

## Booth's Department.

### HABITS OF YOUTH.

But, let me ask, what are the habits of youth in general? and what the causes of such habits? As far as I have been able to watch over them, there seems to be three principal ways in which idleness is generated. I will describe them to you under the characters of three young men whom I once knew very well.

I. *The Procrastinator.*—Richard Jackson was a youth of great promise at Eton. He had a great talent and dexterity at versification. He was very quick in perceiving the meaning and seizing upon the spirit of all he read. Whenever anything was put before him which required immediate and prompt attention, he was sure to be among the first to succeed. But he was very fond of books of the imagination; and by that I do not mean good and genuine poetry, but novels, romances, tales of wonder, and plays of the lowest kind. He was somewhat addicted to the ludicrous, and quick in seizing jests and turning all things into ridicule, not with a bad intention, but only for amusement. All this was natural enough, nor indeed did it contain any serious wrong. But only this was the consequence: in the excitement and pleasure created by the peculiar turn of his reading, he could never endure hard, plodding labour. Books of history he called dry; any book which had argument or reasoning in it he threw aside as a bore; disquisitions or essays were an abomination; hard matter of fact were despised. Nothing was taken up but that which would excite the movements of his imagination, and that indeed which most told of the marvellous was ever devoured with the greatest alacrity. But Jackson was a clever boy nevertheless. He was seldom at fault in lessons or in duties. He trusted to his natural talent, and generally succeeded in achieving in a few hours what it took other boys a week or more to accomplish. And this was the fatal snare; for, soon perceiving this, he would put off all that was laborious, while he amused himself with all that was pleasant. His constant cry was, "It is time enough yet. I can easily do it when once I set to work. To-morrow will do. Let us be happy while we can. *Quid sit futurum cras fuge querere.*"

Such was Richard Jackson at school. Passing through Eton with the character of a "clever fellow," bearing the reputation of one who could do anything he pleased, "when once he set about it," he went to Oxford. Three years were now before him for his degree. Three years! He thought to himself, "Well, I have plenty of time before me. What have I to read? Here is a list of twenty authors. Here is my Euclid and my logic, my algebra and my history. Let us put all together. It is not very much. Three years will give me plenty of time. I may amuse myself as I like, at any rate, for a year." And, upon this thought, his plays and novels had a full swing. He was at the tennis-court or the billiard-table all day long; his studies were all abandoned, and he just managed to pass his "little log" on the strength of remembering what he had learned at Eton. Thus being done, there were now two years before him. But that which was not begun when three years stood in anticipation, strange to say, was not more likely to be begun when two years only appeared. Such is habit. It was irksome to begin now. He had now thought of it so long, that he did not know how to take it up. The same conclusion was repeated, "There is time enough yet." The end of the second year had found him exactly as the first had done. Not a book of serious study opened save what his tutors absolutely compelled. "No," said he, "I was always very quick at Eton when anything was really required to be done. I was always reckoned a 'clever fellow.' I shall do very well, I dare say, 'when I once set about it.'" And now six months drew on—still the same. And now three; and then he set to work; but three months, by no stretch of arithmetic or wand of the enchanter, can be made to do the work of three years. He did work at last; but novels and plays, and the sound of the billiards and the tennis, and his amusing companions, and his fun, and his jests—all these had driven out of his brain the power of close and steady application. The day arrived, Jackson was plucked for his degree, and disgraced for life.

II. *The Day-dreamer.*—Thomas Harvey was a boy of very fair abilities, and very nearly equal to Jackson. He felt himself, like Jackson, able to do anything, but he had better sense than Jackson, and plainly perceived that a boy must work hard at the drudgery and rudiment of everything; otherwise, to attain em-

inence was impossible. So he did not cast aside his books altogether, but prepared them and got them into order, and made a great many plans for study. He drew out a little scheme on paper, in which he portioned out his time, so many hours for this study, so many for that; everything was to be completed within a given time. In the same spirit, when he went to Oxford he obtained a very good private tutor. He determined to do so much in the first term, so much in the second, and so much in the third: in short, he looked forward to great honours and reputation by the time his university career should be over. But somehow or other, though his plan said, Rise at six and read till eight, he was seldom out of bed till nine. Though his scheme on paper said, At ten read Herodotus for two hours:—and accordingly thought at ten he might be found making a beginning, and his Herodotus was before him in due order, yet he was always interrupted by some accident. Johnson, his friend, on the other side of the quadrangle, would call in and have a chat; the tailor would call to measure him for a new coat; the postman would leave his letters, and the reading of those would waste away a quarter-of-an-hour; some noise was heard in the street, and away he would hurry to see what it was; his dog [for he would keep a dog in his rooms though quite contrary to rule] would play some trick and attract his notice, and then he would rise up from his work, quite oblivious of what he was engaged in. Thus it happened nine times out of ten, that the poor Herodotus was left at the end of two hours, just precisely at the same page at which it was opened at their commencement; and Thomas Harvey, with all his paper schemes, only just managed to escape disgrace with a common degree.

