

Will it be thought very much out of place if I say, let us honor the farmer? His is the only natural, the original, and the essential work. There is a moral in the fable of Hercules and Antæus. It was not until Hercules had lifted the giant bodily from the ground and so broke the magic contact that he was overcome, and the prescription for many of the ills of the body and of society to-day is in the cry, "Back to the land!"

I have spoken of occupation as bearing on health and character. There is one other factor in our social life to consider, and that is our amusements. Indeed, among some people this question seems to take precedence of work. Amusement and relaxation are necessary, but to give them so prominent a place in our life as they appear to occupy to-day is a menace to the health of the body which they are meant to secure, to the intellectual powers and to moral character.

Pleasure takes precedence of duty, and camp-laisant sophistry may even justify this order. To scorn delights and live laborious days is now considered folly. We amble along the primrose path of dalliance and avoid the "asperous way that leadeth to the house of sanity."

It is a delight and a hopeful omen to see an interest taken in athletics, and to know that our country takes such an honorable place in all manly exercises. But for one young man whom you will find on the football field, or plying oar or paddle, you will find many who simply waste their time, their only interest in athletics being the spectacular interest of a match or the dubious financial result of a bet. If we could only influence these young men to take a more heroic, a more manly view of life, we should be doing them and our country a service.

Even in our sports there is room for some earnestness, and it might be well if we took our pleasures, as Froissart says our ancestors did, seriously, and sympathised with the spirit of the old English ballad of Ulysses and the Syren:

"To spend the time luxuriously  
Becomes not men of worth.

.....

".....suppose there were  
Nor honor, nor report,  
Yet manliness would scorn to weare  
The time in idle sport;  
For toyle doth give a better touch  
To make us feel our joy;  
And ease finds tediousness, as much  
As labour yeelds annoy.

.....

"But natures of the noblest frame  
These toyles and dangers please;  
And they take comforts in the same,  
As much as you in ease;  
And with the thought of actions past  
Are recreated still,  
When pleasure leaves a touch at last,  
To shew that it was sill."