library. The hall was crowded. A considerable sum of money was realized. After he had concluded his lecture he drew his Derringer and shot his brains out according to his promise. What a conclusion of an earthly life—rushing red-handed into the presence of his God! The event occurred in August, 1868.

Perhaps this horrible deed was the result of vanity, or perhaps to make a sensation. His name would be in the papers. Everybody would be shouting about his courage. But it was cowardice far more than courage. It must have been disappointed vanity. Sheridan once said, "They talk of avarice, lust, ambition, as great passions. It is a mistake; they are little passions. Vanity is the great commanding passion of all. This excites the most heroic deeds, and impels to the most dreadful crimes. Save me from this passion, and I can defy the others. They are mere urchins, but this is a giant."

A resolute will is needed not only for the performance of difficult duties, but in order to go promptly, energetically, and with self-possession, through the thousand difficult things which come in almost everybody's way. Thus courage is as necessary as integrity in the performance of duty. The force may seem small which is needed to carry one cheerfully through any of these things singly, but to encounter one by one the crowding aggregate, and never to be taken by surprise, or thrown out of temper, is one of the last attainments of the human spirit.

Every generation has to bear its own burden, to weather its peculiar perils, to pass through its manifold trials. We are daily exposed to temptations, whether it be of idleness, self-indulgence, or vice. The feeling of duty and the power of courage must resist these things at whatever sacrifice of worldly interest. When virtue has thus become a daily habit, we become possessed of an individual character, prepared for fulfilling, in a great measure, the ends for which we were created.

How much is lost to the world for want of a little courage! We have the willingness to do, but we fail to do it. The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action that everything seems to say loudly to every man, "Do something; do it, do it." The poor country parson, fighting against evil in his parish, against wrong-doing, injustice, and iniquity, has nobler ideas of duty than Alexander the Great ever had. Some men are mere apologies for workers, even when they pretend to be up and at it. They stand shivering on the brink, and have not the courage to plunge in. Every day sends to the grave a number of obscure men, who, if they had had the courage to begin, would, in all probability, have gone great lengths in the career of well doing.

Professor Wilson, of Edinburgh, in teaching his students, always put foremost the sense of duty; moreover, of duty in action. His lectures deeply influenced the characters of those who listened to him. He sent them forth to fight the battle of life valiantly; like the old Danish hero—"to dare nobly, to will strongly, and never to falter in the path of duty." Such was his creed.*

There is a great deal of trimming in the world, for the most part arising from the want of courage. When Luther said to Erasmus, "You desire to walk upon eggs without crushing them, and among glasses without breaking them," the timorous, hesitating Erasmus replied, "I will not be unfathful to the cause of Christ, at least *so far as the age will permit me*." Luther was of a very different character. "I will go to Worms though devils were combined against me as thick as the tiles upon the housetops." Or like St. Paul, "I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem."

Sir Alexander Barnes said, "One trait of my character is thorough seriousness. I am indifferent about nothing that I undertake. In fact, if I undertake to do a thing, I cannot be indifferent." This makes all the difference between a strong man and a weak man. The brave men are often killed, the talkers are left behind, the cowards run away.

* When he was canvassing the members of the Town Council of Edinburgh for their votes, one of them said to him, "I wad like to gie ye ma vote, Mr. Wulson; but I'm feared. Then say ye dunna expect to be saved by grace." "I don't know much about that, Bailie, but if I am not saved by grace, I am sure that my works won't save me." "That'll do, that'll do; I'se gie you my vote."

Deeds show what we are, words only what we should be. Every moment of a working life may be a decisive victory.

The Pessimists say that work or the necessity for work, is the enemy of man. On the other hand, M. Caro says: "An irresistible instinct carries man toward action, and through action toward some unforeseen pleasure, or expected happiness, or imposed duty. This irresistible instinct is nothing less than the instinct of life itself; it explains and sums it up. In the very moment in which it develops the sentiment of being within us it measures the true worth of being. . . . There are the pure joys, which lie in a long-sustained effort in the face of obstacles toward a triumphant end; of an energy first mistress of itself and then of life, whether in subduing the bad wills of men, or in triumphing over the difficulties of science, or the resistances of art—of Work, in short, the true friend and consoler of man, which raises him above all his weaknesses, purifies and ennobles him, saves him from vulgar temptation, and helps him to bear his burden through days of sadness, and before which even the deepest griefs give way for a time. In reality, when it has overcome the first weariness and distaste it may inspire. Work itself, apart from all results, is one of the most lively pleasures. To treat it, with the Pessimists, as an enemy, is to misconceive the very idea of pleasure. For the workman to see his work growing under his hand or in his thought, to identify himself with it, as Aristotle said (Ethic iv. 7)—whether it be the laborer with his harvest, or the architect with his house, or the sculptor with his statue—whether it be a poem or a book, it matters not.

