

Many a lad and lass got something in this way lodged in the memory that is food for thought for a life time. To many again, it is the opening of the door upon the light, that draws them into fellowship with the noblest spirits. To many too, it is an introduction to a world of which they formerly had no conception: a world of great and true men, who sympathize with every movement of the heart, and every sorrow of the soul.

These put them in a Columbus' ship that covers a new and a greater world.

The late Dean Alford, while at school makes some interesting entries in his diary, such as, "Rose at six, learnt Wolsey's lamentation on his greatness," "Learnt the story of Lavinia in Thomson." "Learnt a piece of Wharton's Pleasures of Melancholy." And years after writing a letter to his sister Fanny he quotes a beautiful passage from Cicero's treatise on Old Age, and tells her that he was reading Plato on the Immortality of the Soul and that he might have a quotation from that for her e'er he finished the letter. And then he says in justification: "You cannot think how beautiful it is to select and admire the finest parts of the classical Philosophers and Poets, and then to find parallel passages in Scripture, as may almost always be done, and compare them, not to destroy the beauty of the first, but to exalt and to bring into light the Divine sublimity of the latter." This quotation shows us how the mind acts, it gathers its material by selection. F. W. Robertson in one of his letters speaks in this way: "It is very surprising to find how little we retain of a book, how little we have really made our own when we come to interrogate ourselves as to what account we can give of it, however we may seem to have mastered it by understanding it. Hundreds of books read once have passed as completely from us as if we had never read them; whereas the discipline of mind got by writing down, not copying, an abstract of a book, which is worth the trouble, fixes it on the mind for years, and besides, enables one to read other books with more attention and more profit."

There too in the abstract we have what has struck so many thoughtful people. Cicero the great Roman Orator opens his treatise "On Friendship" in these words that bear directly on our subject: "Quintus Mucius, the Augur, used to relate many things of Caius Saelices his father-in-law, from memory and in a pleasant manner and did not scruple in every discourse to call him a wise man."

Moreover I myself, after assuming the manly toga, was introduced by my father to Scævola, in such a way that, as far as I could, and it was permitted me, I never quitted the old man's side. Accordingly many sagacious discussions of his, and many short and apt sayings, I committed to memory and desired to become better informed by his wisdom." Such has been the practise, to a larger or smaller extent, of every scholarly man. Dr. James Hamilton of London had volumes of such nuggets,—thought nuggets—treasured up under the title of "Bibline."

Southey's commonplace book was something of this sort carried out extensively. Dr. Norman McLeod writes rapturously to his intimate friends of some fresh beauties discovered in the poems of Wordsworth of which he was specially fond.

Choice selections are like diamonds, very precious, and very compact. They are charged with thought, and open up to the reflective mind far reaching vistas. They throw back the dark cloud curtains and lay bare the star-spaces, where infinite worlds roll. A volume of them like "Beecher's Life Thoughts" and "Watch words for the Warfare of Life," from the Works of Martin Luther, are magazines of furnishing for the mind. They give us thoughts, views of things, pictures and images, in such vivid coloring that we are moved by them to exercise our intellectual powers, and so to grow stronger and broader and fuller. They are repositories of wisdom within a compass which is easily managed. Do we not like to listen to a discourse, or read a book, that has in it quotations or references that open like bow windows on a piazza out of the main room into the fragrant garden, or musical alcove of the birds, or on to the grassy lawn that leads away to the plantation of trees, where slender streams meander in the shade and cover the stones with moss, and scent the air with sweet odors. I think we do. For as the proverb has it variety is the spice of life.

The oldest and wisest of us may be as little children in our communion with a prayer-hearing God. No errand to that mercy seat is too trivial to lead our foot-steps thither. We may connect all the issues of life with the control of that over-ruling will. We may put our hand in that paternal hand, no matter how narrow the chasm, and look trustfully and hopefully for that availing guidance. Ah, if we could learn this lesson of filial trust at every step of our way along our earthly pilgrimage, no matter how steep or rough or obscure the path, it would guide us safely and surely home to our Father's house.

The Harvest.

