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FOUR EPIGRAMS.

A KIND WORD.

A kind word often so endears:
It echoes sweetly through the years,
Forgotten by the tongue that spoke;
Remembered by the heart it woke.

CURIOSITY.

Watching the bees, he oft is stung
Who o'er the hive too close his head
has hung.
So, too, and righteously, he fares
Who thrusts himself in other folks'
affairs.

IMAGINATION.

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Off our imagination brings
Such pleasant things to view.
We fold them in our memories
And love to think them true.

FORGIVENESS.

Crush the rose, its odor rises,
Giving sweetness for the pain.
Grieve a woman, and she gives you
Sweet forgiveness, poured like rain.

—§§—

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG CONTINUED.

ABSTRACTION IN STUDY.

The first great object of education is to discipline the mind. It is naturally like the cold, wild and un-governed. Let any man who has not subdued his mind, more or less, by close thought, sit down and take hold of a subject, and try to "think it out." The result will be that he cannot hold his thoughts upon the point. They fly off—they wander away. He brings them back, and determines now to hold his attention there; when at once, ere he knows how, he again finds himself away. The process is repeated till he gives up in discouragement, or else goes to sleep. A young man was once heard complaining that he could not keep his mind fixed on a point. "It rolled off like a barrel from a pin;" and he gave some hints that possibly it might be that his mind was so great! His gravity altogether

exceeded that of his associates, to whom he was giving the explanation. How many great minds would there be if such indications were relied on!

In the period which belongs to you as a *student*, it is not important that you should try to lay up a vast amount of information. The object now is, to fit the mind for future acquisitions and future usefulness. The magazines will be filled soon enough; and we need not be too anxious to fill it while we are getting it ready for use. It is desirable that you should have it strongly impressed on the memory that the great object now is, to set the mind out on a course which it can successfully pursue itself, and that too, through life. Your present object is to form habits of study, and to learn how to study to advantage.

Let your first effort be to fix and hold your attention upon your studies. He who can do this, has mastered many and great difficulties; and he who cannot do it, will in vain look for success in any department of study. "To effect any purpose in study, the mind must be concentrated." If any other object plays on the fancy than that which ought to be exclusively before it, the mind is divided, and both are neutralized so as to lose their effect. What is commonly called *abstraction in study*, is nothing more than having the attention so completely occupied with the subject in hand, that the mind takes notice of nothing without. One of the greatest minds of modern times has been known to be so engrossed in thinking about a particular subject that his horse waded through the corner of a pond, yet, though the water covered the saddle, he was insensible to the cause of his being wet. I mention this, not to recommend such an abstraction, but to show that he who has his at-

tention fixed, and the power of fixing it when he pleases, will be successful in study. Why does the boy, who has a large sum upon his slate, scowl, and rub out, and begin again, and grow discouraged? Because he has not yet learned to command his attention. He was going on well when some new thought flashed into his mind, or some new object caught his eye; and he lost the train of calculation. Why has that Latin or Greek word so puzzled you to remember, that you have had to look it up in the dictionary some ten or a dozen times? And why do you not look at it as a stranger, whose name you *ought* to know, but which you cannot recall? Because you have not yet fully acquired the power of fixing your attention.

The difficulty of confining the attention is probably the secret of the plan of Demosthenes, who shut himself up in his celebrated dark cave for study; and this will account for the fact, that a person who is unexpectedly deprived of the use of his eyes, will not unfrequently make advances in thought, and show a strength of mind, unknown before. I have frequently seen boys take their books on a summer's day, and flee from their room to the grove, and from the grove back again, full of uneasiness, and in vain hoping that changing the place would give them some new power over the roving attention, and that indescribable restlessness, so inseparable from the early efforts to subdue the mind. It is all in vain. You cannot fly from yourself; and the best way is to sit down directly in your room, and there command your attention to fix itself upon the hard, dry lesson, and master it; and when you have thus brought this rover to obey you once, he will be more ready to obey the next time. Attention will be more ready to come at your call to-morrow than to-day.