"The joy of creation more than returns all the pains of labor; and, as the conscious labor against external obstacles is the first joy of awakening life, so the completed work is the most intense of pleasures, bringing to full birth in us the sense of personality, and consecrating our triumph, if only partial and momentary, over nature. Such is the true character of effort or will in action."*

* "Le Pessimisme au XIX. Siècle." Par E. Caro. Paris, 1877.

A man is a miracle of genius because he has been a miracle of labor. Strength can conquer circumstances. The principle of action is too powerful for any circumstances to resist. It clears the way, and elevates itself above every object, above fortune and misfortune, good and evil. The joys that come to us in this world are but to strengthen us for some greater labor that is to succeed. Man's wisdom appears in his actions; for every man is the son of his own work. Richter says that "good deeds ring clear through heaven like a bell."

Active and sympathetic contact with man in the transactions of daily life is a better preparation for healthy, robust action than any amount of meditation and seclusion. What Swedenborg said about vowing poverty and retiring from the world in order to live more to heaven, seems reasonable and true. "The life that leads to heaven," he said, "is not a life of retirement from the world, but of *action in the world.* A life of charity, which consists in acting sincerely and justly in every enjoyment and work, in obedience to the divine law, is not difficult: but a life of piety alone *is* difficult, and it leads *away* from heaven as much as it is commonly believed to lead to it."

With many people religion is merely a matter of words. So far as words go, we do what we think right. But the words rarely lead to action, thought and conduct, or to purity, goodness, and honesty. There is too much playing at religion, and too little of enthusiastic hard work. There is a great deal of reading about religion; but true religion, embodied in human character and action, is more instructive than a thousand doctrinal volumes. If a man possesses not a living and strong will that leads the way to good, he will either become a plaything of sensual desires, or pass a life of shameless indolence.

One of the greatest dangers that at present beset the youth of England is laziness. What is called "culture" amounts to little. It may be associated with the meanest moral character, abject servility to those in high places, and arrogance to the poor and lowly. The fast, idle youth believes nothing, venerates nothing, hopes nothing; no, not even the final triumph of good in human hearts. There are

many Mr. Tootses in the world, saying "It's all the same," "It's of no consequence." It is not all the same, nor will it be all the same a hundred years hence. The life of each man tells upon the whole life of society. Each man has his special duty to perform, his special work to do. If he does it not, he himself suffers, and others suffer through him. His idleness infects others, and propagates a bad example. A useless life is only an early death.

There is far too much croaking among young men. Instead of setting to work upon the thing they dream of, they utter querulous complaints which lead to no action. This defect was noted by Dr. Channing, who lamented that so many of our young men should grow up in a school of despair. Is life worth living? Certainly not, if it be wasted in idleness. Even reading is often regarded as a mental dissipation. It is only a cultivated apathy. Hence you find so many grumbling, indifferent, *blase* youths, their minds polished into a sort of intellectual keenness and cleverness, breaking out into sarcasm upon the acts of others, but doing nothing themselves. They sneer at earnestness of character. A lamentable indifference possesses these intellectual vagrants. Their souls, if they are conscious of possessing them, are blown about by every passing wind. They understand without believing. The thoughts which such minds receive produce no acts. They hold no principles or convictions. The religious element is ignored. Their creed is nothing, out of which nothing comes; no aspirations after the higher life, no yearnings after noble ideas or a still nobler character. And yet we have plenty of intellect, but no faith; plenty of knowledge, but no wisdom; plenty of "culture," but no loving-kindness. A nation may possess refinement, and possess nothing else. Knowledge and wisdom, so far from being one, have often no connection with each other. It may be doubted whether erudition tends to promote wisdom or goodness. Fenelon says it is better to be a good living book than to love good books. A multifarious reading may please, but does not feed the mind. St. Anselm said that "God often works more by the life of the illiterate, seeking the things which are God's, than by the ability of the learned seeking the things that are their own."

Here is the portrait which a great French writer has drawn of his contemporaries: "What do you perceive on all sides but a profound indifference as to creeds and duties, with an ardor for pleasure and for gold, which can procure everything you desire? Everything can be bought—conscience, honor, religion, opinions, dignities, power, consideration, respect itself, vast shipwrecks of all truths and of all virtues! All philosophical theories, all the doctrines of impiety, have dissolved themselves and disappeared in the devouring system of indifference, the actual tomb of the understanding, into which it goes down alone, naked, equally stripped of truth and error; an empty sepulchre, where one cannot find even bones."

