

see to it that your choice of a career lies in the direction of your capacity. If it does not, all work will be a drudgery to you—it will be a mere turning of the mill to grind corn into bread with weary hands and feet and a dulled brain, and takes all the beauty out of every landscape and sucks the sunlight out of all existence.

It is no small and unimportant thing, this that I am urging, for your delight, or no-delight in the ordinary bread-making work of life must affect every other part of your life. When we are doing the kind of work for which we are fitted it comes easy; there is joy in it; there is a deep satisfaction in it; the temper is kept in cheerfulness, and the spirit in peace; affection for the work impels to industry in the work, and industry well administered, the world over, commands success.

And failure here affects every other phase to which life lends itself. It deadens the heart; it embitters the mind; it sours the affections; it dulls the light of reason, and distorts the vision whenever the eye looks upon anything. You rarely meet with a man who is a failure in his calling but that he is socially a pest and a nuisance. He is a bad workman and complains of his tools; he grumbles at the world and everything in it, and generally talks as if he holds it as a grievance that he was not consulted when the world was made. The unsuccessful merchant—what a grinding task his work is? The lawyer, whom no discontented, or quarrelsome, or ill-used will employ—what a dry, dull workaday thing life is to him? The doctor, who cannot get patients, and the minister who cannot keep an interested audience, but has to beat out his little homily Sunday by Sunday, a mere clatter of wood upon wood—what a tame, and cold, and cheerless thing their professional life is? So, I would say, weigh well and choose deliberately what you will set your hand or brain to do in the world. By far too many among us are content to live just for the day. They do not calculate the chances of the future; they do not enquire: Is this the kind of work to which I should like to devote myself as my calling in the world? but they allow circumstance to play a game of shuttlecock with them, tossing them to and fro from pillar to post, as if they were simply things to be played with. It is a good and commendable thing when a young man says: I am willing to do anything to get for myself a living—but that is a mere expediency; and life is a science—not only a science of self-sustenance, but the main idea is the doing of most needful work; contributing to the general good of the whole; working in with Providence and blessing all the world.

But, I would say, don't aim at too much. It seems to me a great mistake that almost every man who goes into business should be haunted with feverish dreams of making a fortune; that almost every doctor should want to be a consulting physician; that almost every lawyer should decide that a judgeship is the only thing worth living for, and that almost every politician should desire a seat in the Cabinet. Ambition is a good thing—a great sentiment—a mighty impelling force; but it is plain that ambition may be a false guide and lead to false issues. Success has its drawbacks. Those who achieve most, enjoy most, perhaps, and suffer most. When wild tempests are sweeping the earth, the tops of trees feel it most and rock most. When men stand on great heights, the head is liable to become giddy, and the feet fail when the head gives way. A man finds real contentment, not from the success he has won, but from his inward sense of duty done. The man who is desirous of using his powers well—to their utmost and to their best—with an eye to the welfare of others; the man who wants above all things to discharge his obligations to God and man, is the man of true, sublime ambition, and who gets the most positive reward out of life. This widespread desire for distinction; for much wealth—for much honour—for much power is a curse, and the sooner we can put it away the better. If men would be content to do their duty and achieve a moderate success, we should have less sin in the world and more happiness. There was sound philosophy, as well as true piety, in the old prayer—"Give me neither riches nor poverty." In either extreme there is danger; safety lies between.

The next point for you to consider is your place in the social life of the world. Just as you have to choose your way of bread-winning have you to choose your society, and your friends. Circumstance will in some part decide this for you. Children are thrown together by what looks like accident; youthful loves ripen into mature friendships, and each seeks the society of the other. Similarity of tastes will also be a powerful factor in determining what kind of people should meet and mingle. But so far as I can see, in the life of every thoughtful young man there comes a time when he may choose for himself what and with whom he will be socially. He can maintain his exact rights and company with his equals; he can go below himself, and so take great destructive forces into his life; or he may aspire successfully to walk and talk and commune with those who occupy spheres higher in the social scale than that to which he properly belongs. I mean that one is not circumscribed as to the circle of friends he may have; he may extend the sphere of his acquaintance almost indefinitely.

