

out this rule (by whatever means he earns his bread) is a student, and may be a gentleman and a fit companion of the learned.

3. In all important studies be thorough.

It is a great blessing to know what you know, and to be able to state it on proper occasions without fear or embarrassment. He that is sure of what he has gained can have confidence in himself thus far, and is prepared to press forward to what remains with the greater speed. Yet I do not believe that we are never to glance at a subject or science with which we do not expect to become thoroughly acquainted. An article in an Encyclopedia, or in some Quarterly Review, may give us a brief outline of a book, a science, or a subject which will tend to enlarge the mind, although we may not find it possible to make ourselves complete masters of it.—Such particles of knowledge will often enable us to listen intelligently to conversation which otherwise would have no attractions, and even to take some part in it, at least by modest and pertinent enquiries. Still, as I remarked above, let your important studies all be thoroughly mastered.

4. Write down, in your own language, every new acquisition.

The habit of writing will fix it more firmly in the mind, and enable you to express yourself with precision and elegance. No faculty is capable of greater improvement, by careful practice, than conversation. The common rules of grammar and punctuation being understood, we may arrive at almost any degree of polish in writing which we choose to attain. Daily reading will enlarge our command of language, and daily composition will enable us to arrange our sentences. The perusal of some of those writers celebrated for their excellence of style, with the object of personal improvement in view, would furnish valuable assistance. Chiefly, however, would I recommend a calm reliance in your own common sense, simply observing to "put proper words in proper places."

Important as this rule is, I more fear its being neglected than almost either of the others. In order to secure its adoption, it might be necessary to effect a slight change in your domestic economy. That family who are bent on self-improvement will find it important to set apart somewhere in the house, a room or a corner, for the library and a study. There should be the books and a table, and if last, not least in importance, good clear black ink, and clean white paper, together with the grey goosequill, whetstone, and penknife bone. With such preparation, it will require self-denial not to sit down and write. But if, as is too often the case, a penknife must be borrowed, and the inkstand be for the seventh time replenished with vinegar and water, and there is no spot to sit down and be retired, I doubt if much will ever be done. It is true, a glowing genius will overcome almost anything, and Mrs. Hemans wrote one of her largest and most splendid poems in her sister's pantry; still I am not so sanguine as to expect such occurrences every day. A very little care and expense would enable every family to have a library, which, in a room set apart for it, would work wonders in the business of home education.

5. Have confidence in yourself.

The want of confidence prevents many from beginning. Do not await, however.—Put not off the commencement of study for fear you shall not accomplish all your desire. What if you do not? You will gain what you do gain, and know what you do know, be it little or much. What if you never become a Newton, a Locke, or a Milton? Is that a reason why you should not avail yourself of what Newton discovered, or improve the

mental powers which Locke defined, or let your imagination travel on the strong wings which Milton left outspread? Only begin, and then simply continue from day to day, and your success is certain. You have perception, and can understand a given statement of a fact or principle, as well as others. You have reason, and you can compare fact with fact, principle with principle, and conclusion with conclusion, until you arrive at a satisfactory decision. Your memory will be strengthened by exercise, and your imagination will be trained and inspired by constant communion with great and gifted writers.—What then shall hinder your improvement if you are determined upon it?

It is a pleasant thought, in finishing this communication, that probably a few at least will make an experiment of these rules. If so I shall not have written in vain. There will be some, dwelling here and there, who will give it a speedy trial. Let it be a fair one. Then there will be an increase of intellectual power in our families, and an extension of spheres of usefulness in which many will be blessed.—*New York Evangelist.*

AN ANGEL VISIT.