We are, however, to be redeemed by "Culture." This is a new word,* of German origin. Many worship "culture." It is their only religion. It is intellectual cynicism and scepticism, with a varnish of refinement. The persons who profess it live in an atmosphere of exquisite superiority, like that represented by Moliere in "Les Precieuse Ridicules." *Nil admirari* is their motto. They sneer at the old-fashioned virtues of industry and self-denial, energy and self-help. Theirs is a mere creed of chilling negations, in which there is nothing to admire, nothing to hope for. They are sceptics in everything, doing no work themselves, but denying the works of others. They believe in nothing except in themselves. They are their own little gods.

Goethe was the inventor of *geist* or culture. But the poems of Goethe bring forth no deeds like those of Schiller. The works of Goethe are childless. He was a man who traded in the loves of women—women whom he had at-

* Another curious word has come up of late—that of *Philistine*. Mr. Leslie Stephen says that it is a term of abuse given by prigs to the rest of their species. Schopenhauer gives another definition. "A Philistine," he says, "has no spiritual wants, and it follows that he can have no spiritual pleasures, for the saying is true, 'Il n'est de vrais plaisirs, qu'avec de vrais besoins,' no longing for science or insight for its own sake. No enjoyment of art can animate his drear existence. His pleasures are sensual. The end of his life is to add to the number of his physical comforts."

tached to him by his powers of fascination. "When he had no woman in his heart," says his latest biographer, "he was like a dissecting surgeon without a subject. He said of Balzac, that each of his best novels seemed dug out of a suffering woman's heart. Balzac might have returned the compliment. In reference to his early fondness for natural history, Goethe says, 'I remember that when a child I pulled flowers to pieces to see how the petals were inserted into the calyx, or even plucked birds to observe how the feathers were inserted in the wings.' Bettina remarked to Lord Houghton that he treated women in much the same fashion. All his loves, high and low, were subjected to this kind of vivisection. His powers of fascination were extraordinary; and if, for the purposes of art, he wanted a display of strong emotion, he deepened the passion without scruple or compunction—like the painter engaged on a picture of Christ on the Cross, who, to produce the required expression of physical agony in the model, thrust a spear into his side. The capacity for minute observations, under such circumstances, implies comparative coldness; and we can fancy Goethe, like the hero in 'L'Homme Blase,' marking with finger on pulse, when the required degree of excitement had been reached, and taking good care to stop short of fever heat. . . . Goethe tells us frankly that he turned everything in the way of adventure or love affair to account; and that he regarded all that befell him with his female acquaintance from the æsthetic point of view, and found that the most instructive palliative for a mishap or a disappointment was to write about it."*

Oh, the vain pride of mere intellectual ability! how worthless, how contemptible, when contrasted with the riches of the heart! What is the understanding of the hard dry capacity of the brain and body? A mere dead skeleton of opinions, a few dry bones tied up together, if there be not a soul to add moisture and life, substance and reality, truth and joy. Every one will remember the modest saying of Newton—perhaps the greatest man who ever lived—the

* "Goethe," by A. Hayward, Q.C.

discover of the method of Fluxions, the theory of universal gravitation, and the decomposition of light—that he felt himself but as a child playing by the sea-shore, while the immense ocean of truth lay all unexplored before him! Have we any philosophers who will make such a confession now?

"There are truths," said the Count de Maistre, "which man can only attain by the spirit of his heart. A good man is often astonished to find persons of great ability resist proofs which appear clear to him. These persons are deficient in a certain faculty; that is the true meaning. When the cleverest man does not possess a sense of religion, we cannot only not conquer him, but we have not even the means of making him understand us." Again, Sir Humphry Davy said, "Reason is often a dead weight in life, destroying feeling, and substituting for principle only calculation and caution."

But the widest field of duty lies outside the line of literature and books. Men are social beings more than intellectual creatures. The best part of human cultivation is derived from social contact; hence courtesy, self-respect, mutual toleration, and self-sacrifice for the good of others. Experience of men is wider than literature. Life is a book which lasts one's lifetime, but it requires wisdom to understand its difficult pages.

"In our days," says Lady Verney, "there is an indissoluble connection between the ideas of cultivation and reading and writing. It is now only the ignorant and stupid who cannot do both. But fifty years ago books, except in the highest education, were the exception, and very clever men and women thought out their own thoughts, with very little assistance from anything beyond the Testament. Even among the upper classes reading was not very common among women. 'My grandmother could hardly spell when she wrote, and she read nothing but her *livre d'heures*,' said a Frenchman who was well able to judge, 'but she was far more worthy and wise than women are now.'"

In the old times boys had duty placed before them as an incentive. To fail was to disgrace one's self, and to succeed

was merely to do one's duty. "As for the dream," said Hugh Miller, "that there is to be some extraordinary elevation of the general platform of the human race achieved by means of education, it is simply the hallucination of the age—the world's present alchemical expedient for converting farthings into guineas, sheerly by dint of scouring."

