LIFE AND LABOR.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAN AND GENTLEMAN.

The first stocke was full of rightwisness,
  Trewe of his worde, sober, piteous, and free,
Clene of his goste, and loved his besinesse,
  Against the vice of slouth, in honeste,
And but his eyre love vertue as did he;
  He is not Gentil though he riche seme
  Al were he miter, crowne, or diademe.—CHAUCER.

  Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
  Sow a habit, and you reap a character;
  Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.—?

Come wealth or want, come good or ill:
  Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the Awful Will,
  And bear it with an honest heart.
Who misses or who wins the prize—
  Go, lose or conquer as you can,
But if you fail, or if you rise,
  Be each, pray God, a gentleman.—THACKERAY.

THE life of man in this world is, for the most part, a life of work. In the case of ordinary men, work may be regarded as their normal condition. Every man worth calling a man should be willing and able to work. The honest laboring man finds work necessary for his sustenance; but it is equally necessary for men of all conditions, and in every relationship of life.

How can one be idle when others are busy; how maintain social respect, honor, and responsibility? Work is

the best of all educators; for it forces men into contact with others, and with things as they really are. If we consult biography, it will be found that the worthiest men have been the most industrious in their callings, the most sedulous in their investigations, the most heroical in their undertakings. Indeed, to work of hand and brain the world is mainly indebted for its intelligence, its learning, its advancement, and its civilization.

Labor is indeed the price set upon everything which is valuable. Nothing can be accomplished without it. The greatest of men have risen to distinction by unwearied industry and patient application. They may have inborn genius, their natures may be quick and agile, but they cannot avoid the penalty of persevering labor. Labor, however, is not a penalty; work, with hope, is a pleasure. "There is nothing so laborious," said St. Augustine, "as *not* to labor. Blessed is he who devotes his life to great and noble ends, and who forms his well-considered plans with deliberate wisdom." It is not, however, in the noblest plans of life, but in the humblest, that labor avails most. Idleness wastes a fortune in half the time that industry makes one. "Fortune," says the Sanskrit proverb, "attendeth that Lion amongst men who exerteth himself: they are weak men who declare Fate to be the sole cause."

An indulgence in *dolce far niente* causes about half of the hindrances of life. Laziness is said to be one of the greatest dangers that besets the youth of this country. Some young men shirk work, or anything that requires effort or labor. Few people can entertain the idea that they are of no use in the world; or that they are ruining themselves by their laziness. Yet the lazy person who does no work loses the power of enjoyment. His life is all holiday, and he has no interval of leisure for relaxation. The lie-a-beds have never done anything in the world. Events sweep past and leave them slumbering and helpless. "What is often called indolence," says Crabb Robinson, "is, in fact, the unconsciousness of incapacity."

"Idleness," say Jeremy Taylor, "is the burial of a living man,—an idle person being so useless to any purposes of God and man, that he is like one that is dead, unconcerned in the changes and necessities of the world; and he only lives to spend his time, and eat the fruits of the earth, like a vermin or a wolf. When their time comes, they die and perish, and in the meantime do no good; they neither plough nor carry burthens; all that they do is either unprofitable or mischievous. Idleness, indeed, is the greatest prodigality in the world."

The old Greeks insisted on the necessity of labor as a social end. Solon said, "He who does not work is handed over to the tribunals." Another said, "He that does not work is a robber." Labor is one of the best antidotes to crime. As the old proverb has it, "An idle brain is the devil's workshop," for by doing nothing we learn to do ill. The man who does not work, and thinks himself above it, is to be pitied as well as condemned. Nothing can be more terrible than active ignorance and indulged luxury. Self-indulgence saps the foundation of morals, destroys the vigor of manhood, and breeds distempers that nothing but death can eradicate.

Those who know most know best that the devil usually presents himself in the guise of an angel of light, and that sin, in its most seductive forms, arrays itself in the garb of pleasure. The Turkish proverb says, "The devil tempts the idle man, but the idle man tempts the devil." He who follows the devil's lurid light will find before long that ruin follows close upon self-indulgence, and that sorrow becomes only the ghost of joy. Madox Brown, the painter and poet has illustrated the value and beneficence of labor in the following rugged but effective sonnet:—

"Work! which beads the brow, and tans the flesh
Of lusty manhood, casting out its devils!
By whose weird art, transmuting poor men's evils,
Their bed seems down, their one dish ever fresh.
Ah me! For lack of it what ills in leash
Hold us. Its want the pale mechanic levels
To workhouse depths, while Master Spendthrift revels.
For want of work, the fiends him soon inmesh!
Ah! beauteous tripping dame with bell-like skirts,
Intent on thy small scarlet-coated hound,
Are ragged wayside babes not lovesome too?
Untrained, their state reflects on thy deserts,
Or they grow noisome beggars to abound,
Or dreaded midnight robbers, breaking through."

