

**PROCEEDINGS OF LEXINGTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND
PAPERS RELATING TO THE
HISTORY OF THE TOWN, VOL. III**

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VARIOUS

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Carlton A. Staples.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
LEXINGTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AND PAPERS RELATING TO THE
HISTORY OF THE TOWN
PRESENTED AT SOME OF ITS MEETINGS.

VOL. III.

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A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF HON. THOMAS HANCOCK, A NATIVE OF LEXINGTON.

READ BY REV. C. A. STAPLES, MARCH 8, 1887.

Among Hogarth's pictures, designed to teach certain great moral lessons, there is a series entitled "The Industrious and the Idle Apprentice." In these he represents the course of two young men apprenticed to a silk weaver in London, a hundred and fifty years ago. In the first plate we have the young men working at their looms. The industrious apprentice appears cheerful and happy, intent upon his work and trying to accomplish as much as possible. Beside him lies an open book which he is supposed to be reading whenever his eyes can be safely withdrawn from his work -- a book of an instructive and moral character. His appearance is that of a tidy, self-respecting, open-hearted fellow, determined to make his way in the world through his own work and worth. The other, the idler, is represented as yawning over his work, from the effects of the last night's debauch, sullen and repulsive in countenance, with copies of ribald songs hung up around him, which he is evidently learning, and with a huge pot of beer standing hard by. His appearance is slovenly and coarse; he seems careless in his work, and only concerned to get through with it as easily as possible, that he may be ready for another night of dissipation and folly.

The second plate represents the way in which they spend Sunday. The industrious apprentice is seen in the congregation at Church, joining in the service of worship with his master's daughter who holds the hymn book with him from

which they are singing together with evident satisfaction and delight. The idler has stolen away from Church into the adjoining burying ground, where with his associates he is engaged in gambling, using a horizontal tombstone for a table while the sexton, who has discovered them, is about to cudgel them over the head with his cane.

In the fourth plate we have the industrious apprentice advanced from the weaver's stall to the counting room, where he keeps the books, and holds the keys of his master's purse, while the idle fellow is driven out of the shop and sent off to sea for vicious courses.

The next scene introduces us to a wedding with its festivities and rejoicing, where the industrious apprentice marries his master's daughter, and becomes his partner in business, while the idle one, returning from sea, becomes the associate of vile creatures, who live in wretched garrets and support themselves by thieving.

In the next our industrious and prosperous young man becomes an Alderman of London, and as one of the magistrates of the city, his former fellow apprentice is brought before him to be tried for murder. And the series closes with the Alderman, become Lord Mayor, and in his splendid coach, when riding to his inauguration in Guild Hall, he passes his old associate on his way to the scaffold to die for his crimes.

Thus industry, morality and religion lead to promotion, wealth and honor; while idleness, dissipation and folly lead to poverty, suffering and shame. Such are the lessons which these pictures forcibly, characteristically and happily teach. They are a series of sermons illustrating great principles of human conduct preached in pictures rather than words.

No doubt Hogarth drew both characters from the life