

OUR MANHOOD.

There is deep-seated in the soul a feeling of independence, a something which we cannot describe, but which all have felt at one time or another, breathing around the prison walls of their hearts and seeking to make its influence felt on the outward world.—a feeling which prompts us to attempt great deeds, or launch out on the broad ocean of hidden knowledge in search of new discoveries. Who has not felt while contemplating the works of genius, a consciousness of the latent power existing within himself, and which, for aught he knows, shall yet burst forth into life and energy. As we wander in the deep solitude of the forest, with naught to disturb and distract the mind from solemn thought and heavenly musings,—as we contemplate the vastness of Omnipotence while beholding the lofty mountain and the wide, unbroken plain, or while listening,

"When old ocean roars,
And heaves huge surges to the trembling shores,"

the mind seems to expand; to grow large with the consciousness of its own might, and we are lifted, "from Nature up to Nature's God," whose creative power seems to us no longer a mystery, while within we feel the power to scan the Universe,

"To read creation, read its mighty laws,
The plan and execution to collate."

To the man who has become imbued with the "great idea" of his manhood—to whom it is given to know the high prerogatives which he may justly claim, the mountains of difficulties and impossibilities of former years dwindle into mole hills, or seem as but stepping-stones to greatness. Let the contest between spirit and flesh be once commenced,—let our antagonisms be fully aroused,—let us be convinced of the great deeds that are waiting for our performance, and how little it matters what opposing forces may array themselves against us?

How oft does the soul of the boy throb with joy as he thinks of the great deeds manhood has marked out for him; and those "child-dreams," as they are called, are but beliefs, the realizations of which are destined to shape the pillars of earth's old heathen temples, and teach an unbelieving world the greatness of the soul.—Palissy was laughed at by many, and regarded with commiseration by others; but the dream of restoring a lost art to the world had taken possession of his youth and grown into a belief, and in spite of opposition, scorn and derision, he labored on through long weary years until success crowned his efforts, and his glad "Eureka" shout taught the world the truth of his belief. When Timanthes beheld the cherished production of his pencil in ruins, its only effect was to engender within him the purpose to create something more enduring, and as a result, we behold the "Sacrifice of Iphigenia."

Let any one but once realize that within him exists a soul, which the Almighty has endowed with the ability to reach forth and grasp a universe of knowledge, and he will rise up in his strength and shake off the fetters of earthliness. What matters it to him if poverty and obscurity are his portion? His manhood depends

upon something more noble than the mere circumstances of position and wealth, and more refined impulses than the gratification of the merely selfish propensities urge him on to action. To him it is the height of pleasure to meet with new difficulties. He no sooner attains the summit of the loftiest peak which met his gaze, than he beholds another, and still another *Alp*, each offering a greater and more noble victory, because assimilating him towards his Creator. "I am a man," he cries, brother to that Divine Man who, eighteen hundred years ago lived and died for fallen humanity. All then great and good of by-gone days are my brothers, bound together by the ties of a common parentage, and I am tending towards the same Eternity to which they have departed. When countless ages shall have rolled their eyes round, I shall still exist, and when my mind, by reason of increased strength shall have explored the farthest confines of space, still shall it behold an undiminished field for research.

It is a beautiful belief that in a future state we shall be constantly progressing towards, but never reaching, a state of perfection; our attainments commencing there where they end here. Why then, with so glorious a hope for the future, should we despair? To the man who, rather than "be the sport of circumstances" makes "circumstances his sport," the battle is half fought. When the brave three hundred stood at the Pass of Thermopylae, and beheld approaching, the Grecian hosts, innumerable as the leaves of the forest, it was remarked, that the arrows of so great a multitude would darken the sun. Then, was the heroic reply, "*Melius itaque, in umbra pugnabimus.*" "Then we shall the better fight in the shade."

TO THE YOUTH OF OUR SCHOOLS.

You are now in the morning of life.—You know naught comparatively of its rough and thorny path,—behold nothing in the cup but happiness, smiles, and sunshine; even if a passing cloud intervenes, it is of transient duration, and the joy that awaits you seems *thrice* more welcome. Oh! childhood's tears serve to wash away the dust from the mind,—to dispel the petty trials, annoyances and anxieties attending some long, difficult task in Arithmetic or Geography,—some perplexing, brain-bewildering parsing exercise, and the like. But as you advance in life, you will perceive,—yea, more, realize, that this is all *right*,—all just that you should be called thus early to conflict with some trials. It is necessary, before the soldier enters the army, that he should be thoroughly trained and disciplined, that he may be well prepared to act his part. So it is with you; you need to meet some cares, some troubles, that you may be able to withstand the mightier waves and breakers with which your frail bark will have to contend. A few short weeks, or even years at most, and you will be called forth into life's battle-field. Therefore how necessary it is that your minds be properly disciplined, that you study *carefully, thoughtfully*, with regard to the directing of your affairs, knowing

in what direction to go, what path to pursue, and how to avoid the tempests of pride, of avarice, and passion.

There are many heavy toll-gates erected along Life's pathway, which will beggar both the brain and the purse, unless you understand how to avoid them. They appear lovely,—they charm the eye, and fascinate the ear, they scatter roses under your feet, and lead you on by presenting to your vision pictures of happiness, day-dreams of unparalleled bliss, and they keep pointing you *on and on*; your eye becomes dim with the mists of age, your ear no longer has the power of listening to these siren charmers, you behold the roses crushed and withered, and perceive around you only discontent—longings to be some other than what you are, yet the reality is in the distance, and ever will be.

Strive, then, for that which is more stable,—yea, strive for wisdom, cultivate the intellect, discipline the mental faculties—let Improvement be your watch-word, Truth your object-glass, Honesty your surveying-chain, Integrity and Perseverance your armor. You must not be content to stand still. The world is moving, science and literature are advancing, and we, as rational beings, must keep pace with the age. It is a duty we owe ourselves, our fellow-beings, and our Creator. Man was made for progress, and it is no unworthy aspiration when this desire fires the youthful mind. Cultivate and cherish it, prune and direct it in the right path, and above all, learn to think, *think for yourselves*; and when you have thought correctly, properly, and justly, put those thoughts into execution. Be worthy of self-approbation, and as you honor yourselves, so will you be honored.

How many there are who are called good scholars in our schools, of whom we hear nothing after they go forth into the world. Their good scholarship gives them no impulse to go on to greater attainments for themselves. They are mere book-worms, walking libraries, their learning is either that of reception, as the sponge takes in water, or that of mere memory. They have none of that self-reliance which impossibilities alone can subdue. In the same school there are others known as "dull, heavy scholars," distinguished in no way but for their stupidity, who, in after life, fairly outstrip their fellow.—And why is this? The proper course of educating and training these youthful minds has not been properly understood; people will not always go in leading-strings, and, again I repeat, they must think for themselves. Their instructors can, if they understand their vocation, (by degrees, it is true,) call forth these dormant minds and turn the active into a more healthful channel. Happy will be the day when human nature is so understood, and the science and art of education so comprehended, that every mind may be directed and direct itself into its proper sphere. It cannot be done for you; advice and assistance may be given, which shall greatly enhance your progress; but it depends chiefly on yourselves, whether you will be thus educated or not. As Improvement is your watch-word, you must be prepared to detect and avoid the errors of your instructors. Remember,