After all, the best school of discipline is home. Family life is God's own method of training the young. And homes are very much as women make them. "The hope of France," said the late Bishop of Orleans, "is in her mothers." It is the same with England. But alas! we are distracted by the outcries of women who protest against their womanhood, and wildly strain to throw off their most lovable characteristics. They want power—political power, and yet the world is entirely what their home influence has made it. They believe in the potentiality of votes, and desire to be "enfranchised." But do they really believe that the world would be better than it is if they had the privilege of giving a vote once in three or five years, for a parliamentary representative? St. Paul gave the palm to the women who were stayers and workers at home, for he recognized that home is the crystal of society, and that domestic love and duty are the best security for all that is most dear to us on earth.

A recent writer, after describing the qualities which ought to characterize a woman's nature, says, "One might almost fear, seeing how the women of to-day are lightly stirred up to run after some new fashion of faith or of works, that heaven is not so near to them as it was to their mothers and grandmothers; that religion is a feebler power with them; that their hearts are empty of all secure trust and high faith in the beneficence of God's ordinations." The writer is herself a woman.

Before the recent Franco-Prussian war, Baron Stoffel was deputed to report upon the state of opinion and morals in Prussia, as compared with France. In the course of his remarks he says, "Discipline in the army depends on the discipline of society and private families. The young men in Prussia are trainad to general obedience, to respect

authority, and, above all, to do their duty. But how can this discipline exist in the French army when it does not exist in French families? Moreover, look beyond the family circle, at lycees, schools, colleges, etc.—is anything done to develop among the children respect for their parents, regard for duty, obedience to authority and the law, and, above all, belief in God? Nothing, or next to nothing! The consequence is, that every year we introduce into the army a contingent of young men who, for the most part, are entirely devoid of religious principles and sound morality, and who, from their childhood, have been used to obey no one, to discuss everything, and to respect nothing. And yet there are people who pretend that all at once we can, as soon as they get into the army, inure to discipline these undisciplined and unprincipled youths. These people do not suspect that discipline in the army is nothing but discipline in private life—that is, sense of duty, obedience to appointed superiors, respect for the principles of authority and established institutions. . . . Artificial discipline once established may last a little time under the pressure of circumstances; but be sure that it will vanish into thin air the moment it is put to the real test." It need scarcely be said that in these words Baron Stoffel proved a true prophet.

Can it be that we are undergoing the same process in England; that the ever-extending tide of democracy is bearing down the best fruits of domestic discipline and moral character? We are a very vain-glorious people. We boast of our wealth, our power, our resources, our naval and military strength, and our commercial superiority. Yet all these may depart from us in a few years, and we may remain, like Holland, a rich and a comparatively powerless people. The nation depends upon the individuals who compose it; and no nation can ever be distinguished for morality, duty, adherence to the rules of honor and justice, whose citizens, individually and collectively, do not possess the same traits.

Lord Derby observed in one of his recent speeches: "An accomplished nobleman said to me the other day that he thought England had steadily declined in those qualities

that make up the force and strength of national character since the day of Waterloo; and though he did not say so in words, yet from his manner and tone I inferred that he thought it was too late to hope for a recovery; that the deluge was coming, and that happy were they who had almost lived their lives, and would not survive to see the catastrophe. Of course it is possible that such a catastrophe may come; and, given certain conditions, it is certain that it *will* come."

This is a serious word of warning. Is the deluge really to come, as it did in France a hundred years ago? The late Dr. Norman Macleod said, "The confusion that exists at this moment, which began soon after the war of '15, and is as eventful as the Reformation, is most oppressive. On the one hand there is a breaking up of the old forms of thought about everything—social, political, scientific, philosophic, theological. In spite of much foolish conceit and sense of power on the part of those who guide the battering rams against the old wall, there is, on the part of many more, a great sense of the paramount importance of truth and duty; which, if rightly considered, would but express faith in God, who is ever on the side of truth. . . . As for Scotland, the church of the future is not here. We ignore great world questions. We squabble like fish-women over skate and turbot!"

What spectacle can be sadder than to see men, and even women, passing their lives in theorizing and gossiping over the great principles which their forefathers really believed; and by believing which, they secured for their generation the gifts of faith, of goodness, and of well-doing? There are two thoughts which, if once admitted to the mind, change our whole course of life—the belief that this world is but the vestibule of an endless state of being, and the thought of Him in whom man lives here, or shall live hereafter. We each have the choice of following good or following evil. Who shall say which shall prove the mightier? It depends upon ourselves—on our awakened conscience and enlightened will. Troubles and sorrows may have to be encountered in performing our various duties. But these have to be done, and done cheerfully, because it is the will of God. Good actions give strength to ourselves, and inspire good actions in others. They prove treasures guarded for the doer's need. Let us therefore strengthen our mind, and brace up our soul, and prepare our heart for the future. The race is for life.