'Twas the music of the reapers, mang the yellow waving corn,
That awoke the drowsy sleepers, at the breaking of the morn
Oh many hairts hae come and gane, since first I saw the licht
But the gloamin noo is fa'n fast, and mirk will be the nicht.

Auco merry was the harvest time, the days were never lang,
And quickly sped the evening hours, for blithely reaper's sang.
But noo, the harvest mune is dim, aye clouded owre the rim,
Or else, my sicht is failing fast, my een are growin dim.

But its gloamin, aye, its gloamin, and I'm lying here at rest
Nae mair for me the harvest days, and may be it is beat,
My sorrows noo are owre, and I thecht some micht be spared,
When a my bonny boys were laid, within the lair kirkyard.

But they're sleeping there, sae sounly, O sae peacefu' is their rest,
And n'er a worldly thooht, or care, disturbs the youthfu' breast,
While I hae seen another year; another birthday gane,
Aye, a these things I think o'; while I'm lying here alane.

I care na tho' the night be mirk, it canna aye be licht.
And when a body's een are dim, the stars are no in sicht
And may be I'll sleep sounly, and nocht will hear or feel
While the angels bare me gently to the land o' the leal.

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Thanksgivin.

Another year replete with God's goodness has been given us. As households and communities it is meet we should respond to the call of the Psalmist and "come into God's presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful voice unto Him with psalms." The blessings of health and peace; the security of our homes, the plentifulness of our tables and the continuance of family order and affection; the blessings of good neighborhood, and all the kindly amenities and sympathies of social life; the stability of our national life and the supremacy of law; our schools, our churches, and the banner of the cross upheld and the word of the Gospel everywhere preached in the land—as we are called to contemplate these things let the sacrifices of thanksgiving be offered and gladness fill the heart.

It is a pleasant duty to which the thanksgiving season calls us. Thankfulness is quite the same as joyfulness. It implies delight and gladness of heart. It is a simple and very intelligible duty too. Even a child can experience the sense of gratitude. One of the first things the little one learns to say, is "Thank you." Any one who is able to appreciate the Lord's gifts is qualified to join in the sentiments of thanksgiving time.

And yet can we say there is no need of reminder and call to this most befitting duty? Is thanksgiving general? Is it spontaneous? We feel our wants before the great Giver and are bold in making known our requests. But do we give thanks in the same measure that we offer up our desires? Earnest prayer came from the ten lepers unto the Lord Jesus as he was entering a certain village. They were humble and most respectful, as standing afar off they lifted up their voices for His mercy in their misery. But after Jesus had healed them all, there returned but one of the ten with the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Alas! for all time how true is Mrs. Browning's plaint—

"And lips say 'God be pitiful'
That ne'er said 'God be praised'."

We are to "give thanks always in all things," says the apostle, that is, in every situation and every kind of circumstance, be found "praising Him." Rightly apprehending God as sovereign Giver, and ourselves as dependents without a claim, we can conceive of no situation where the offering could be untimely or inappropriate. There is often a latent skepticism just here. When after a long course of uninterrupted and abundant favor there occasionally comes some deviation from that tide of good providence, then arises the unworthy thought that the claim upon our gratitude has been forfeited, or at least the call to thanksgiving has lost its suitability. There can come no time however calamitous, no personal experiences however bitter, but that the devout heart may still realize causes for rejoicing and gratitude.

We can always find in the midst of hard lots not only tempering influences and "silver lining within the clouds," but also reserve blessings, which have been untouched. It is wrong and unjust to God to imagine we are destitute of good unless we have every object of desire, and that our cup of mercies does not call for special mention unless it is made to overflow. It is a spirit of selfishness and presumption to look, as it were, upon the tender of only a half loaf as something unworthy the giver, if not discreditable to the recipient; and the gift, if not rejected in scorn, is yet not acknowledged as a claim on gratitude or an atonement of complaint. Like the peacock in Æsop's fable, which, forgetting its gift in beauty of form and plumage, murmured before Juno because it was not also endowed with the sweet song-voice of the nightingale; so now, what should be our note of praise for the measure of good bestowed, we often turn to peevish lamentation and criticism that our gifts have not been larger and more various.—Mid Continent.