Aristotle strongly remarks that happiness is a certain energy; and daily observation shows that happiness and health are incompatible with idleness,—incompatible with the frivolity that lives in the wind of fashion and plays with the toy of the hour. Most men have opportunities without end for promoting and securing their own happiness. Time can be made the most of. Stray moments, improved and fertilized, may yield many brilliant results. It is astonishing how much can be done by using up the odds and ends of time in leisure hours. We must be prompt to catch the minutes as they fly, and make them yield the treasures they contain ere they escape forever. In youth the hours are golden, in mature years they are silvern, in old age they are leaden. Who at twenty knows nothing, at thirty does nothing, at forty has nothing. Yet the Italian proverb adds, "He who knows nothing is confident in everything."

"We have," says Ruskin, "among mankind in general the three orders of being,—the lowest, sordid and selfish, which neither sees nor feels; the second, noble and sympathetic, but which neither sees nor feels without concluding or acting; and the third and highest, which loses sight in resolution and feeling in work." Promptitude and punctuality are among the blessings and comforts of life. For want of these gifts some of the greatest men have failed.

Curran once said to Grattan, "You would be the greatest man of your day, Grattan, if you would buy a few yards of red tape and tie up your bills and papers." Mackintosh failed for want of method and punctuality, though endowed with the noblest intellectual powers. Cavour was one of the most punctual of men, and achieved greatness independent of red tape.

In the most ordinary affairs—in the business or calling by which we live—at home or abroad—we must take heed of the value of time, keep watch over it, and be punctual to others as well as to ourselves. Without punctuality, indeed, men are kept in a perpetual state of worry, trouble, and annoyance. Punctuality is said to be the politeness of kings. It is also the politeness of subjects. When a certain nobleman, who had made an appointment with George III., went to his Majesty too late, the king made a remark upon his unpunctuality; on which the nobleman replied, "Better late than never."—"No," said the king, "that is a mistake; I say, *better never than late.*" "Too late" is the curse of life; too late for obedience; too late for love; too late for respect; too late for reverence; too late for reform; too late for success; but not too late for ruin.

No life need be useless unless its owner chooses. We can improve and elevate ourselves, and improve and elevate others. We can make ourselves better, and make others better. But this can only be done by the patient use of our moral and intellectual faculties. Miss Julia Wedgwood says, "Of all the mental gifts, the rarest is intellectual patience, and the last lesson of culture is to believe in difficulties which are invisible to ourselves." Many are born with noble gifts and talents; but patient labor is necessary to make them available. Bacon, Newton, and Watt—Pitt, Wellington, and Palmerston—Scott Byron, and Thackeray—worked as hard in their lifetime as

common mechanics. Indeed, no man of ascendancy in science, politics, or literature, can maintain and advance his position without long-continued patience and long-protracted labor.[1]

Buffon was probably not far from the truth when he asserted that the genius of great men consisted in their superior patience. Nothing repelled nor tired them; they turned every moment to account. "Not a day without a line" was the maxim of Apelles. Constant and intelligent observation was the practice of Newton. "We must ascertain what will do, by finding out what will *not* do," was the saying of Watt.

The man who observes patiently and intelligently, and who tests his observation by careful inquiry, becomes the discoverer and inventor. He brings the facts of truth and accuracy to bear upon every subject he investigates, whether it be science, art, literature, law, politics, physiology, or invention. Theories are human, but facts are divine. The habit of patient attention to facts is one of the chief powers to be cultivated. It was one of Newton's remarks, that the only faculty in which he excelled other men was in the power he possessed of keeping a problem before his mind, and perpetually thinking it over and testing it by repeated inquiry, until he had succeeded in effecting its solution.

Iago embodies a lesson of wisdom in his speech to Brabantio: "'Tis in ourselves that we are thus and thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our *wills* are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce;

[1]Victor Hugo says:—"Les opiniatres sont les sublimes. Qui n'est que brave n'a qu'un accès, que ne'st que vaillant n'a qu'un temperament, qui n'est que courageux n'a qu'une vertu, l'obstene dans le vrai a la grandeur. Presque tout le secret des grands coeurs est dans le mot: *perseverando*. La Perseverance est au courage ce que la roue est au levier, c'ést le renouvellement perpetuel du point d'appui."

Quetelet says;—"L'homme qui tend toujours vers le meme but finit par acquérir une force morale immense."

set hyssop, and weed up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured with industry,—why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills." Though we may hate Iago, we thank him for teaching this wholesome lesson.