III. *The Lounger.*—John Atkinson was a youth of great promise when his father, a merchant of a considerable eminence, placed him in his counting-house at the age of eighteen, to be trained up in his own profession. His duty was to be at his desk at nine o'clock every morning, and to work till four in the afternoon;—hard work, but nevertheless, with a little patience, certain, humanly speaking, to lead to great affluence if not to honour. He began very well. His letters were ably written; his books carefully kept; but as he grew a little older and thought himself a man, he joined a club at the west end of London. In this club he found of course many new companions, and some of very questionable characters. It was not to be expected, that when he had parties to dinner at seven or eight in the evening, and spent late nights at the club or the theatre, that he should be found plodding at his desk at nine o'clock in the morning. No, instead of nine, it was now frequently ten o'clock when he appeared; sometimes eleven; sometimes not at all. As the club found him at dinner in the evening, so it found him at breakfast in the morning, and then a friend would drop in and he would take a walk with him to such a place, or visit such a one, or play a game of billiards, or try a new horse, or drive in a new buggy. Now it was very remarkable that he never did anything positively vicious or sinful. There was no positive fault to be found with him. He did not gamble, he did not visit theatres or operas as system, but only dropped in for a lounge, being led away by others. He did not form friendship with horse-dealers and jockeys because he liked their society, but simply because he rolled in among them by accident. It was a sort of desultory rambling spirit that took possession of him, which he could not shake off. But time went on. The desk was now seldom, if ever, visited. The counting house became a bore, and the ledger was looked upon as a disgrace. Why would not his father let him do as he liked, and give him his share of the fortune at once? why must he needs suffer all this drudgery? he should do well enough without any further apprenticeship. Thus it went on, and now twenty-five years had passed over his head, when, instead of being an assistance to his father, he was becoming a serious impediment, by his loose and careless habits; instead of being able to take a place in the labours of the house, he was as ignorant of mercantile affairs as though he had just left the school-room. And so it happened that just at the precise moment, there arose a great crisis among the merchants and bankers of London, and with many others, his father's name was found in the list of bankrupts. Atkinson was thrown upon the world. He knew nothing. He was fit for nothing. The end of the lounge, I believe, was, that he became a shopman in a linen-draper's establishment, and served out tapes behind a counter. *Bennett's Letters to my Children.*

A life without rest is painful, like a long journey where there is no inn.

## Selections.

*A HUNGRY CATERPILAR.*—The *Buffalo Express* relates an amusing incident which occurred at Erie a few days since. A gentleman left Cleveland for New York at an early hour in the morning, without his breakfast, and being very hungry, upon the arrival of the train at Erie, entered the dining room, and placing his carpet bag upon a chair, sat down beside it, and commenced a valorous attack upon the viands placed before him. By and by the proprietor of the establishment came around to collect fares, and upon reaching our friend, ejaculated, "Dollars, sir?"

"A dollar!" responded the eating man, "a dollar—thought you only charged fifty cents a meal for one—eh?"

"That's true," said meanness, "but I count your carpet bag one, since it occupies a seat." [The table was far from being crowded.] Our friend expostulated but the landlord insisted, and the dollar was reluctantly brought forth. The landlord passed on. Our friend deliberately arose, and opening his carpet bag, full in its wide mouth, discarded untidily saying, "Carpet bag, it seems you're an individual—a human individual, since you eat—at least I've paid for you, and now you must eat,"—upon which he seized everything eatable within his reach, nuts, raisins, apples, cakes, pies, and amid the roars of the bystanders, the delight of his brother passengers, and discomfiture of the landlord, phlegmatically went and took his seat in the cars. He said he had provisions enough to last him to New York, after a bountiful supply had been served out in the cars. There was at least \$8 worth in the bag—upon which the landlord realized nothing in the way of profit. So much for meanness.

## ALUMINUM—DISCOVERY OF AN IMPORTANT METAL.

I see from late papers, that a discovery has been made—or rather is about to be realized—which will almost bring to pass the fabled dream of the Alchemist. It is not that of a "philosopher's stone", or a chemical principle—that they change the base metals into gold and silver; it is that of making common clay yield a metal not only resembling silver in all essential and valuable properties, but even surpassing it, and possessing valuable properties that silver does not! That such a metal can be produced from common clay as its base or ore, is no longer a problem, but has been decided in the affirmative, and the only question now is, whether it can be produced with sufficient ease and cheapness to make it useful, and available for the purposes of coin, &c. It is well known that common clay possesses a metallic principle called *aluminum*. It is this that M. Deville, a French chemist, by a series of patient and laborious experimenting, has made to yield this metal.

It is thus spoken of by a late paper, in an article headed, "Turning Clay into Coin," on the subject of this discovery: "Wohler, a well known German chemist, had taken a step beyond Davy, and actually made a lump of clay give up its silver, or aluminum, as the metal was called, but it was only in tiny globules, somewhat resembling seed pearls in appearance. The result was in no way equal to the cost and labor of experiment; still a fact was demonstrated. M. Deville, however, produces the metal in such quantities as to make even grave philosophers hold up their hands in amazement. At a late meeting of the Academy of Sciences, in Paris, he laid before the learned assembly long strips of sheet aluminum, ingots of the same metal, and medals of some inches in diameter, which had been struck at the Imperial Mint—all of which had been got out of clay by his newly discovered process. M. Deville says that this metal is as white as silver, and malleable and ductile in the highest degree. He finds, however, in working it, that it offers a great resistance, from which we may suppose its tenacity to approach that of iron. Cold hammering hardens it, but its former condition may be restored by remelting. Its melting point differs but slightly from that of silver; it conducts heat well; and may be exposed to the air without any sensible oxidation.

We learn further, that aluminum is perfectly impervious by dry or damp air; it may be handled and carried in the pocket without becoming tarnished, and it remains brilliant where fresh cut tin or zinc loses its lustre. Neither gold nor boiling water impairs its brightness; even sulphurated hydrogen, that terrible blackener of plate, finds it altogether insensible; nor does nitric acid, weak or concentrated, act upon it. The only solvent yet known for this apparently indestructible metal is chlorhydric acid, which, by disengaging hydrogen, forms a sesquichloride of aluminum. "Any one," says M. Deville, "will comprehend how