

self-help

1845.12.05

Virtue and not lineage is the only ground of nobility. Beggars have descended from kings and kings have in turn descended from beggars; and both kings and beggars have sometimes been virtuous and noble hearted, and sometimes vicious and mean spirited; he who is virtuous, whether a king or a beggar, is the only true nobleman.

1846.01.09

Illustrious Mechanics and Self-Made Men

Adam, the father of the human race, was a gardener. He had, however, a strange propensity for tasting unwholesome fruit, which produced very injurious effects, both upon himself and his offspring.

Noah was a shipwright and a husbandman; he navigated the whole earth in his ark, and got "seas over" in his vineyard.

Solomon was an architect, a poet and philosopher; his conduct, however, was not always by line and rule; he trod the circle of dissipation in his imaginations, and violated his own maxims. His own conscience and strength of mind, however, reclaimed him, and his repentance is the most beautiful of the works which he has left for the contemplation of his species.

The apostle Paul was a tent maker, and labored with his hands at his vocation, while he endeavored to infuse into the minds of his fellow men the important truths of revelation. - While he screened them with earthly tabernacles from the weather, he held above their souls the aegis of divine protection.

Matthew was a poor fisherman; he relinquished his humble calling for that of a missionary, and toiled assiduously to draw men from the fiery billows of perdition.

Quintus Cheimatus was a ploughman, and was invoked to the

government and dictatorship of Rome. His labors in the political field were as successful as those upon the soil.

Arsaces was a private mechanic, and was called to found the Parthian Empire. He built up a powerful nation, and erected for himself a mausoleum of fame which is indestructible.

Tamerlane, the conqueror of Asia, was also a mechanic; he rough hewed. Bajazet, and carved his way to fortune and glory.

Massaniello, a Neapolitan fisherman, was raised to the command of fifty thousand men and gave up fish lines for lines of bayonets, and river seines for scenes of change.

Jolis Leyden, in Germany, was a tailor, and rose to the dignity of a king. He cut out for himself a bad piece of work however, and afterwards came to a miserable end. His goose did not fly very well.

Zeno, the famous bishop of Constantis, who had the largest diocese in that country was a weaver. He directed his attention to the habits of both soul and body.

Stephen Tudiner, a hatter in upper Austria was made a general, and commanded an army of sixty thousand. He made hats for others, but preferred for himself a chapeau.

Walmer, a shoemaker, succeeded him in command but was slain by Count Papenheim. He converted his awl into a sword; "his last state was worse than the first."

Mr. Edmund, of Sterling, in Scotland, showed such unparalleled bravery in the Swedish wars, under that "thunderbolt of war, Gustavus Adorphus," that he was made a general. A maker of bread might be supposed to know how to rise.

Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia, worked at ship-building. He learned the Russian Bear how to manage a boat.

Charles II, of England was a turner of ivory, nor could affairs of a state divert him from his morning task at the lathe. He turned his mind, however to amusements, which tasked his health, and pared away his reputation.

Louis XIV of France, was one of the best watermarkers of his reign. He forgot the burdens of power in following the light footsteps of time and escaped the fluttering of parasites on the pinions of chronometers.

William IV, of England, was a sailor and rose from the forecandle to the throne. He managed the ship of state with nautical address, and bore her a considerable way up to the harbor of Reform.

Benjamin Franklin was a printer, philosopher, and statesman. He drew lightning from heaven and left his name in large caps upon the annals of his country. His spirit is among the [blank]

George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and William Henry Harrison were farmers - From the pursuits of agriculture they went forth to pursue the enemies of their country and from the fields of death gathered the "Golden Immortal."

Sir Richard Arkwright, who first conceived the idea of spinning cotton by use of machinery, passed the earlier part of his life in pursuing the humble occupation of a barber. - His genius proved brighter than his razors.

John Leslie, professional Natural Philosophy, in Edinburgh was the son of a poor farmer in Largo, Scotland. He was employed in the capacity of herdsman. His pencil was a stick; and the ground his slate.

From being the companion of cattle,
he became the peer of learned men.

James Ferguson was in earlier years
a shepherd, watching the stars at
night like his predecessors of
Chaldea, and like them was led to
his favorite planet by the
contemplation of the goodness and
magnificence of the works of the
Deity.

