

THE  
**ODD FELLOWS' RECORD;**

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE,

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE INDEPENDENT  
ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS.

Vol. I.

MONTREAL, AUGUST, 1846.

No. VIII.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF LIFE.

The chronology of human life is a science at present either little understood or studied, perhaps because, like some others in a similar position, it is put aside for the acquisition or study of such as are more striking and fashionable, though of less general utility. Such are found (as this will be if candidly examined) to enter into the most secret recesses of human happiness, and to be most intimately connected with the success of human efforts; and many close observers of mankind have endeavoured to sketch it. That "sweet child of nature—Shakspeare"—as Bishop Watson styled him, has quaintly described it thus:—

"Each man in his time plays many parts,  
"Their Acts being seven Ages :  
"First, the infant, meuling and puking 'n the nurse's arms,  
"Then the whining school boy, with shining morning face,  
"Creeping like snail unwillingly to school, &c. &c.  
"Last scene of all which ends this strange eventful history," &c.

And again he has very truly observed:—

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
"Which, taken at the flood, flows on to fortune.  
"That miss'd, the rest is bound in shallows and in misery."

What man does not look back with regret at his indifference to advantages once placed in his power in the chronicles of by-gone days, and his supineness in neglecting to improve opportunities he once enjoyed, of acquiring knowledge or of improving talents, which would have yielded at the present moment a rich harvest of advantages that cannot now be realized. I have often thought it would form one of the most interesting, instructive and important collections of statistics in existence, if it could be gathered up without interference with the privacy of social life. We gain some slight sketches of it from the histories of public men, and occasionally are favoured with some of bolder outline, stronger markings and higher finish; while others again present deeper shadow and stronger lights in the history of human character amongst our private acquaintance. The child that refuses to pay due respect to parents, to observe the courtesies due to mankind, or to learn habits of neatness and order, sows for himself and his posterity a harvest of evils which they will be compelled to reap when the period of their maturity arrives. The youths who neglect to improve the opportunities of obtaining a good and thorough education when their parents have it in their power to afford it—who waste and idle away

their time in frivolous sports, vain amusements, and uninstructional reading—find themselves, when too late, ill prepared for the stern realities and requisitions of real life, and vainly regret the want of attention they manifested during the period, which should have been employed in diligent attention to studies necessary to qualify man for the duties he owes to his fellow. The young people, whose carelessness, or blind headstrong disregard of the future, prevent them from acquiring that knowledge of the world and of business, and that tact and habit which the period of apprenticeship is intended to convey, or who, when that period expires, neglect to economize their time and resources for the opportunity of commencing the world for themselves, or rashly and heedlessly plunge themselves into all the cares, anxieties, and responsibilities of married and business life, have generally a whole life of more lengthened or protracted disappointment, in which to regret their having suffered the golden moment to escape from their grasp, or pass by as an insignificant shadow. The commencement of business and of married life, is an era of the greatest importance to persons of riper years, or youth ambitious of instruction and progress; and yet how many bright hopes and fond anticipations have been dashed to the ground through want of care, industry or prudent circumspection at that eventful period,—let bereaved families and ruined fortunes witness! Attention to business, to a wife, a husband, or a family, which would have been so requisite in establishing a concern or a household, have been misplaced by indolence, intemperance, inattention and want of plan or arrangement of time, and the most distressing and irreparable injuries have been sustained.

A large number of men in business have had to lament their neglect of opportunities for forming or throwing off an acquaintance with individuals, which has had important bearing upon their present position and circumstances, or of being awake to the existence or introduction of incidents which would have materially altered it, and the circumstances and prospects of their families. And the same may be said in reference to more private individuals, who have forgotten or disgraced the value of the time or advantages in their possession, and bartered them heedlessly for some fancied good, the worth of which they did not take the pains to investigate or duly consider.