

with an amount of information which will be useful or merely useless lumber in proportion as the individual has used the opportunities for mental training within his reach.

The importance of a sound and thorough mental training cannot be overestimated. It is by far the noblest acquirement open to our competition. It is the developing of those god-like faculties, the germs of which have been placed within us by the all-wise Creator, and from the very fact that those faculties are capable of improvement by cultivation, we may safely draw the conclusion that it is imperative on man to cultivate them so far as he has opportunity. We know of no avocation, no sphere of labor, in which men engage where they will not reap benefit from having undergone a course of mental culture, and we consider it a lamentable state of things that so few outside of the learned professions avail themselves of the opportunities that are now within the reach of all to secure this desirable end.

Some considerable agitation is being made of late with regard to the best means of securing a thorough mental training. A tendency is displaying itself in some of our American institutions of learning, and also though to a less degree in some European colleges, to depart a little from the old well-beaten path in which students have been compelled to walk for some centuries back. This shows itself in the elective element, which to some extent is allowed in the curricula of those colleges. We are, however, of opinion that the underlying cause of this departure is rather expediency than prosperity. The present is an eminently practical age, and in some respects men greatly err by attempting to carry too much of the practical spirit of business life into the domain of education. Students cannot, in many instances, see why it is not more to their advantage to pursue such branches of study, as they may in after life turn to practical use than to spend their time over the dead languages, or the higher mathematics; and it may be that a mere desire for popularity has, in some cases, been an inducement to colleges to introduce this element. But notwithstanding the contaminating influence of the present practical age may, to some extent, be visible in a few of our centres of learning, yet as a means of mental culture there is but little or no disposition among the literati to abandon the old efficient agency—the classics and mathematics. Whilst it is education that colleges are designed to carry on, those studies, although of but little practical benefit in after life, must ever constitute a very large part of the work to be accomplished, during a course of collegiate training, for the experience of centuries has already proven that in all the vast

field of literature there can be found no adequate substitute for this part of our curricula.

### LIFE.

"We shape ourselves the joy, or fear,  
Of which the coming life is made;  
And fill our future's atmosphere  
With sunshine or with shade."

"The tissue of the life to be  
We weave with colors all our own;  
And in the field of destiny,  
We reap as we have sown."

Should a summary of the forces within each soul be made they could be properly reduced to three. Hope, Memory, and Conscience. While hope is the guiding star to each individual life, memory and conscience are the working powers in our natures which make our lives miserable or happy.

At first there is nothing by which memory is particularly called into exercise; but as we grow older, leaving the fairy land of youth, and merging into the broader fields of manhood and womanhood, the seeds of the future harvest are sown. Each act, each thought, each desire, is then pre-eminently a link in the great chain of our existence. If these be strong and true all the surges of after life can only teach us the sweet experience that our anchor is cast within the veil, and the cable is strong. As time rolls on memory reviews each individual life, turning and over-turning. Conscience holds the light by which all the dark recesses are explored and the hidden things brought to light. Within each soul is the tribunal going on. Sweet scenes of the long ago arise but they are now estimated by a standard different from before. Blindness, as to the future, arising from the expectancy of youth, or the ardor and ambition of early manhood has now departed, and the weary pilgrim of "three score and ten" looks upon life as something past. What *shall* be? cannot now be the question that comes to his mind; but what *has* been and what *is*? and still he looks into the future and asks what *shall* be?

"What is the gift of life?  
To him who reads with heaven-instructed eye  
'Tis the first dawning of eternity;  
The future heaven just bursting into sight,  
The glimmering of a still increasing light;  
Its cheering scenes forstake of heavenly joy;  
Its storms and tempests sent to purify;  
Then, truly then is life a glorious thing."

### INDIVIDUALITY.

The endless variety of feature observable in different individuals of the same species, is scarcely less wonderful than the countless number of different species of organized beings which exist upon the earth. The Divine Architect manifests

an inexhaustible originality in the details of his handiwork in every department of nature. While conforming to the law of the species, He gives to each individual certain marks which distinguish it from all others. No two are formed exactly alike. No two need be mistaken for each other. Though each corresponds to the specific type, it nevertheless possesses peculiarities which give to it an individuality of its own.

In no department of the realm of life do we notice greater or more striking diversity of individual character than in the human family. Men differ widely in their native endowments, and these inherited differences often become more marked by cultivation. While the specific resemblances of men are such as to indicate their descent from a common parentage, and their brotherhood as a race, the variations of mental constitution are as numerous as the individuals, stamping each with his own distinct personality.

There is doubtless a beneficent purpose underlying this endless diversity of natural character, and the consideration of such purpose may suggest a lesson which is not perhaps without importance. What, then, is the purpose of the numberless differences of feature which distinguish individuals from each other? Does it not seem that the Author of nature intended, by a variety of individual forms within specific limits, to invest His skill and power with a charm which they could not otherwise possess?

Uniformity, however beautiful the type, soon becomes dull and tiresome. If all landscapes were exactly alike the traveller would soon become weary of viewing them. If every flower, or shrub, or tree were precisely similar to every other individual of the same class, nature would lose half its attraction to the tourist and the poet. If all human minds bore a perfect resemblance to each other, a large amount of the enjoyment of life, as it is, would be utterly impossible. The law of individuality seems to be necessary to the happiness of man, and this may, perhaps, in some measure, account for the fact that it is found operating so universally in the world about him and in his own nature.

We may hence infer that individuality of character is not an unnatural or undesirable excrescence, which ought to be pruned away, or suppressed; but rather an advantage which nature has conferred upon every one, and which, as such ought to be retained and utilized. While eccentricity should never be effected, it need not be disowned, or under-rated; but may, if wisely used, prove of great service. Though comparatively few possess the element of eccentricity, yet every man has traits of character which may distinguish his life-work from that