

never do anything. How strange it is that one is so long in learning the importance of great books, and the necessity of neglecting middling ones!

"(January 1, 1878, Marine Parade, Brighton, 6 a.m.) When one thinks of the immensity of time and of the Christian hope that there is endless existence before us, one is perplexed that this infinity of time should take its character from a few years that seem to bear no proportion to it. One observes, however, that in the time here, by far the greatest portion is determined by certain hours or, it may be, minutes.

* In itself a thought,
A slumber'g 'tought is capable of years;

says Byron. With most of us the greater part of our life seems merely wasted. Perhaps the scanty moments we give to prayer may, in importance, be the chief part of our existence.

"(June 6, 1881.) I was lately examining some old papers. They were old scribblings of mine in 1853, twenty-eight years ago. I could not help feeling vexed that they were so good. The first twenty years of life are the really most important part, after all.

"(July 23, 1885.) As I grow old, my capacity for the active business of life (never very great) seems to grow considerably less, while my desire (and, I fancy, my ability) to theorize on life seems to increase. But my time is so consumed by small things that I never get free and never *feel* free to think and write.

"(May 15, 1886.) Perhaps, before the end of my journey, I may be able to write some useful essays, working up the materials in these note-books. The question is whether I shall find time. Till lately, one has thought of the station as at an immeasurable distance. It does not

seem so, now. Like the members of that old fashioned sect still known by the name given them at Antioch, I don't believe in the existence of a terminus.

"(June 15, 1886.) My father used to say that one of his best points as a man of business was that he never let stock hang on hand. He would keep the decks clear and not get hampered with the old stuff.

"(July 8, 1887, Redhill.) In our present state, the machinery of life is far too extravagant of force. When one has arranged one's affairs, seen one's callers and returned their calls, read one's letters and answered them, there is hardly any time left except for meals and sleep. It seems to me a clear duty to reduce all these demands on one's time. Besides this, I think we should spend a portion of the day with some great writer. One is disinclined to rise to the thoughts of a great writer, and one gets to prefer incessant grind. How few intimacies one has with great writers! One has 'no time' to cultivate their acquaintance. But one finds plenty of time to read newspapers and periodical twaddle which does no good at all.

"(October 17, 1887, Redhill.) In indexing my notebooks, I have lately had to read a good deal of my own writing. It is extremely devoid of what M. Arnold calls charm. But one claim to attention my writing has: I write because I *think*.

"(October 26, 1887, Redhill.) I am always engaged in a struggle with my physical surroundings. I do not like disorder, far from it; but never having paid proper attention to keeping things in order, things are too many for me. And, after trying hard to get them straight, I fail. My difficulties arise from two sources—first, I have a sort of acquisitiveness which prevents me from throwing away what may come useful;