

PRECEPTS INVITING AND IMPORTANT.

WHAT THE AGE REQUIRES OF US—SELF-RELIANCE, SELF-CULTURE, SELF-DENIAL.

We have chosen the above motto, and intend devoting two or more pages each month to subjects in keeping with its import. We wish to show that in almost every condition of life there is an opportunity for study and self-culture, and for those ardently desirous of improvement, "there is a way." Past history shows that the most learned have often acquired their knowledge and celebrity under circumstances of the most discouraging nature. As we so frequently hear from the young, particularly those engaged in commercial houses and mechanical occupations, a description of their trying situation in regard to early advantages, and present opportunities for improvement, we are led to present what we hope may prove incentives to earnest effort after knowledge, excellence and usefulness. There are many motives which might be mentioned to stimulate us all to activity. For the sake of our own happiness let us look away from ourselves into the grand and wonderful world which God has spread before us, until, by becoming acquainted with its resources, so varied and beautifully adapted to all its phenomena, we feel our hearts swelling, and great and good thoughts and desires gushing forth. The best incentive to self-improvement is an honest wish to be useful to our fellow beings. We owe a duty of love and self-denial to the suffering sons of misfortune and misery, who, with sorrowful voices, implore our aid. There are evils growing rank around them, and increasing, because we, who are now happily situated, neglect to exert ourselves to ameliorate their condition. We owe a duty to the future of our country. Nobly overcoming every obstacle, each one of us should advance with the heroism of determined resolution, and a will that knows no backward wavering, or longing for ease and indulgence, to high attainments in all that is "lovely and of good report."

"Life is real! life is earnest!

And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and time is fleeting,
And our hearts, tho' stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!

Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead.

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime!
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, may take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait."

Socrates was probably the greatest and best philosopher of antiquity. His motto, *Esse quam videri*, i.e., be rather than seem, is worthy of our adoption, for as this illustrious man used to say, "The only way to true glory is for a man to be truly excellent—not affect to appear so." In the defence of Socrates before the Judges, we find these words:—"I never wronged any man, or made him more depraved, but contrariwise, have steadily endeavored throughout life to benefit those who conversed with me, teaching them to the very utmost of my power, and that, too, without reward, whatever could make them wise and happy." If this heathen philosopher, without the word of God and its sanctifying influences to guide him, was actuated by such principles, certainly there can be no reason why we should