

find it needful, sometimes, to deny himself to those by whom he chances to be surrounded, not because he is tired of society, but because he does not wish to be alone.

Attention has been frequently drawn to the fact that most of the world's strong men were made ready for their life-work by years of meditation in solitude. There is no reason to suppose that the law of their development in this regard is at all exceptional, or that it will be less necessary for us than for them to lay the foundations of our character in earnest thought, and vivid realization of the great principles of life. If we become impatient under the moulding hand of reflection, and seek to abridge the time which is absolutely essential to mature any worthy plan, and render our energies intense and vigorous, the Nemesis of outraged nature will be that shallow success and contentment which, however, pleasing they may seem, are the surest signs of human deterioration. The prevailing tendency of not a few men is towards this lamentable issue. They are always acting and never thinking, unless they dignify by the name of "thought" those schemes of self-interest and pleasure upon whose current their lives are borne. The wise man said "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow;" and one of the compensating advantages of ignorance lies in the fact that it makes possible the joyous pursuit of some lower forms of activity, perhaps not altogether useless but certain to be either wholly abandoned with the growth of mental discernment, or bequeathed as an unenviable legacy to those who still find them quite noble enough for their capacities and ideas of life. In this new world we have probably carried utilitarianism as far as we can with safety. When any object is presented before the average citizen, he is not very likely to ask, "What are its educating influences?" but "How much is it worth?" and his standards of value will have invariable reference to the current coin of the country. We may feel some temptation, in hours of discouragement and indolence, to eliminate serious thought from the programme of life, when we see how remarkably "acceptable" some men are without it. "We pray to be conventional," says Emerson, "but the wary heaven takes care you shall not be, if there is anything good in you." No one can carry his head on his sleeve, any more than his heart, if he has much of either. He may even find it expedient to shun the easy path towards ephemeral popularity, to make himself a little less conspicuous before the public, if he aspires to influence in any permanent way the fortunes of his fellow-men. When we were little children, some of us showed our crude ideas about agriculture by planting seeds one day, and tearing up the ground on the next, to see if they were growing. There is a great deal of that kind of childishness in the demands some excellent persons make for a scheme of education, which shall be "practical," that is to say, in their vocabulary, immediately manifest in its results. They are perfectly content if the youthful organ of the mind, after