

to encounter some small difficulty he may inquire what weapons they wielded for a like purpose, and perhaps he will wield them with a like success.

Energy is the powerful weapon which achieved victory for all great men. Whether a man is great in war, in politics, in science, literature or the fine arts, he never would have been so if he had not been a man of energy; and moreover, a man of concentrated energy.

In literature, the ancients addicted themselves to one species of composition; the tragic poet appears not to have entered into the province of comedy, nor, as far as we know, were their historians writers of verse. They devoted their faculties to one object, just as the rays of the sun may be directed on a single point with a hundred-fold intensity through the lens of a burning glass; and to this concentration of energy is chiefly owing their general superiority over the moderns. This is the great principle of constancy in one occupation which is partly impeached in the well known maxim: "Beware of the one-book man!"

Now, who are the one-book men? I believe that they comprise many of our great names. Everyone knows how assiduously Demosthenes went on transcribing his Thucydides. Then, St. Chrysostom, who to my mind was by far the greatest orator that ever lived, spent two years in a solitary cavern, reading and meditating on the Holy Bible, so that we are told, he knew it perfectly by heart. Among a hundred more recent instances, there is that of Chatham, who studied Barrow's sermons so often as to repeat them all from memory. There is scarcely any great literary man who has not been particularly addicted to some one book. Here they established a vantage ground where they had a firm footing and a secure fortress.

Everyone, therefore, who engages in literary composition, if not naturally drawn to choose some superior model, should learn to do so from such great examples. But he should determine for what purpose he will take up one especial book. This would be the best for its admirable style; that for its depth of thought; another for the wisdom or science it contains; and in all cases the writer chosen should be the very best of his kind. Then the mind will acquire a decided and vigorous tone—the absence of which is so commonly felt; and it will be kept from that vacancy, inertia and dissatisfaction, which are produced by the practice of desultory reading. This habit indeed will give the fulcrum on which, with the lever of his own peculiar talents, each one will be able to move the world of thought.

But this one book system implies a constancy which has in it something heroic; and therein lies the energy, and therein lies the greatness of the great.

But above all is energy required in the act of composition. It is mere nonsense to say that great geniuses set down their thoughts without labour. It is true, perhaps, that there have been one or two cases where wonderful powers of mind have been united to as wonderful powers of expression, and where thoughts flowed out almost spontaneously in a torrent of eloquence. It was so with Shakspeare in modern days, and it was so with Homer in the olden time. But those instances of energy of thought and expression without effort are remarkable exceptions to the general rule. We hear very differently of the vast majority of famous writers. Take the poets: Euripides wrote one line in the hour; Ariosto wrote some stanzas descriptive of a tempest in sixteen different ways; Petrarch made fifty-four alterations in a single verse; even Byron, whose words rush along in an irresistible stream, displays very many erasures in his manuscripts. If this be the

case with poets, it is even more so with other writers. To go no further back than our own time, Lord Brougham wrote one of his speeches twenty times over. Bulwer Lytton says it was with "incredible labour" that he composed his first fiction. Dr. Newman is nearly always ill after the labour of prolonged composition. Gibbon, the great historian, composed his memoir eight or nine times, and after all left it unfinished. These are but a few instances out of many.

Now, what an extraordinary amount of energy is displayed in all this labour. A weak spirit would be daunted, and give up the undertaking, or hastily throw out some crude production to meet with a similar fate to that of many a poet,

"Whose sweet melodious works have sunk
To wrap up sausages, or line a trunk."

But the great writer has before his mind a grand ideal, which he labours hard to express in language commensurate to its loftiness. He strains intensely after this ideal; but all the time his labour is an enthusiasm, and though at times his mind may be wearied, it is ever borne up with the inward consciousness of power. The struggle between the mind and the idea is often long and severe; often they "wrestle as in a war-embrace," but in the end the patient energy of the manly spirit obtains the mastery, and thought becomes embodied in words.

A Journey to Grammarland.

There was once a little boy who had a great desire to please his mother, and she was very anxious for him to learn grammar. To accomplish this, they worked together with all their zeal; but it was very hard. To learn to speak requires much time; but one accomplishes it, and with pleasure too. When we say "ossee" to the baby, showing him a horse, and he repeats it, everybody is delighted; his mother rewards him with a look and a smile full of tenderness; his father embraces, with a shout of joy, his fat and laughing form; and the little fellow vigorously brandishes his arms and his legs, in order to show that he is happy too.

That is not the way with the grammarians. Those poor gentlemen never laugh, and they have, alas! something more important to do than to kiss little children. With them it is no longer "ossee"; but we are in the presence of "horse, a common substantive, third person, masculine gender, singular number, forming its plural by additions, and whoever can't learn that is a little dunce!"

It is clear that there is no fun in that.

One beautiful summer morning, the mother and the little boy had risen very early to review carefully the page of grammar which he must recite that day. The sun, which made the dew-drops in the grass glisten like diamonds, had entered the room through a corner of the window, and seemed to invite them to come and see how beautiful it was out-of-doors. The red breasis, the tomtits, and the linnets called them with sweet songs from all the trees of the garden; and the large rose-bush which grew behind the house, agitated by the morning breeze, strook the window-panes which its bunches of flowers.

Obedient as he was, the dear child had not courage enough to resist this universal invitation. His legs, which moved about in spite of him, asked to carry him

"Grammar according to the Maccan System; or, a Journey to Grammarland." Adapted from the French, by Père et Fille.