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THE CALLIOPE

CONCORDIA RES PARVÆ CRESCUNT,

VOL. 1.

JUNE 21 1859.

NO. 8.

POETRY.



Shun delays—they breed remorse ;
Take thy time while time is lent thee ;
Creeping snails have weakest force ;
Fly their fault least thou repent thee.
Good is best when soonest wrought,
Lingering labors come to nought.

Written for the 'Calliope.'

BY ETHA.

"Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man."

"Know thyself." In the acquirement of knowledge, in the various departments of literature and science, we willingly devote the whole of our days laboriously and unremittingly, but to that important study, which requires the eyes to turn inwards and to peruse, carefully, slowly and thoughtfully the pages of the mind, so fraught with the most momentous and instructive lessons, and marred by as many errors of which they should be purged, we seldom and reluctantly turn. Some shrink from the task ; their pride holds them with firm, unrelaxing grasp from attempting to discover and to remedy faults in themselves, as such an act would strike a cruel and painful blow to that pride which they cherish so closely and fondly. Others again are restrained by motives of fear ; the voice of conscience buried beneath, and temporally extinguished by the heap of moral filth above it, on being disinterred by the penetrating glance of search, would raise her voice in tones that would strike dis-

may and despair to the heart of vice's votary ; that nature, prostituted by vice would raise such a voice of woe on beholding her degraded state as to drive frantic her abuser. Drowning every voice of conscience ; disregarding every appeal and struggle of a fettered and abused nature, he strives to forget that he has a conscience and a moral nature, and sinks down deeper and deeper into the dismal and wretched pit of profligacy, misery and utter debasement, and finally vanishes in its horrid depths into eternal perdition. While not a few with minds too contracted to perceive their weaknesses neglect the precept 'know thyself' as inapplicable to them, regarding their follies, prejudices, &c., as but marked peculiarities of character, or things to be retained rather than renounced.

If each were to say to himself, "let me know myself," and to bend his gaze anxiously within, with a firm determination to detect and destroy every weakness, every folly, every prejudice, to supply every want ; to learn the exact compass of his mind, man would seldom be overtaken by those disappointments which embitter life ; he would escape all the painful blows at his pride which the world perpetually deals at those who assume much ; be saved from the most of those failures in enterprises which sweep from him in one fatal moment all he possesses, the accumulation of toil some years ; which plunge thousands of beings into hopeless misery, and summon up the gaunt spectre starvation to haunt their empty homes ; which cast to

THE CALLIOPE.

the black, insatiable jaws of death thousands of premature victims. Trace all the calamities which befall man to their source and you will find it mostly to lie in his wrong estimate of his own capabilities.

If we were each to say: let me know the purpose for which I exist. Is it to move through this transitory existence solitary, excluded from the world, in the pursuit of studies which can benefit myself alone, but not have the remotest influence on the welfare of the world at large? that can exalt my intellect, raise me superior to my fellow beings, and elicit their admiration and applause, but not aid in lifting from poverty and misery; snatching from the horrors of starvation and attendant vice, poor, fallen man? Was I placed on earth to ascend to power, honour, fame, on the necks of my prostrate fellow creatures; to rise a step higher at each wretch I cast into the dust? Was I placed on earth my only object to accumulate wealth; to draw from the poor man, as the tiger sucks his victims life-blood, his last penny to throw on my glittering, hell-damning pile? that penny which, perhaps, a long day of painful toil had won; which the feeble cries of perishing infants and the rending sobs of a mother had driven the heartbroken father forth to seek? Assuredly not. In what then consists my duty? Charity. Learn your true nature;—to sympathize with your unfortunate fellow men in their wrongs; to mitigate their sufferings;

“And learn the luxury of doing good.”