On the evening of the thirty-first of December, I had been cherishing the humiliating and solemn reflections which are peculiarly suitable to the close of the year, and endeavouring to bring my mind to that view of the past, best calculated to influence the future. I had attempted to recal the prominent incidents of the twelve months which had elapsed; and, in this endeavour, I was led frequently to regret how little my memory could retain even of that most important to be remembered. I could not avoid, at such a period, looking forwards, as well as backwards, and anticipating that fearful tribunal at which no occurrence shall be forgotten; while my imagination penetrated into the distant destinies which shall be dependant on its decision. At my usual hour I retired to rest; but the train of meditation I had pursued was so important and appropriate, that imagination continued it after sense had slumbered. "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man," I was mentally concerned in the following scenes of interest:—I imagined myself still adding, link after link to the chain of reflection, the progress of which the time for repose had interrupted; and while thus engaged, I was aware that there remained but a few moments to complete the day. I heard the clock as it tolled the knell of another year; and, as it rung slowly the appointed number, each note was followed by a sting of conscience, bitterly reproaching me for my neglect of precious time. The last stroke was ringing in my ears, painful as the groan announcing the departure of a valuable friend—when, notwithstanding the meditative posture in which I was sitting, I perceived that the dimness of the apartment became brighter; and on lifting my eyes to discover the cause, I was terrified at perceiving that another being was with me in my seclusion. I saw one before me whose form indeed was human; but the bright burning glance of his eye, and the splendor which beamed forth from his beautifully-proportioned form, convinced me at a glance that it was no mortal being that I saw. The elevation of his brow gave dignity of the highest order to his countenance; but the most acute observation was indicated by his majestic features. A glittering phylactery encircled his head, upon which was written as in letters of fire, "The Faithful One." Under one arm he bore two volumes; in his hand held a pen. I instantly knew the Recording Angel—the secretary of the terrible tribunal of heaven. With a trembling which convulsed my frame, I heard his unearthly accents. "Mortal," he said, "thou wast longing to recal the events of the year; thou art permitted to gaze upon the record of the books of God: Peruse, and be wise." As he spoke thus, he opened before me one of the volumes which he had brought. In fearful apprehensions, I read in it my own name, and recognized the history of my own life during the past year, with all its minute particulars. Bur-

ning words were those which that volume contained; all the actions and circumstances of my life were registered under their respective heads in that dreadful book. I was first struck by the title, "Mercies Received." Some were there the remembrance of which I had retained; more which were recalled after having been forgotten; but the far greater number had never been noticed at all. O what a detail of preservations, and deliverances, and invitations, and warnings, and bestowments; I remembered that "Sabbaths" stood out in very prominent characters, as if they had been among the greatest benefits. In observing the recapitulation, I could not but be struck with one circumstance; it was, that many dispensations which I had considered curses, were enumerated here as blessings. Many a woe which had riven the heart—many a cup whose bitterness seemed to designate it a poison—was there, verifying the language of the poet—

"E'en crosses from His sovereign hand
Are blessings in disguise."

Another catalogue was there; it was the enumeration of "Transgressions." My hand trembles as I remember them. What an immense variety of classes! Indifference—thoughtlessness—formality—unbelief—sins against the world, against the church, against the Father, against the Saviour, against the Sanctifier, stood at the head of their crowded battalions, as if for the purpose of driving me to despair. Not one sin was forgotten there; neglected Sabbaths, abused ordinances, misimproved time, encouraged temptations,—there they stood, with no excuse, no extenuation. There was one very long class I remember well—"Idle Words;" and then the passage flashed like lightning across my mind. "For every idle word that men speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment." My supernatural visitant here addressed me; "Dost thou observe how small a proportion thy sins of commission bear to those of omission?" As he spoke he pointed me to instances in the page like the following: "I was hungry, and thou gavest me no meat; I was thirsty, and thou gavest me no drink; I was sick, thou didst not visit me." I was conscience-stricken. In another part of the record I read the title: "Duties Performed." Alas! how small was their number! Humble as I had been accustomed to think the estimate of my good works, I was greatly disappointed to perceive that many performances on which I had looked back with pride were omitted, "because," my visiter informed me, "the motive was impure." It was, however, with feelings of the most affecting gratification, I read beneath this record, small as it was, the following passage: "Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward." While I gazed on many other similar records, such was the intense feeling which seemed to be awakened within me, that my brain grew dizzy and my eyes became dim. I was awaked from this state by the touch of my supernatural instructor, who pointed me to the volume in which I read my own terrible history, now closed, and bearing a seal, on which with a sickening heart I read the inscription—"Reserved unto the day of Judgement." "And now," said the angel, "my commission is completed. Thou hast been permitted what was never granted to man before. What thinkest thou of the record? Dost thou not justly tremble? How many a line is here, which, 'dying, you could wish to blot?' I see you already shudder at the thought of this disclosure of the day of judgement, when the assembled world shall listen to its contents. But if such be the record of one year, what must be the guilt of your whole life! Seek, then, an interest in the blood of Christ; justified by which, you shall indeed hear the repetition, but not to condemnation. Pray that, when the other books are opened, your name may be found in the Book of Life. And see the volume prepared for the history of another year; yet its page is unsoiled. Time is before thee—seek to improve it—privileges are before thee—may they prove the gate of heaven!—judgment is before thee,—prepare to meet thy God." He turned to depart, and as I seemed to hear the ruffling which announced his flight, I awoke.—*Baptist Recorder.*

If all seconds were as averse to duels as their principals, very little blood would be shed in that way.