

THE ANTIDOTE

Published every Saturday in time for the evening suburban trains. Subscription ONE DOLLAR per annum, single copies FIVE CENTS. May be obtained at all the leading stationers and newsdealers in Montreal, Toronto, Quebec, Hamilton, Ottawa, London, Halifax, St. Johns, Kingston, Winnipeg, Victoria, Vancouver, &c. All communications and remittances should be addressed "THE ANTIDOTE," 172 and 173 St. James Street, Montreal. We do not undertake to return unused MSS. or sketches.

TO OUR READERS

That no one may accuse us of any desire of springing a surprise upon them, our readers are hereby notified that it is not our intention to continue the publication of the "Antidote" after the close of its year, the 10th day of June, 1893.

The chief object sought to be attained in launching the "Antidote" is tolerably well known to many of our citizens, especially to the managers of the various insurance companies who generously put their hands in their own pockets and responded to the appeals made to them for patronage by a former co-worker, since appointed to a more lucrative position. It is not necessary to enter into any explanation of the causes standing in the way of success; suffice it to say that the support, however generous, did not aggregate sufficient to warrant a continuance. Paper, printing, engraving, and commissions cost money, not to mention the other expenses on a paper of the kind; and with all this is to be reckoned the fact—notwithstanding what some writers claim—that one enterprise of a literary character is usually as much as one man can expect to conduct and do it justice. That the "Antidote" had not been discontinued some months ago is due to the natural wish to keep faith with subscribers, of whom the vast majority sent in their names early. Those who subscribed later on may have any unearned balance returned to them on application on or after the close of the year.

The proprietor still maintains the belief that a paper of the kind will some day find a permanent field in Montreal, but there are few men with the proper qualifications for it whose ambition would be satisfied with the possible returns from such a periodical in this country.

Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. (2)

It is, of course, among people who know the commercial law of life, "Time is money," only as a respectable but distant fact akin to the latitude of Timbuctoo, that the waste of work inculcated according to the common interpretation, in the proverb which heads this article, comes to be accepted as work. When time has a well understood arithmetical value it is little enough likely to be spent in less than necessary performance; yet even so while honesty holds out against haste and weariness it may be misdirected and there may be a causeless exertion of patience and labor which would have more wisely served a larger aim. It is a mistake that generally kills itself; but not always without exchange for a worse, for the renouncing patience and labor altogether.

But, where time has no value that can be proved, where it merely means the opportunity for doing what it was not indispensable to do and what there can be no remuneration for doing, virtue, divided between the natural objection to fatigue and the desire of possessing the faculty of industry, spends its skill in ceaseless fussing, and uses ninety times nine stitches in time to save some futilely possible nine, and safely blinds a thousand things which no one will ever want to safely find, till negligence itself would be no more unthrifty, and indolence no more lavish of unfruitful hours.

And not, probably, from any special feminine indigestion of the apple Eve shared with Adam, but because their time is so habitually unrenunerative to them, women more than men spend themselves in vehement uselessness. A man sits manifestly at no toll severer than smoking, with his hands limp and lax, and fears no contumely. A woman sits unemployed, fingers like his, and feels no excuse in a busied mind anxious for more than Martha's cares; no matter what she thinks of, she is doing nothing. Let her tweedle thread to make a hideous and altogether objectional clout called an antimacassar, and she is industrious; so

she makes the clout, and since being worth doing it is worth doing well, she makes it with diligent pains and leaves off thinking. Poor soul, she thinks she is working; but her work was while her hands were still, the misapprehension is good for her. But the misapprehension is not always good.

Where there chance to be brains, and a use for brains, it is a pity when finger-twiddling takes the place of work, and the will to be useful is lost in tasks that, with hours of manipulation added, do not repay the outlay of the merest trifle upon the materials. And even in servicable needle-work, known by the name of "plain" there is the same tendency to the same industrious waste of time—a tendency about to be developed to hitherto super-woman extent by school-board authorities on sewing. Firmness and tidiness of work, as well as sensible accommodation of shape to requirements, cannot be too much esteemed by wearers of the garments generically described as under-linen; but who, save the washerwoman, will have opportunities of gazing critically and aesthetically on the varieties of stitching which may enliven the seams and variegate the hems of those various coverings which are "Born to blush unseen"?

And is our experience of our washerwomen's aesthetic tenderness for the works of art we consign to their chloride of lime and scrubbing brushes such as to call for a large expenditure of human eyesight in a handy-work, in elaborating the fantasies of decorations in cotton threads for their admiration? What are we to say of adornments without use and without artistic grace, and which have no beauty except to the eye of the technical seamstress, and to her represent beauty only by the pains and weariness that must have gone to their making?

But the art of a higher aim than the needle woman's is even the worse for this fine-stitch superfluity of quite imperceptible and meaningless detail with no influence on the whole to which it belongs, and no merit in itself but that of its having taken time to do.

Sometimes even that merit is a sham;