WILL, indeed! But this requires courage, patient courage. It requires the fortitude which can resist, bear up, and hold on, in spite of difficulties. It needs that resolute effort of the will which we call perseverance. Perseverance is energy made habitual; and perseverance in labor, judiciously and continuously applied, becomes genius. Success in removing obstacles depends upon this law of mechanics,—the greatest amount of force at your disposal concentrated at a given point. If your constitutional force be less than another man's, you equal him if you continue it longer and concentrate it more. A man's genius is always, at the beginning of life, as much unknown to himself as to others. It is only after repeated trials that he dares to think himself equal to undertakings in which those who succeed have secured the admiration of mankind. The spring which issues from the mountain rock as a brook, by the accumulation of streamlets becomes a rivulet, then a rolling river, and eventually part of the fathomless ocean, simply by pushing steadily and presistently onward.

Many are dismayed by difficulties, which in most cases are really our helpers. They teach us experience and incite us to perseverance. "The head of Hercules," says Ruskin, "was always struck covered with a lion's skin, with the claws joining under the chin, to show that when we had conquered our misfortunes they became a help to us." Events are never in themselves absolute. Their results depend upon the quality and character of the individual. Misfortune may even be the stepping-stone for

genius—a treasure to the able man, though to the weak man an abyss. Many a man of possible distinction and goodness has been lost to the world simply because nothing interrupted the course of his prosperity. Everything depends upon will and willingness. Where the will is ready, the ways are not wanting.

> This Life is progress; for the better still
> We hope and strive; and oft Adversity
> Is Truth's best teacher—stimulates to life
> Else dormant faculties; invokes our faith,
> Submission, and endurance."

There is no such thing as remaining stationary in life. All that is human goes backward if it does not go forward. Where obstacles intervene we must march through them—difficulties notwithstanding. Sir Philip Sidney's motto was a fine one—*Viam aut inveniam aut faciam,* I will find a way or make one. Ease makes children; it is difficulty that makes men. Many persons owe their good fortune to some disadvantage under which they have labored, and it is in struggling against it that their best faculties are brought into play. Strength or weakness of character is never more truly tested than by the occurrence to an individual of some sudden change in his outward condition; and this is especially observable if the change be a painful one. He is thrown suddenly upon his own resources, and displays altogether unexpected qualities of character which often lead to distinction and eminence.

Suffering is a heavy plough driven by an iron hand; it cuts deeply into the rebellious soil, but opens it up to the fertilizing influences of nature, and often ends in the richest crops. Even antagonism of the most active kind is one of man's greatest blessings. It evokes strength, perseverance, and energy of character. Thus our antagonist becomes our helper. Men may be plucky, but pluck without perseverance is a poor thing. Emotions which live

and die as emotions add very little to human regeneration. It is only by constant effort, even in the midst of failures, that the greatest things are accomplished. "Failures," says the Welsh proverb, "are but the pillars of success."

We have spoken of the gospel of work; let us speak of the gospel of leisure. "Without labor there is no leisure," has become a proverb. Yet one may labor too much, and become so habituated to work and to work only, as to be unable to enjoy leisure. Men cannot rise to the better attributes of their nature when their life is entirely filled with labor. Some devote themselves to business so exclusively, with the object of taking leisure at some future time, that when they have accumulated enough for the purpose, they find themselves utterly unable to find enjoyment or pleasure in cessation from work. Their *Chateau en Espagne* has vanished. It is "too late." The mind has become crippled and dwarfed by too exclusive occupation. They cannot find variety of employment. Their free thought has dwindled; their mind has been exercised in one groove only—perhaps a narrow one; they cannot even take a holiday. The leisure which they have found proves of little use to them. Like the retired tallow-chandler, they must needs return to their old occupation "on melting days."

Work is not quite a blessing when it degenerates into drudgery; for drudgery does not produce happiness or beauty of character. On the contrary, its tendency is to narrow and degrade it. Work is not the be-all and the end-all of humanity. It is not an end in itself; still less the highest earthly good. It is a great thing, however, to be independent—to maintain ourselves and pay our debts out of our own honest labor. Work is not ignoble; but it is ignoble to earn a shilling, and to live idle on threepence a day till the pence are exhausted. "Well," says Balzac, "the thousands of tons of pleasure that we may gather in

"the fields of society will not pay our debts at the end of the month; so we must work, work, work." By the sweat of our brow or brain we must reap our harvest. Though riches may corrupt the morals and harden the heart, yet poverty breaks the spirit and courage of a man, plants his pillow with thorns, and makes it difficult for him to be honest, virtuous, and honorable.