- *Richmond Whig*

1846.03.13

The greatest of all faults is to believe
we have none.

1846.06.12

Moral Courage in Every-Day Life

Have the courage to discharge a debt
while you have the money in your
pocket.

Have the courage to do without that
which you do not need however
much your eyes may covet it.

Have the courage to speak your
mind, when it is necessary that you
should do so, and hold your tongue
whenever it is prudent that you
should do so.

Have the courage to speak to a
friend in a seeds coat, even though
you are in company with a rich one
and richly attired.

Have the courage to know you are
poor and thus disarm poverty of its
sharpest sting.

Have the courage to make a will,
and that a just one.

Have the courage to tell a man why
you will not lend him your money.

Have the courage to 'cut' the most
agreeable acquaintance you have,
when you are convinced he lacks
principle. 'A friend should bear with
the friend's infirmities,' but not with
his *vices*.

Have the courage to show your
respect for honesty, in whatever
guise it appears; and your contempt
for dishonest and duplicity, by
whomsoever exhibited.

Have the courage to wear your old
clothes till you are able to pay for
new ones.

Have the courage to obey your
Maker, at the risk of being ridiculed
by man.

Have the courage to wear thick
boots in the winter and insist upon
your wife and daughters doing the
same.

Have the courage to prefer comfort
and property to fashion, in all
things.

Have the courage to acknowledge
your ignorance rather than to seek
credit for knowledge under false
pretences.

Have the courage to provide an
entertainment for your friends
within your means - not beyond.

Have the courage to take a good
paper and to pay for it always in
advance.

1845.07.10

Whoever is honest, generous,
courteous, honourable and candid, is
a true gentleman, whether learned
or unlearned rich or poor.

1846.05.29

PUSHING. - Keep pushing - that's
the right doctrine. We once knew a
man who followed it up to a charm.
From middle life to old age, he daily
pushed ahead and made a
comfortable living. Poor fellow? - by
a sad misfortune he had lost his
right arm and was made stone blind.
But he sat not down to weep; his
spirits did not leave him. He was
poor - what could he do to support
himself and family? A thought stick
him. He consulted a friend, with
whom he went in business in the
handcarting line. His partner pulled
the cart, while he blind and with one
arm, pushed behind. For years and
years, we used to see this old
gentleman pushing the handcart
along the streets - up bill and
through the mud - week in and
week out - through snow and
through water.

Ye who are about discouraged, learn
a lesson from the blind and one-
handed cartman.

1846.01.30

SLOTH. - Sloth is a most pernicious
mistress; she smiles, soothes,
seduces, and caresses; but finally
destroys everyone who yields to her
blandishments. Though thou wert
Samson, thou wilt lose thy strength,
if thou layest thy head in the lap of
this Delilah! Though thou wert
Ulysses, thou wilt sink to a state of
brutality if thou yield to the
solicitations of this Circe! Though
thou wert Hercules, thou wilt
become contemptible if thou become
the slave of this Omphale!

- *The Savage*

1845.11.14

Industry, temperance, and honesty
are the noblest attributes of human
character; yet how rarely do we find
these qualities possessed by those
who "lord it" over the poor and
humble mechanic?

1846.01.30

GOOD NATURE. - *An Extract* Good nature, is a gem which shines brightly in whatever ground it is set. It cheers the darkness of misfortune, and warms the heart that is cold and callous. In social life, who has not seen and felt its influences? if you want to be happy yourself, and make everyone happy be good natured. Don't let little matters ruffle you. Nobody gains anything by being cross and crabbed. A friend has injured you; the world grows hard; you want employment, but can't get it; or can't get your honest dues or fire has consumed, or the waters have swallowed up the fruit of many years of hard toil; or your faults are magnified; or enemies have traduced or friends deceived. Never mind; don't get mad with anybody; don't abuse the world or any of its creatures; keep good natured, and our word for it, all will come right. The soft south wind and the genial sun are not more effectual in clothing the earth with verdure, and the sweet flowers of spring, than is good nature in adorning the hearts of man and woman with blossoms of kindness, happiness and affection, and those flowers, the fragrance of which ascend to heaven.

