

III. Those violate this precept who have a lawful calling, a proper business, but are slothful in it. When people are in business for themselves, they are in less risk of transgressing this injunction; though even there it sometimes happens that the hand is not diligent enough to make its owner rich. But it is when engaged in business, not for ourselves, but for others, or for God, that we are in greatest danger of neglecting this rule. The servant, who has no pleasure in his work who does no more than wages can buy, or a legal agreement enforce; the shopman, who does not enter *con amore* into his employer's interest, and bestir himself to extend his trade as he would strive were the concern his own; the scholar, who trifles when his teacher's eye is elsewhere, and who is content if he can only learn enough to escape disgrace; the teacher, who is satisfied if he can only convey a decent quantum of instruction, and who does not labor for the mental expansion and spiritual well-being of his pupils, as he would for those of his own children; the magistrate or civic functionary, who is only careful to escape public censure, and who does not labor to make the community richer, or happier, or better for his administration; the minister, who can give his energies to another cause than the cause of Christ, and neglect his Master's business in minding his own; every one, in short, who performs the work which God or his brethren have given him to do in a hireling and perfunctory manner, is a violator of the divine injunction, "No slothful in business." There are some persons of a dull and languid turn. They trail sluggishly through life, as if some painful viscous, some adhesive slime were clogging every movement and making their snail-path a waste of their very substance. They do nothing with that healthy alacrity, that gleesome energy which bespeaks a sound mind even more than a vigorous body; but they drag themselves to the inevitable task with remonstrating reluctance, as if every joint were set in a socket of torture, or as if they expected the quick flesh to cleave to the next implement of industry they handled. Having no wholesome love to work, no joyous delight in duty, they do every thing grudgingly, in the most superficial manner, and at the latest moment. Others there are, who, if you find them at their post you will find them dozing at it. They are a sort of perpetual somnambulists, walking through their sleep; moving in a constant mystery; looking for their faculties, and forgetting what they are looking for; not able to find their work, and when they have found their work not able to find their hands; doing every thing dreamily, and therefore every thing confusedly and incompletely; their work a dream, their sleep a dream; not repose, not refreshment, but a slumbrous vision of rest, a dreamy query concerning sleep; too late for every thing, taking their passage when the ship has sailed, insuring their property

when the house is burned, locking the door when the goods are stolen—men, whose hobbies seem to have started in the race of existence before their minds were ready, and who are always gazing out vacantly as if they expected their wits were coming up by the next arrival. But, besides the sloths and somnambulists, there is a third class—the day-dreamers. These are a very mournful, because a self-deceiving generation. Like a man who has his windows glazed with yellow glass, and who can fancy a golden sunshine, or a mellow autumn on the fields even when a wintry sleet is sweeping over them, the day-dreamer lives in an elysium of his own creating. With a foot on either side of the fire—with his chin on his bosom, and the wrong end of the book turned towards him, he can pursue his self-complacent musings till he imagines himself a traveller in unknown lands—the explorer of Central Africa—the solver of all the unsolved problems in science—the author of some unprecedented poem at which the wide world is wondering—or something so stupendous that he even begins to quail at his own glory. The misery is, that whilst nothing is done towards attaining the greatness, his luxurious imagination takes its possession for granted; and with his feet on the fender, he fancies himself already on the highest pinnacle of fame; and a still greater misery is, that the time thus wasted in unprofitable musings, if spent in honest application and downright working, would go very far to carry him where his sublime imagination fain would be. It would not be easy to estimate the good of which day-dreams have defrauded the world. Some of the finest intellects have exhaled away in this sluggish evaporation, and left no vestige on earth except the dried froth—the obscure film which survives the drivel of vanished dreams; and others have done just enough to show how important they would have been had they awaked sooner, or kept longer awake at once. Sir James Mackintosh was one of the latter class. His castle-building "never amounted to conviction; in other words, these fancies have never influenced my actions; but I must confess that they have often been as steady and of as regular recurrence as conviction itself; and that they have sometimes created a little faint expectation, a state of mind in which my wander that they should be realised would not be so great as it rationally ought to be." Perhaps no one in modern times has been capable of more sagacious or comprehensive generalization in those sciences which hold court in the high places of human intellect, than he; but a few hints and fragments of finished work are all that remain. Coleridge never sufficiently woke up from his long day-dream to articulate distinctly any of the glorious visions which floated before his majestic fancy, some of which we really believe that the world would have been the wiser for knowing. And, returning from secular phil-