Crush with unsparing hand your selfish motives and aims. Take faltering, weak man by the hand and lead him upward to happiness and hopes which will be intensified and realized in a future world. Raise the poor man's head from the dust; wash from him the stains of poverty and hide his nakedness from a cold, careless and deriding world. Let thy trembling hand convey the crust of bread to the starving mouth, and raise the refreshing cup to the parched lips; cause that pulse which had nigh ceased beating, to palpitate again; that blood, stagnant in the

veins, to resume its lightening speed. Let it be thine to keep the pale midnight vigils by the bed of sickness; to aid almost exhausted nature, to throw off the fell hand of disease and struggle back to life and health; to pour the balm of consolation into the wounded mind. Be a *christian*. Know thyself and thou shalt be one.

Let each of us say to himself: “let me know myself.” Do I wear the garments of hypocrisy? let me tear them from my shoulders and fling them from me; let my heart be thrown open to the gaze of the world; my tongue not belie my thoughts. Have I a revengeful, unfor-giving nature? let me search with straining, anxious eyes for the spot in which the rankling poison lurks; cease not till it be discovered and the destroying antidote applied. Skrink my heart with envy? let me burn it out and infuse in its stead pure, disinterested affection. Does malice, lurking in my tongue, shoot from thence its envenomed shafts? let me pluck them out, and let none but words of love and kindness fall from it. Do prejudices warp my judgement and contract my mind? let me release them from those fetters, that they may expand to their utmost bounds; and that reason and justice may wholly predominate. Am I wrapt up in selfishness and pride? let me throw them from me, and take instead mankind and humility. But alas! how few of us do these things! Many of us cannot relinquish weak and foolish habits which a long indulgence make us regard in the light of old friends, in the absence of which we would mope and pine. Take the woodpecker from his stump and he pines away and dies; take his weak or vicious habits from the man, he feels deserted. We must all have something to peck at. To many the appeal would be made in vain. Some of us have cherished habits and prejudices so long and closely that they have become inseparable parts of our nature; and in some places are so intimately connected with the good that it would be difficult, as with the tares in the wheat, to eradicate the one without uprooting the other.

“And e'en our failings lean to virtue's side.”

It is to be regretted for his own sake that man does not more engage in the noble study of himself. He would find there more to please, to interest, to instruct, to improve, than in the dusty pages of abstruse science; the subtle pages of Metaphysics; or the pleasing pages of romance. A study which would fully occupy every moment he could devote to it. A volume, in which, at every new perusal, some errors is found to be corrected; some good point to be improved. And when the vacation comes, the student issues out, an elevated magnanimous being, having successfully and satisfactorily concluded his study, to receive the reward of his labor and the smile of his approving Master; not a disappointed student baffled by speculations which can either, never have a solution, or have it at the sacrifice of every pleasure and comfort, at the neglect of every other duty, even the most important. Studies which make him indifferent and shut to the world, bound up in his miserable self; which have no influence in fitting him for that end to which we all look with such certainty and awe; which do not prepare him for that dread moment in which the good, stretched upon the bed of death, await the hour of dissolution, a sweet and happy smile playing upon those lips, soon to moulder in the dust. Studies prompted by a poor, despicable ambition, which has for its only aim worldly fame. No sooner is the desired height attained; no sooner does the eager, outstretched hand clutch the prize, than the grasp relaxes, the prize vanishes, the creature crumbles into nought, sinks into oblivion. And is it for this men spend laborious, joyless lives!—for this perishing bauble they cast from them an eternal prize! Alas! that it is so! Alas! for poor man! when will he learn the vanity of human things!

We should often blush at our best actions did the world see the motives upon which they are founded.

THE CALLIOPE.

TUESDAY, JUNE 21.



We have heard, on several occasions, boys, whom we know to be possessed of excellent ideas, when requested to contribute to the *Calliope*, offer as an objection, that they find it impossible to shape a sentence for want of words to express their ideas fully. Now we have heard the same boys talk for an hour upon one particular subject, and we confess we were highly pleased with their conversation, yet they have a reluctance to appear in print because they cannot furnish long jawbreakers to mysticate an ordinary piece of composition.

This is very silly on their part, especially when the size and circulation of our humble and unpretending journal is taken into consideration. And even were it on a more extensive scale, their objection would still remain as void of sense. It is unhappily the case that the reading public of the present day delight to swallow down long indigestible words and windy sentences—words of “learned length and thundering sound,” while they despise the plain and tasteful style of a healthy writer.

