

graceful elocution. They preserve young men from dissipation and vulgar amusements, by substituting others which are more intellectual and refined.

Wishing your Society success and renown, I am your friend, and obedient servant,

HENRY CLAY.

With these great witnesses, with these convincing evidences, the Debating Club needs no assistance from me; those facts and proofs, plead more eloquently than my voice could utter, of its many valuable advantages, in training, and in nurturing the mind.

But methinks I hear whispered: "What use can it be for me to make the attempt? I shall never become either a Roscoe, or a Burns." I believe many a valuable but unexercised intellect has slumbered away its existence, and at last sunk into the grave, unknowing, and unknown, from having imbibed those unworthy, desponding impressions. Now, what would you think of a man, who had a journey to perform, which might become productive of much benefit to him, but who, instead of walking cheerfully onward, sat down at the commencement of the road, and exclaimed: "It will be no use for me to try, for I do not think I shall be able to walk it?" Would you not naturally say, that it should be his duty, as well as his interest, to make every attempt and exertion to accomplish this journey? Certainly it would,—and while we have so many encouraging instances, in where such exertions—although barred by many apparent obstructions on the road to knowledge—have been crowned with such brilliant success, I wonder that any one can be prevented from making the attempt, and that such foolish doubts would be allowed any longer to exist in the mind of the young aspirant. What should doubt or fear have to do with the student? His mind ought never for a moment to remain stationary or inactive; but constantly pressing onward, his mind ought not to be occupied so much with the difficulty of obtaining an object, as with the determination to possess it. And then, supposing that he should not attain the eminence of a Newton, a Mansfield or a Burns, there is nothing to prevent any one of us, by diligence and perseverance, from possessing a far larger share of knowledge than we could at first give ourselves credit for. There is a little secret too, which exercises an important effect upon the student's progress, and which I earnestly beg him to impress firmly upon his mind, which is: to allow no *little* incident to pass him unheeded, because of its apparent triviality, thus forgetting that the simplest trifle has produced some of

the greatest results; and that all great things are composed of a multiplicity of little things. A spider's web, we are told, saved Mahomet from the hands of his pursuers, and was eventually the means of founding an empire: We all know, I presume, that by an apple's fall, Newton discovered the laws of gravitation; and from the picking up of a pin, arose the riches and influence of the late French financier, Lafitte. And how many a humbler aspirant, upon the discovery of some long desired object, by some simple, and unexpected incident, has suddenly exclaimed with Archimedes: "I have found it! I have found it!"

There are again, others who object to improve their minds, because, as they say, they are *too old*, and consequently, it is also too late. If they mean by "*too old*," the uncertainty of life, then at that rate, we all may, from the youngest and healthiest, to the oldest and weakest, burn up our libraries, and order our coffins immediately; for I hope we all know that the rosier cheek, and the strongest limb, have no stronger surety for an existence beyond the present, than the feeblest invalid. If they mean by *too late*, that they anticipate from the natural course of things, but a few years more of existence; then, should they not feel it to be a solemn duty, to employ every spare moment during those few years, in exercising and enlarging their mental powers, because it is in proportion as we improve them aright, that we increase our capacity to worship and adore our Creator, through his numerous, and wondrous works. I do not think any one of us would fancy it too late to be cured of a painful malady, which had lain upon us for many years, because we might, in appearance, be upon the verge of the grave; nor indeed, would the unhappy criminal fancy a reprieve too late, because it was not placed in his hands until he had ascended the scaffold. But I fear the real truth is this,—that it is those who have no wish to find time to learn, that would forego an opportunity, upon the false and ungrounded plea of its being too late. It is never too late to learn! Dr. Hunter, the celebrated anatomist, did not think it too late at twenty, to commence the rudiments of an education; Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, did not think it too late at thirty, to commence the study of the Latin language; Cato the Censor, did not think it too late to learn Greek in his old age. The French mathematician, Paucton, was nineteen before he received any sort of an education, and he afterwards found he was not too late. Cromwell, who in every battle he fought was victorious, was forty-two before he entered the army,—and thus, we see neither was he *too late*. It is true