Thus, everything has to be taken with moderation. Work is good and honorable, not so much for itself as for higher objects—for the cultivation of the mind, for the development of the higher powers, and for the due enjoyment of life. Indeed, as we shall find, some of the best work in the spheres of literature and science has been done by men habitually occupied in business affairs. It is the excess of business, carried on under extreme pressure, which is so fatal to serene and happy existence. "He that is wise," said Lord Bacon, "let him pursue some desire or other; for he that doth not effect something in chief, unto him all things are distasteful and tedious." And again: "The most active or busy man that hath been or can be, hath no question many vacant times of leisure, while he expecteth the tides and returns of business, except he be either tedious and of no despatch, or lightly and unworthily ambitious to meddle with things that may be better done by others."

A great point is to vary our occupation. We must do one thing well; and for the rest take relaxation, and adopt variety of work. This is the true way to enjoy leisure and preserve the bloom and grace of life. Holidays can then be enjoyed; exercise will be found for faculties of mind hidden away unused; and variety of work will recruit the springs of pleasure and give a crispness to enjoyment, so as to render life a continuous holiday. There are so many ways of innocently and profitably enjoying leisure. Nature opens her inexhaustible store of charms.

We can survey and study her rich variety; examine her proceedings; and pierce into her secrets. Her range is infinite—animals, plants, minerals, and the wide extent of scientific inquiry. For the lover of books, literature offers a wide scope. There is the ancient and modern history of men, illustrating the best methods of swaying, educating, and ruling them, for their own advantage and the progress of the world's civilization. Then there is the boundless store of literature,—biography, poetry, the drama,—all full of fascinating interest.

The greatest Italian painter and the greatest Italian poet conversely varied their occupations. Michael Angelo went from painting to sonnet-writing; and Dante exchanged his pen for the painter's pencil; these were their holidays of the brain. Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo were many-sided, and almost universal artists. They were alike great in painting, sculpture, architecture, and engineering. Rossetti, too, was as great in poetry as in painting.

Other brain-workers demand physical exercise; they take to deer-stalking or grouse-shooting, not so much for the game they bag, as for the health they seek. Mr. Ashworth, the Quaker, though unused to shooting, said that grouse-shooting among the heather had saved his life. Angling is the quietest of all pursuits out of doors: it was the hobby of the analytical and philosophical Paley. He impaled a worm as he impaled an antagonist. Sir Humphry Davy and Wollaston were fly-fishers. Davy gave us his experiences in *Salmonia;* he inspired Wollaston with his love of angling, at the same time that he enabled him, when out of doors, to indulge his opportunities for prosecuting the study of geology. Davy considered that the close communion with nature which angling affords is one of its chief charms. It has also an important influence in developing character.

"It is a pursuit of moral discipline," he said, "requiring patience, forbearance, and command of temper. As connected with natural science, it may be vaunted as demanding a knowledge of the habits of a considerable tribe of created beings—fishes, and the animals they prey upon—and an acquaintance with the signs and tokens of the weather and its changes, the nature of the waters, and of the atmosphere. As to its poetical relations, it carries us into the most wild and beautiful scenery of nature; amongst the mountain-lakes, and the clear and lovely streams that gush from the higher ranges of elevated hills, or that make their way through the cavities of calcareous strata. How delightful in the early spring, after the dull and tedious time of winter, when the frosts disappear, and the sunshine warms the earth and waters, to wander forth by some clear stream, to see the leaf bursting from the purple bud, to scent the odors of the bank perfumed by the violet, and enamelled, as it were, with the primrose and the daisy; to wander upon the fresh turf below the shade of trees, where bright blossoms are filled with the music of the bee; . . . till, in pursuing your amusement in the calm and balmy evening, you are serenaded by the songs of the cheerful thrush and melodious nightingale, performing the offices of paternal love in thickets ornamented with the rose and woodbine."

Dalton, another philosopher, took pleasure in exercise in the open air—in walking to his native mountains, and climbing Helvellyn and Skiddaw. But his chief pleasure was bowling. He spent every Thursday, when the weather was fine, at a bowling-green near Manchester, when he joined some congenial associates in a turn at the old English game of bowls. When a distinguished professor of chemistry called at his house Dalton was out, but the professor was directed to look for him at a neighboring bowling-green. Dalton quietly apologized for being out of

his laboratory, but added that he liked to take a Saturday in the middle of the week.