1846.02.13

Anger. - Anger is the most impotent passion that accompanies the mind of man; it effects nothing it goes about; and hurts the man who is possessed by it more than any other against whom it is directed.

- *Clarendon.*

1845.12.05

KEEP COOL. - Coolness is a rare virtue; who possesseth it? Let a man step on your toes - or your corns, if you please - and what is the result? You know. Would it not be better and wiser to be calm and cool, and not swear? You knock your elbow; the pain is severe. - Why do you rave? On a dark night you run against a post; but what avails the flash of anger? You are called a cheat and a villain. Be cool, and let the accuser prove it, if he is worth noticing; if not, let him go. But never retaliate. The man who is not in the

wrong, seldom uses harsh words and provoking sentences. "Let not the sun go down on your wrath." The is wisdom in that sentence; remember it. Keep cool.

1847.03.05

Two things a man should never be angry at - what he can help, and what he cannot help.

1845.11.14

'A Soft Answer Turneth Away Wrath.' -

We were the other day, forcibly struck with the truth and wisdom of these words of holly writ. An acquaintance of ours, who by the way, is possessed of great physical and moral courage, but from principle is opposed to fighting, was assailed by the most bitter and opprobrious language, by one who, from some cause or other, felt himself aggrieved by him. Our acquaintance, instead of replying by a blow, as nine out of ten would have done, mildly denied the justness of such abuse, and asked the cause of the insulting language. An explanation followed. The assailant acknowledged his error and asked pardon for his violent and improper conduct. "A soft answer" produced an effect that blows could not have brought about - a complete victory over the mind and heart of the wrong doer.

- *Pittsburg Chronicle.*

1845.10.03

He who sedulously attends, pointedly asks, calmly speaks, coolly answers, and ceases when he has no more to say, is in possession of some of the best requisites of man.

1846.05.08

Slander. - It is a poor soul that cannot bear slander. No decent man can get along without it - at least none who are engaged in the business pursuits of life. Have you had a bad fellow in your employment, and discharged him - he goes round and slanders you; refuse another, some modest boon which he has asked, he goes round

and slanders you; let your conduct be such as to create the envy of another, he goes round and slanders you. In fine we would not give a cent for a person who is not slandered; it is either a milksop or a fool. No - no - earn a bad name by a bad fellow, (and you can easily do so by correct conduct) it is the only way to prove you are entitled to a good one.

1846.02.20

Envy. - Like a corroding plaster, it lies gnawing at the heart, and indeed is founded in grief, that being the object of it, either in himself or others, through all the conditions that are. Either he grieves in himself when another is happy, or else, if ever he does rejoice, it is certainly because another does suffer; so calamity seems the centre that he points unto.

1846.04.10

Charity never multiplies feuds, nor fosters enmities; and the experience of all ages proves that persecution, whatever form it may assume, or in whatever garb it may appear never succeeds in making proselytes.

- *Dr. Fellows.*

1845.11.29

Good-humour, as it is often the most effective, is also the cheapest virtue. Nothing is more easy than a smile or look of kindness while the want of it has made the world a desert. Well has the poet designated it when he speaks of

- "that best portion of a good man's life, His little, nameless, unremembered acts, Of kindness and love."

- *Emporium*

1845.12.05

Be punctual in all your engagements and never make a promise that you do not fulfill. No person ever prospered who was in the habit of putting off a more convenient season the duties of to-day. Be on your guard at all times.

“Sun delays - they breed remorse,
Take the time, while time is lent thee;
Creeping snails have weakest force.
Fly their fault, lest those repeat thee;
Good is the best when soonest wrought,
Lingering labor comes to nought.”

We might quote the familiar lines of Young:

“Procrastination is the thief of time.”

and also:

“Be wise today; 'tis madness to defer.”

If it would be of any avail. We are certain no young man will ever become distinguished or wealthy, who has contracted the habit of delaying important business. It is of the utmost importance, in all your dealings - in every situation in life - that you should be prompt, punctual and ever ready to take hold of anything beneficial to yourselves or others.

1845.07.10

Trust him little who praises all, him less who censures all, and him least who is indifferent about all.

1846.02.06

Error - Error lives ere reason can be born.

