

Such a mind cannot have that view of motives which will produce this. Yet, a mind with powers below mediocrity, when earnestly bent on the performance of duty, will accomplish in the end what at first sight might appear wholly beyond its reach. It is thus that some young men who, from their deficiencies on entering College, were objects of suspicion to their friends, and of pity or contempt to their more gifted class-fellows, have, nevertheless, by an earnest application to study, turned out respectable scholars and most useful professional men. Hence, when their success in after life is spoken of, you often hear the remark in reference to some one of them, Yes, he was a lad of but slender powers of mind and ill prepared for College, but his earnest application made up for his deficiencies. For, let it never be forgotten by you, that it is just constant and earnest application to duty which forms those valuable habits on which success in life so much depends. Genius can work with habits, but cannot create them. Earnestness is mainly instrumental in doing this. Nor is this all. How rapidly does that student apprehend what is brought before him, and with what accuracy does he retain what he reads or hears, whose eye glistens with the ardor of a soul on fire as he catches another and another truth by which he is to master the subject of his study. Have no fear for that young man, for he is in earnest. If he has naturally good parts and fair advantages for their cultivation, he can scarcely fail to reach distinction. Even under great disadvantages he is sure to be respectable. For a soul in earnest is animated by that vital heat by which all its powers are expanded and its fruits brought to maturity. If this be not the Promethean fire, the Promethean fire is nothing without it. Depend on it, a want of earnestness in the business of your class, will of itself sufficiently account for your want of progress in learning, and ought to be a sufficient reason to your parents or guardians for your failure here. The earnest student follows with delight the guidance of his Professor, and makes acquisitions at every step. But the frivolous and slothful, although he may be dragged through the *course*, yet at the close he will be found not covered with laurels, but with dust, and will be seen to have gained hardly anything but hatred to study and an aversion to those who dragged him through it. Unless you are earnest, lads, I must tell you solemnly, that I have no hopes of your success within these walls, let your Professors be ever so able and ever so faithful. And, moreover, ever keep in mind the momentous consideration, that all your labors here, and all that you learn in this place, are but the means to future usefulness. O, could we only make you thoroughly earnest students, we would have accomplished much to make you able and successful men in life. For, without this, you will succeed but poorly in any profession to which you are looking forward;