

The slothful man is a burden to himself, his hours hang heavily on his head; he loitereth about, and knoweth not what he would do.

His days pass away like the shadow of a cloud, and he leaveth behind him no mark for remembrance.

His body is diseased for want of exercise; he wisheth for action, but hath not power to move; his mind is in darkness; his thoughts are confused; he longeth for knowledge, but hath no application.

He would eat of the almond, but hateth the trouble of breaking its shell.

His house is in disorder, his servants are wasteful and riotous, and he runneth on towards ruin. He seeth it with his eyes, he heareth it with his ears, he shaketh his head and wisheth, but hath no resolution, till ruin cometh upon him like a whirlwind, and shame and repentance descend with him to the grave.

CHAP. IV.—EMULATION.

If thy soul thirsteth for honour, if thy ear hath any pleasure in the voice of praise, raise thyself from the dust whereof thou art made, and exalt thy aim to something that is praiseworthy.

The oak that now spreadeth its branches towards the heavens was once but an acorn in the bowels of the earth.

Endeavour to be first in thy calling, whatever it be, neither let any one go before thee in well-doing. Nevertheless do not envy the merits of another, but improve thine own talents.