There are other ways of enjoying an out-of-doors life. Scott planted trees at Abbotsford, wandering about the grounds with his favorite Tom Purdy. Daniel Webster enjoyed and improved his flocks and herds, and cultivated his waste lands. Scott was fond of horses and dogs, and Webster of sheep and swine. Admiral Nelson was fond of bird-nesting, and Admiral Collingwood of gardening. The poet Shelley took pleasure in sailing paper boats—sometimes of Bank of England notes—on the Thames or Serpentine. Dickens was a great walker. He was accustomed to walk from his office in Southampton Street, London, to his house at Gad's Hill Place, near Rochester. Southey and Wordsworth were indefatigable walkers. They used to be seen "skelping" along the roads in Westmoreland. Wordsworth walked in his hodden gray and country-clogged shoon, sometimes starting up in the mist like a spectre. He studied for the most part out of doors; his poems indicating his abundant and engrossing love of nature. A stranger who was shown about Wordsworth's grounds asked to see his study. The servant took him to the library, and said, "This is master's library, but he studies in the fields."

William Hutton, the bookseller and historian of Birmingham, made repeated walking excursions. He walked, when in his seventy-ninth year, along the Roman Wall, between Wallsend in Northumberland to Bowness in Cumberland; and afterwards wrote an account of his excursion. In his eighty-fifth year he visited Coatham in Yorkshire, and wrote an account of the journey. He did not walk thither, but journeyed by carriage; but in his ninetieth year, he walked into and out of Birmingham, about five miles—his daughter saying, "I believe that his walks and his life will finish nearly together." He

walked nearly to the end, and lived till ninety-two. "Contentment in old age," said Turganief, "is deserved by him alone who has not lost his faith in what is good, his persevering strength of will, and his desire for active employment."

Some take pleasure in riding. Men of sedentary occupations take to saddle-leather rather than sole-leather. It stirs up the liver and promotes circulation and digestion. Liston, the surgeon, was a great hunter. Voltaire, when at Cirey, hunted for an appetite. Abraham Tucker, author of *The Light of Nature*, used to ride over Banstead Downs to get an appetite for dinner. Paley tried to ride and even to gallop; he fell off many times; but he had plenty of pluck, he tried again and again until he succeeded. An old writer has said, "Stomach is everything, and everything is Stomach." Those who cannot afford saddle-leather take to sole-leather, and walk; at all events you breathe fresh air, and exert the muscles of nearly every part of the body.

The principal amusement of Cheselden, the surgeon was in witnessing pugilistic encounters. Mr. Procter (Barry Cornwall) told Hawthorne, the American, that in his younger days he had been a scientific pugilist, and once took a journey to have a sparring encounter with the Game Chicken. Two prime ministers, Malon of Belgium and Gladstone of England, took to the felling of trees. Thalberg, the pianist, when he retired from the musical profession, bought a vineyard, grew grapes, and made wine. At the Paris Exhibition of 1867 he obtained from the juries an "honorable mention" of his wine of Pausilippo. On the other hand, Rossini went into cookery. He delighted in good living, and prided himself on his table; he invented sauces, salads, and new preparations of truffles. To a great singer he wrote: "That which interests you in a different manner to music, dear Angélique, is the discovery that I have just made a new salad, for which I hasten to send you the receipt. . . . Truffles give to this condiment a kind of *nimbe*, fit to plunge a gourmand into ecstasy." Many cookery receipts which have become celebrated are said to have been of Rossini's invention.

Shenstone enjoyed his leisure hours in laying out his grounds at the Leasowes, and in adorning them by his taste. They still point out at Vaucluse the gardens, adjoining the natural grotto, which Petrarch formed with so much care, and which he mentions in his letters. It was there that he composed some of his finest sonnets. De Crebillon, styled the Æschylus of France, after producing his *Idomeus* and *Rhamistus*, withdrew from the world, disgusted with court neglect, and passed a life of abstinence amidst a large number of cats and dogs, whose attachment, he said, consoled him for man's ingratitude. Machiavelli, when in the country, spent much of his time in killing thrushes. Writing to a friend, he said, "Up till now I have been killing thrushes. Getting up before daylight, I prepared my snares, and set off with a heap of cages on my back. I caught at least two, and at most seven thrushes. In this manner I passed all the month of September; and, though the amusement was a queer and vulgar one, I was very sorry when it failed me."

More innocent was Dugald Stewart's attempt to balance a peacock's feather on his nose. When a philosopher visited Woodhouselee, Stewart was found engaged in this exercise. Patrick Fraser Tytler, the historian, was his competitor in the amusement. John Hunter's amusement was the study of bees; as that of Sir John Lubbock is that of ants, bees, and wasps. Both made their amusements scientifically productive. Hunter took pains with everything, and when he said, "Let me amuse myself with bees," it was but the beginning of a series of researches, the result of which, embodied in an es-