And I hold that a young man should set it before himself as a joyous and imperative duty to make friends—he should take pains to make himself agreeable and pleasant. I meet with many who will not do that—I have been afflicted with the disease myself in those hours when the devil succeeded in

cheating me out of my common sense—but a great many young men cultivate the malady and are proud of it. They are weary of life before they have done a morning's work—they are disappointed in love or friendship, and straightway declare that everything mortals can have or desire is a fraud; and they whine, or sneer, and drive away those who would be their friends. That is a disaster whenever it happens to a man—because it dooms him to the belief of a falsehood for the time, and to the loss of many friends perhaps for all time. And we cannot afford to lose friends—we cannot afford to scoff at the tender joys of social life—they are a necessary, and real and important part of our existence—they act and react upon our mind and heart all through life—they are formative forces, building up character—they are educational forces which must result in personal good or harm, and on all these counts it is your duty to yourself—to your own future, as well as to society, that you should make yourself, not simply known, but worth the knowing. But when I say, make yourselves agreeable, I beseech you not to imagine that I would have you copy one of those animated bits of Blanc-mange you so often meet in society—I mean those who always wear a simper on the face, and who manage to throw a soft, silly, boneless, bloodless, soulless affection into the eyes, and talk nonsense to ladies, and always cast about for a chance of paying a compliment. It is refreshing now and again, because it is amusing, to read of the old days of courtzanship when men vied with each other in offering speeches of compliment in a gallant way—but generally there was some wit in what they said, if not much wisdom—it was a fine art and well cultivated, and gave polish to society if it failed to give any permanent profit. But the cooing done in many instances now—the constant effort to say complimentary things—is simply detestable. A few silly people may like it, and say: "O, that Mr. Butter-and-honey is a nice young man"; but people of honest mind and heart will say that Butter-and-honey is a fool. If you would make yourself agreeable and worth having in social life, treat men as men—believe that they may differ from you in politics and not be completely idiotic—and may be your rivals in business and not be much more dishonest than yourself; and treat women as in every way equal to men, believe that they have minds, and can judge of things—that they don't want stupid little prettinesses dinned in their ears constantly; and don't treat them as if they can talk nothing and want to hear nothing but gossip. They can talk of other things, and want to hear of other things, and they will honour the men who honour the mind in woman, and do not treat her as an over-grown baby. But, I would say, choose your friends discreetly, with a keen eye for your own character and your own future. There is one rule which every one may adopt and follow with absolute safety—it is this: to put all friendship to the test and know—does it not simply entertain me, or amuse me—but does it *help* me? does it improve my mind, and cultivate in me what is good and true and manly? That is to say, analyse the results of evenings spent in company—find out what is the tendency your friends give to your minds. If it is to debauch your mind, or lower your standard of duty, or your esteem for virtue, or your admiration for noble manhood—then call that a friendship of evil, and a thing to be eschewed. Whatever is helpful, cultivate—whatever is hurtful, flee from. Try and get real mental and moral bracing from society—insist on healthy talk, on healthy amusements—a game may be perfectly harmless, and it may be turned into a means of ruin—enjoyments may be used as a healthy change, a real and true recreation—or they may be corrupted and cause the man to run to waste. We are blessed with judgments—we may know ourselves and what will suit our mental and moral constitution, and we ought to have strength of will that shall decide what we may or may not accept as the pleasures of life. Judge your acquaintances by the effect their company produces upon you, and you will find that although the numbers of your friends may be limited, social life will be well worth the living. The work of analysis is not difficult, for the great evils to life are well known and tabulated. Avoid the drunkard, or the man who would lead you that way—avoid dishonesty under any form—avoid those who indulge in loose immoral talk—avoid a tattling, gossiping, scandal-loving man—and still more, as a far worse plague, a tattling, gossiping, scandal-loving woman.

I wanted to speak, too, on the need and importance of mental culture, but I can only dwell on it in passing. For myself, I do not understand how men can let their mental faculties run to waste with such unconcern. In the vast majority of cases men do not care to inform the mind upon anything but business and politics; they know nothing of the great men who have made history and built up literature, and consolidated scattered tribes into nations. Work during the day, a glance at the papers over dinner, and then talk, talk, and nothing else. Why the truth is that we are losing great and real pleasures here and now. You like to be with great men, great minds, surely; well, you may have intercourse with the master minds of the race. Get into the light of living sinners if and where you can. A little may be learned from almost any man; but the teaching of the small and the weak will be of a negative kind, while the teaching of superior minds is always positive and good. There are not many geniuses alive—nature does not seem capable of producing many at a time; and those that do live are separated from most of us, their circles and ours do not cut each other anywhere. And yet we have access to them; we can hear them; we can see them; we can feel them; for, thank God, they