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OUR WORK AND HOW TO DO IT.

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(Continued from page 124.)

IN childhood our first thought, apart from our own gratification, is to please our parents, our friends, our neighbours. It is a motive which is in itself excellent and commendable, and which never entirely leaves the better kind of men and women. We meet with this thought in most workers; and it is embalmed in the writings of the greatest of men. It speaks in touching language in the preface to the great dictionary of Johnson. "I may surely," he says, "be contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds."

In youth we are possessed by the spirit of emulation, and it would be wrong to discourage this sentiment altogether; but it is one which does not live with the best men. "As we grow older," it has been well said, and

the speaker* might have added, as we grow wiser, "we care less to surpass others, and more to do our own work well." The man who cannot understand words like these can hardly have appreciated the dignity and responsibility of work. What can afford a truer or keener pleasure to the earnest workman than to see his work taking shape under his observant eye, under his careful and laborious hand? What, save the satisfaction which he experiences when he finds that he has not wholly failed in his attempt, that he has come somewhat near to the ideal which he placed before him when he took his work in hand? And if the thought of good work be an incitement and the sight of it a joy to the worker, it is hardly less a *delight to all who behold it*. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," said Keats, and the words are emphatically true of a thing of beauty which is the re-

* Lord Derby at Edinburgh.