- *Congreve*

1846.02.12

Politeness. - To say the truth, the world is filled with cheats, who, however were not born but are become so. Nature intended we should act openly, and show ourselves such as we are. Experience has shown that this is inconvenient, and that to mix with the world our inclinations must be moderated and regulated. This has taught men wariness and dissimulation. This is a state of violence and slavery to which a good mind accustoms itself with pain. Habit cannot destroy

nature and he who succeeds best in acquired politeness, can never be guarded against but by those who have learnt the same dissimulation, and the same unfeeling courage to use it.

- *The By-stander.*

1846.04.24

Hypocrisy is, of all vices, the most hateful to man, because it combines the malice of guilt with the meanness of deception. Of all vices it is the most dangerous, because its whole machinery is constructed on treachery; through the means of confidence on compounding virtue with vice, on making the noblest qualities of our nature minister to the most profligate purposes of ruin.

1845.12.19

Hear no ill of a friend, nor speak any of an enemy. Believe not all you hear, nor speak all you believe.

1846.10.16

VERACITY. - In all your intercourse with the world strict veracity will gain respect, while prevarication, and falsehood are despised. Let a strict regard for truth be a characteristic of your minds, and rest assured, under whatever circumstances you may be placed, that truth is powerful and will ultimately prevail. It stands in bold relief, the child of heaven, and is, when unadorned adorned the most." Be candid in your deliberations, and ever bear in mind that "honesty is the best policy." Let your operations always be founded upon truth, and you need not fear the frowns of virtue, for you will remember that veracity is one of the gems in her crown, and one that gives beauty to the others.

1845.07.24

"Poor but Honest." - The newspapers, and other equally great authorities, make use of this phrase in biographical notices - "He was born of *poor* but *honest* parents!" Poor *but* honest! That is to infer that the parents ought to have been dishonest because they were poor, but that in the particular case they were honest, spits of their poverty. This common phrase is a direct

insult to the condition of ninety-nine out of the hundred, and an indignity to human nature. There might be considering the manner in which many fortunes are acquired, some little shade of meaning in saying of the heir of fortune - "He was born of *rich* but *honest* parents!" - but the "poor but honest" phrase is atrocious.

1846.03.27

Custom is the plague of wise men,
and the idol of fools.

1846.01.02

When a young man has acquired a love of reading, and of course a healthful relish for intellectual pleasures he has become possessed of one of the best preservatives against intemperance. A fondness for low company, and intemperate pleasure is most generally the consequence of ignorance and a want of taste.

1846.02.06

Opinions. - Neither accept an opinion, or except against it, merely on the score of its novelty: all that is new is not true, but much that is old is false.

- Zimmerman

1846.01.16

Consistency. - The world talks much of consistency, without appearing to care about it - to understand what sort of consistency is really desirable. That man should ways retain the same opinion - that he should shut his eyes and his ears, learn nothing, obstinately adhere to his first conceptions - no one who loves and properly appreciates the value of truth and knowledge could possibly desire. - One of the most powerful obstructions to the advancement of knowledge is the too great readiness with which mankind make up their minds, shut up the book of experience, and rest contented with what they have seen. - They who seek truth with fervor are ever open to new evidence - even ready to re-consider, re-investigate the opinions they hold. They deem none irrevocably fixed. They are tolerate of new views, and explore with candor the grounds on which they are supported.

1846.05.01

THINK. - Think, all of you, think of yourselves, upon what you read, of the incidents you meet with in life, of your work, of whatever deserves your thought. Do not let the hours glide away, and do nothing with your brain but dream. A laboring

man or woman, to become useful in the world, to gain a good name, to meet with troubles, to succeed with their work, to shun all the snares that may be in their path, to be prepared to act out of their place when called upon, to be happy and rich, must think. Think always. The miser thinks of his money, the merchant of his ships, the manufacturer of his machinery and other property, the farmer of his crops, the rascal of a hundred things at once to make him miserable, but the laborer can think of his work and himself, and 'know himself' and be above all those who use the mind for one purpose only. Think thoughts of your own and not depend upon others. Reflect always, and endeavor to 'go ahead' and think some new thoughts, and not always live upon musty old notions and never know whether they are right or not.

- *The Age.*

1846.04.10

The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good an ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.