These modern literary “bruisers” are not unlike your highflavoured exquisite, who astonishes the humble folks with the splendour of his waistcoat, the stunning pattern of his pants, the scientific and complicated arrangement of his necktie, and the glossy hue and admirable set of his *Castor*. His *tout ensemble* is so bewildering as to dazzle the beholder, and make him unable to form any idea on the subject; in fact he loses sight of

THE CALLIOPE.

it altogether in the multitudinous array of finery in which it is wrapt up.

It is not necessary that a man should either study or *eat* the dictionary to be able to talk or write. We can, all at least *talk* plain English, and if we only write as we talk we will soon learn to both write and talk more correctly. We should endeavour to adapt our language to our subject, and not sacrifice our subject to language which is entirely out of place in the mouth of a youngster, and which forces upon us the unpleasant conviction that they are not his own. When we see a boy making superhuman efforts to drag up some monstrous words, and when out get entangled in the roots, it makes us feel for the poor fellow and come to his aid with a few nouns and adjectives to help him out. It is amusing to see one of your literary levellers sit down to dash off an article in the regular "yankee Sullivan" style. Striking a suitable attitude he turns up his cuffs, lays hold of the largest dictionary he can find to pick out the longest words, takes a huge sheet of paper, plunges a monstrous pen into an oceanic inkstand and goes at it. He'll show you what writing is! No matter what his theme he'll astonish the natives. If he "had a donkey what would'n't go," he would tell you that he was "the possessor of an ungovernable quadruped who absolutely refused to proceed." These chaps certainly astonish the vulgar, not by the force of their argument, but by the weight and length of their words.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Three Rivers, June 20th 1859.

Dear CALLIOPE,

Insert this letter. Confer a great favor. Know who I am? I'm a boy. Yes, a youth. Won't attain to manhood for some time yet. Glad of it. Youth happiest time of life. In age looked back on with regret. No use that. Should take things as they come. Be content with what you've got. Never sigh over what's past, lost. Foolish, weak—very. Youth called spring of

life. Very appropriately. Everything springing up then. Same in nature. Grass springs up then. Flowers spring up then. Cabbages spring up then. Carrots spring up then. All vegetables spring up then. Aware of that I suppose? Buds burst forth then. Birds spring out then. Warble sweetest notes then. Everything green then. Same in youth. Grass of hope springs up then. Flowers of hope spring up then. Cabbages of hope spring up then. Carrots of hope spring up then. All vegetables of hope spring up then. Buds of hope burst forth then. Birds of hope spring out then. Warble sweetest notes then. All green then—dark. Spring of life; spring of nature, identical. Above reasoning proves so, don't it? Fellow boys—listen. Know anything about farming? No: Never mind, don't matter. Aware that better land cultivated, better it produces? Yes. Good. Know that more manure, the better? Fewer weeds the better? Plants spring up. Weeds spring up. Weeds thicker. Choke plants—impede growth. To unchoke plants, aid growth, root up weeds. Know all that? Very good. *Bene* Dominic would say. Don't like to quote Latin. Looks peevish, affected, ostentatious—odious. Boys laugh—worse. Cultivate field of hope well. Will produce abundantly. Add lots manure. Make it rich, fertile. Kill weeds that they may not choke plants. Keep field clean. Well fenced in, so that no stray cattle get in. If do will make immense holes in field. Destroy many hooting plants. Perhaps destroy them altogether. Take care then to have no holes in fence—no rotten rails. Do all this. You will have green, luxuriant midsummer—abundant harvest. Adieu. Hear from me again. Glad I suppose? Yes. Well, I won't disappoint you. Good fellow is Calliope. Wise fellow Calliope. Shy fellow Calliope. Great fear of girls. Blushes and shakes at sight of one. Silly fellow. Listen to all he tells you. To what I tell you too. Can't go wrong.

I am, Your Seryt.

CURTIS CRISP.