.

Psychology, embracing as it does the knowledge of the laws of mind-growth and development, is another essential in a course of study for woman. For herself and those depending on her, such a knowledge of the mental world as will reveal to her the best method to strengthen memory, reason, and will, and train the conscience and moral powers to the highest perfection, is of the highest value to every woman.

That knowledge is of most worth to woman which gives her a mastery of her own language and literature, and makes her thoroughly conversant with her own country and her own times.

To you who speak the English language, it is of

more value than all others combined. Where school-life is limited to a partial course, it is doubtful if much advantage will be gained by a short and superficial study of other languages—except in the case of Anglo-Saxon and Latin, some knowledge of which is really essential to a mastery of English. A young woman is not educated, no matter what may be her other accomplishments, until she can correctly speak and write her native language with precision and purity and effect. This is especially important for woman in the sphere of the home and social circle, where she is a teacher of the children and a leader in conversation.

An acquaintance—the more thorough the better—with the treasures of our English literature, and an appreciation of their beauties, will add very much to your enjoyment in life, increase your conversational powers and your influence with people of culture.

No young woman can afford, at this time in particular, to be ignorant of her country. Its history, resources, extent, possibilities, methods of government, and the living problems of the present hour—all these she should seek to master. Woman is just now coming into her kingdom. The time for idleness, ignorance and impotence has passed away, and the age demands of her a knowledge of herself, her country, and her times, and an active participation in the struggle for human liberty and progress. Far too many women live in the narrow circle of home, or in a little coterie of parlour acquaintance, having no thought or sympathy, no helping hand for the struggling masses of humanity around them. Such a knowledge of one's country and one's times as I have outlined would enlarge their thought, broaden and deepen their sympathy, and lift many women above the frivolities of fashion and the vexations of home life.

That knowledge is of most worth to woman—as it is to man—which brings her in thought and feeling nearest the source of all knowledge and blessing—God.

The study of God's existence and attributes, as revealed in nature and revelation, the tracing of his wisdom, power and goodness in the creation and government of the universe, and of his matchless condescension and mercy in the plan of redemption, is the noblest of all departments of study, and yet this department of college work is usually designed for and pursued by men. Why should the noblest of all sciences—theology—be neglected in woman's education? Is she less disposed by nature to sacred studies? Is she less reverent in soul or less inclined to a ministry of blessing to mankind? Does her position, as queen at home, or teacher of the youth, or leader of society, require less knowledge of sacred things, or less religious devotion? Why should not every woman blest with opportunity of thorough collegiate training, study the works and words and ways of God? In this age, when so many doors of Christian labour are opening before young women, it seems to me their education is far from complete without a course in natural theology, Christian evidences, and Bible study. We live in an age characterized by diligent study of the Scriptures, and woman must march with the advancing column of progress, or be left in the rear. New Testament Greek is a branch of college study well calculated to bring you large returns of mental wealth and spiritual enlargement, and rich provisions for useful labour. In this age of mental unrest, in regard to revealed truth, Christian evidences will fortify the mind against insidious attacks of sceptic and infidel, and prepare you to meet and refute their sophistries. Above all, the study of the discourses of Christ yield the grandest results to mind and heart, and the fullest preparation for life's duties. May you learn of him in whom are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge."