

**THE YALE LITERARY
MAGAZINE; VOL.
XXIX, MARCH, 1864,
NO. 5; PP. 169-210**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649313136

The Yale Literary Magazine; Vol. XXIX, March, 1864, No. 5; pp. 169-210 by Various

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VARIOUS

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EDITORS FOR THE CLASS OF '64.

S. C. DARLING,

W. G. PECK,

L. GREGORY,

H. M. WHITNEY,

M. H. WILLIAMS.

Business vs. Professions.

As we approach the end of our College life, no question oftener presents itself than this, What calling or profession shall we adopt? There are many whose choice is already determined for them, either by parental predestination or strong personal bias. Such escape much present perplexity. Happy for them if they never find that they have mistaken their calling. But some are yet undecided, and by the position of these our article is suggested.

It is unnecessary to repeat the trite observation, that we should not be governed in this decision merely by motives of ease and self-interest. Those who have a sense of moral obligation will not be unmindful of it here, and others will not be much influenced by my poor sermonizing.

I may pass at once therefore to the consideration of the various avenues which are open for us. There are three so-called learned professions to which popular expectation assigns the educated man. Two others might well be added; editing and teaching.

All these furnish abundant scope for the best abilities and the highest attainments.

The ministry is peculiar. It demands the best qualifications of the others, and, in addition, a heart preparation without which all other things are insufficient. Its call is at once so sacred and so personal that it cannot with propriety be discussed here.

Of those which remain, the two last are necessarily limited in their higher departments. The majority of every class are not "oration men," and hence cannot aspire to a Tutorship, with a remote possibility of a Professorship, when some incumbent dies. Shut out from this avenue to glory and position, the teacher's work is neither so attractive or so profitable as to entice many to choose it for life, though many adopt it temporarily for self discipline or money.

The editor occupies a post of influence second to none, and it is a gratifying fact that so many College-bred men are now entering this profession. There is however one drawback in the minds of those not content with silent influence. Nothing seems more irrecoverably lost than the words of an editor, as they are scattered in the printed sheet over the land. They serve for lighting fires, or for ladies' curl papers, or lie dust-covered and forgotten amongst the lumber of old garrets. Their influence can no more be followed than the waves of a pebble thrown into the sea; and with a consciousness of this it requires a large faith to labor earnestly. The number of editors, moreover, must from the nature of the case be small.

The greater part then of each class are restricted to the two remaining professions of law and medicine. These are overcrowded already, it is true, but, as Webster said, "there is always room in the upper stories," and each thinks he shall reach that happy position. Furthermore, both the work and the results here are definite and tangible. The lawyer may measure his influence by the cases gained or lost, the quarrels prevented or encouraged; the physician his, by patients recovered or put to rest under the turf. For these professions many exhibit a special aptitude in youth, which determines their choice. Some have a natural tact for overreaching others, and "making the worse appear the better reason." The law will furnish the fullest opportunity for the exercise of all these qualities. Others early take delight in dislocating the bones of some luckless cat or dog, that they may exercise their skill in replacing them. Behold the distinguished surgeon in embryo. Let all such fulfill their manifest destiny.

Most however have no such special bias. They are fair scholars, passable writers, and good fellows generally. They go to college because fate has so determined, and not because they are gifted with endowments superior to the average of clerks and mechanics, who are

not thus favored. But after graduation they must do something, and think it would be derogatory to their dignity, as educated men, to adopt anything but a profession. If they have wealth to support them during the long period of preparation and waiting, they may do well, but if dependent upon themselves the prospect is by no means flattering. One cannot look at the long list of briefless young lawyers and physicians without patients, even within the circle of his own acquaintance, and not feel an emotion of pity. They do not succeed in obtaining either fame or money.

Medicine seems to have fewest attractions, and appears to be chosen, often, not from special adaptation to it, but from want of adaptation to anything else. Law is attractive because it affords an opportunity for politics, the special field of delight for all ambitious young Americans; but the folly of making this an important element in calculation is apparent, when we consider that ten must necessarily fail here where one succeeds, while even success is seldom free from some alloy.

(We may observe here, by way of parenthesis, that the veneration of spirit to which young politicians in College are subject might well warn them of what they may expect hereafter.)

After this somewhat rambling discussion of the professions in general, we may now consider briefly some of the inducements which business offers to the educated man.

The first consideration which strikes us is, that in this he is far most likely to obtain wealth. The incomes even of our most successful professional men do not compare with those in business. Rufus Choate, the first of American advocates, in the very height of his fame, only received about Twenty-five Thousand Dollars a year, and this was also the income of one of the most distinguished physicians of New York city in his prime.

On the other hand, our *first* business men double or treble this amount, while hundreds of them equal it. Perhaps it may be objected that this mercenary consideration is unworthy to be taken into account in the decision of the question, but we are of the contrary opinion. The pursuit of wealth as an *end* is of course to be condemned, but as a means to higher good it is both legitimate and praiseworthy. Culture, refinement, civilization, all depend upon it. These desirable ends cannot be obtained if the means are neglected.

It is not however to be denied, that wealth is fraught with dangers, both to the individual and the community. Its influence, both in the rise and fall of states, may be distinctly traced. History tells us how nations have arisen, one after another, only "to describe the parabolic

curve of seeming progress to a sure decay." The steps are few and simple.

By the struggles of the formative period, nature's recourses are developed for man's use, and wealth is produced. Wealth relaxes effort and substitutes debauchery; debauchery leads to effeminacy, and effeminacy to ruin. To counteract this inevitable tendency of civilization to decay is the endeavor of the Philosopher and the Christian. But how shall it be done? By checking the accumulation of wealth? Thus we destroy civilization itself while we are attempting to remedy its evils; we dam the stream at its source to guard against the danger of flood, forgetting that the greater its power, the more, if guided in its proper channel, will it fertilize and beautify the land through which it flows.

Our own country is now entering upon the second stage of national development, that of wealth. To save it from the debauchery and ruin which History tells us is liable to follow, there must be a strong controlling force, which shall turn this stream of wealth from mere self gratification into higher channels.

This is the mission of the educated business man. His collegiate training has strengthened his intellect and elevated his taste. A broad liberal culture has widened his manhood, so that he cannot be compressed into a mere money making machine. His accumulations will not be hoarded, but used for the attainment of things which he deems more valuable. He will be a patron of Art, Literature, and Science, not because "it is the thing," but because he truly appreciates them. He will have sources of enjoyment within himself, and will not be driven to dissipation, to employ the leisure hours which business leaves him, because his head is a vacuum when not filled with thoughts of making money. This is the type of the true business man, but not the prevailing one in America. The "Shoddy Aristocracy" are vastly more numerous. Their suddenly acquired wealth brings them into a new position and new social relations, where they feel awkward and ill at ease. Man being naturally an imitative animal tries to learn from those about him. These act as they see others act. Pictures are fashionable; they give orders for them painted in the most *expensive* colors. A library is a necessary article of furniture, and books are ordered by the cubic foot to fill the shelves. Diamonds are a mark of distinction, and so the richest jewels flash where pinchbeck before held undisputed sway.

This is folly, and we may smile at it, but immorality and vice flourish in the same rank soil. Such persons can be reached and influen-

oed only by wealth and display. Paul the Apostle, in a ragged coat, would be dismissed more unceremoniously by them than by the Roman Felix. But let them see around them persons, their equals in wealth, vastly superior, as they themselves will confess, in all other desirable qualities, and they will necessarily be benefited; their taste will be elevated, and their money so employed as to be a benefit instead of a curse.

Extreme cases these may be, but we are speaking of undeniable tendencies, and these seem sufficient to justify us in our position, that wealth, in the hands of the educated business man, may be an instrument of the highest good, and that a young man is warranted in considering it in his choice of life. No one need fear becoming too rich if he purposes to use his property aright. Should there chance to be a dozen millionaires or so among Yale's Alumni, Alma Mater would willingly grant them absolution, if they atoned for the fault by contributing a few hundred thousand dollars for her benefit.

We had intended to mention other inducements to a business life, but our article is long enough already, and they will easily suggest themselves to any one who gives the subject thought.

Sometimes in hours of reverie we think of our class meeting thirty years from now. Many will have finished their work, but some will come back in their ripe manhood to the old College home. Useful ministers, distinguished lawyers, skillful physicians, there will, no doubt, be among them, but the whole-hearted, successful business man will have no cause to blush in comparison with any.

M. H. W.

Cultivation of Humor.

"As much light discourse comes from a heavy heart as from a hollow one; and from a full mind as from an empty head."—*The Doctor*.

"Life without laughing is a dreary blank."—*Thackeray*.

"Go on then merrily to heaven."*—*Burton's Anat. of Melancholy*.

If Addison has given us a correct genealogy of Humor, we should certainly seek to know the youngster for his great grandfather, Truth's,

* It may not be out of place to remark, for the sake of the weaker brethren, that old Burton used "merrily" in the ancient sense, synonymous with cheerfully.—*Vide Anat. of Melancholy*. Vol. II, p. 249.

sake. And if we find, as those who love him declare, that he forfeits none of the veteran's spirit, while inheriting from Wit and Mirth, his father and mother, a charming quaintness and cheerfulness of disposition, we may be glad to gain him as a friend. We all meet him every day. But how do we treat him?

Many, to be sure, do not even know Humor by sight, and, before their attention can be directed to the stranger, he generally passes out view. Not a few return his salute with a kind smile, are happy to see him, and then pass on to forget his existence until the next chance encounter. Some take off their hats to him because their companions do—but when alone never recognize him. A great many earnestly desire his acquaintance but are continually mistaking others for him, and, alas! him for somebody else. He is actually avoided by a certain class of the devout, who, while deprecating his levity, nevertheless pity the poor fellow for the sake of his grand-father's blood that is in him—but some surly pietists have no good-will whatever towards our hero. They frown at his kind words, refuse him the ordinary civilities of life, and will not hear the thousands who declare that he has aided them in the course of virtue and honor. Others there be, and we count in our numbers the best, the wisest, and wittiest of men, who cherish him in their hearts as one of the most precious of God's gifts, who live with him day and night, side by side, through work and play, and so far from being ever weary of him, the more we learn of Truth, the fuller is our appreciation and the deeper is our love for this branch of the old stock.

"Why is this," say you? "Whence this ardent affection for so thoughtless and trivial a comrade?" Superficial observer! Ignorant critic! Remember I speak of true Humor—not of pretenders. He is friend and teacher as well as boon companion. To tell of his benefits would involve the story of our lives. In good fortune he adds to all our pleasures—in adversity he lessens every grief. In all things he teaches us to be honest, and humble and kind. His good nature is invincible. Will you deny that he helps our charity? He does not parade his virtue, but when he cracks the whip of ridicule and disembowels men of straw with his satirical knife do you not hear him whisper "This above all—to thine own self be true.

Thank him when his capers and songs enliven your holidays. Remember the old story of the sick clown, and don't call Humor a thoughtless fool. "A man may whistle for 'want of thought,' or from having too much of it." And now, before we bow out the propria persona of our subject, that we may speak with less embarrassment,