

as actions are the most correct index of the mind and heart; they are thoughts crystallized.

Action is the result of matured thought, or of impulse. We are told that every motion of the body proceeds from the brain; that every thing that we do is anticipated by it, and action takes place there, and may or may not have a corresponding outward motion, according as the will is exerted in reference to that action. And, since action is a motion of the mind, permitted by the will to assume an outward form after more or less consideration, impulsive action, or that which takes place with the least forethought, is the most correct index of the original motion of the mind.

If a man should see his fellow in a river drowning, and hasten to render all the assistance in his power, in order to rescue him, an observer would think of the one who rendered the assistance as being a noble-hearted man—one who had a sympathizing nature, and ready to help the distressed; and the inference would be a reasonable one; for the action was the result of impulse. The man had not time to consider whether or not it would be profitable to endanger his own life for the sake of saving that of another; it was enough for him to know that the life of his fellow was in danger, and that his help was needed.

On the other hand, action as the result of forethought does not give a true picture of the author's character. It presents a picture similar to that representing the highest idea the artist had of the object represented; there is more gold and sunshine made to appear than really exists in the original.

A generally prevailing idea among men at the present day is, that virtue and integrity can be manifested only in great actions. But this is an erroneous notion, since great deeds, so called, are generally performed after much preparation and forethought, and therefore cannot denote the true character of the doer; but it is rather in the performance of the small things of life—things that are done almost unconsciously, that virtue and integrity are, if at all, manifested. A man occupying a high position in the state, to whom an important civil or financial trust has been committed, may exemplify virtue and integ-

riety by acting honorably and honestly in reference to that trust; but another man occupying a lowly position, on whom the great world is not looking, can exercise the same innate principle of virtue and integrity as the other, with probably a purer motive.

Very many persons seem not to be aware of this fact, or they seem to have forgotten it altogether. They have an idea that if they occupied the position that some one else occupies, they could do much more good than they now do; their sphere of influence would be more extended, and if they practised virtue, it would be more widely recognized and more generally imitated. It was this desire to do more than the ordinary duties of life demand of one, or than was thought could be done in connection with life's common duties, combined with the same error, that instigated the so called christians of Europe, during some of the past centuries, to break the ties that bound them to society, and to go on pilgrimages, or to shut themselves in from the contaminating influences of their fellow men.

We exercise sufficient latitude in our opinions to believe that there were instances of virtue among those who thus buried themselves for life in convents and monasteries; and some probably had praiseworthy motives, but it is quite evident that they too, as the results show, were in error. It is impossible for us to say what would have been the result if those persons had retained their position and influence in the world, but if the monks and nuns had any religion, it was removed from among men and with them was buried in the tombs of the living; and as a result, we see the people left without instructors; the little knowledge of truth possessed by them, instead of being nourished and increased by intercourse with those who were supposed to possess it, allowed to languish, or to be fed at the beak of chance, and if we take a glance over Europe soon after the establishment of the Monkish order, we will see darkness hovering over and frustrating the minds and hearts of men. Men in intercourse with each other are influenced, one by the other; there the monks in severing their connection with the world, forsook the contest with error and evil, leaving the field in the power of the enemy, as far as human