

**MAN'S MANHOOD,
A LECTURE**

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Man's manhood, a lecture by George Morris

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GEORGE MORRIS

**MAN'S MANHOOD,
A LECTURE**

MAN'S MANHOOD.

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE MEMBERS

OF THE

MENTAL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY,

CANTERBURY,

ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31ST, 1848.

AND ALSO AT THE

LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION,

CANTERBURY,

ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 18TH, 1848,

BY

GEORGE MORRIS,

MINISTER OF WATLING STREET CHAPEL,

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TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE
MENTAL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY,
CANTERBURY.

THIS LECTURE,
WRITTEN FOR THEIR INSTITUTION,
AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST
OF MANY WHO HEARD IT, IS

DEDICATED,
IN TOKEN OF SINCERE RESPECT FOR THEM,
AND ATTACHMENT TO THEIR SOCIETY,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PROGRAMME.

*Nature of the Subject.—Scene of Man's advancement to his
Manhood.—Constitutional adaptation of the Scene to this
End considered physically, intellectually and morally.—
Particular circumstances which contribute to bring on Man's
Maturity.—When that Manhood is attained.—Its future
development.*

MAN'S MANHOOD.

A LECTURE.

Nature of the Subject.

THERE is, perhaps, something strange in the *name* of my subject. I confess I have not yet, myself, got rid of this seeming strangeness;—and at this early stage of my lecture when I am to speak briefly of the NATURE of the subject, I will take the opportunity of saying that I am glad that I never lost the impression of this peculiarity, for I am much indebted to the retention of it. At first I was tempted to ask myself, whether the title “Man’s Manhood” would not seem a mere unmeaning singularity; and thus create against the *idea contained in it*, a prejudice that it was little more than a conceit of the fancy,—a profitless extravagance,—a *mere* eccentricity.

But it at once came home to me,—that it is not what things *seem*, but what they *are* which is the great question about them: and, however my subject with its name might seem this, I knew that it *was not* this.

The subject is in its nature *purely* MENTAL. I think it ranges high even among that class. Did I fear upon the score of properly apprehending it,—my chief resolve would be, not to be guilty of bringing it down to my own level;—but to prefer the lesser fault of failing in my ascent to it; a crime more pardonable than aiming too low. Shakspeare speaks of “breaking the neck with climbing;” a lot, in a good cause, infinitely preferable to crawling on “all fours” though one never got a scratch.

I have said that my subject is purely mental in its nature; and in this sense I conceive that—“Man's Manhood” is properly, independent both of bulk of body and length of years. I do not mean that this “Manhood” is attainable by childhood or by youth; (though there may be some fine reachings after it)—I mean that maturity of body or of age is no guarantee for its attainment: they are not, *in themselves*, the signs of its existence,—though they go to make up the conditions of its development

As more particularly illustrating the nature of the subject I will remark that—Man was created *inherently great*; and that the Divine intention concerning him was that he should become greater. Not that in the present he was in any way incomplete; not at all incompetent to subserve the high designs of his creation; but that his greatness was of such a nature, that *development* was a necessary element in his constitution.

This *becoming greater* was not to be by a re-creation; the mind was not to receive *new elements*;—there was not to be any re-adjustment of its powers; for there could be nothing inherently faulty in such a work that it should need to be made over again. No work of the Creator's is in itself susceptible of improvement even from the Divine hand;—it must be *worthy of its origin*. If it ever need alteration or improvement, it must be owing to self or hereditary perversion, and not to primary defectiveness. It was not then by an *alteration* of man that he was to become greater, but by the continual development of what he *was*.—The soul *must grow*.

The Scene.

This brings me to speak of the Scene of Man's advancement to his Manhood; with the constitutional adaptation of this scene to the end, considered physically, intellectually and morally.

As to this "scene" we all know *where* it is, and the name of it. It is all about us, and within us. I know of *nothing* which is not *part of it*.—of nothing so remote but claims affinity, and says "*I am as much it as any thing else is it.*" But making the due distinction between what is internal and what is external, I would say that this scene consists more in what is "I"—than in what is not "I."

But as to *what* this scene really is,—this is not found out in a day;—it is a thing we are always learning, and the understanding it is parallel with the attainment of Manhood.—Suffice it to say, then, in addition to what has gone before, that the scene is full—endlessly diversified—harmonious though conflicting;—its very conflicts resulting in fine harmony. It is a sublime paradox which it is the high prerogative of man in the exercise of his true moral power to *reconcile*; an intricate web given to man to *unweave*, and which in his hands becomes the SILVER CORD OF TRUTH!

In regard of the *Physical* adaptation of the scene to the end, I shall limit myself to the observation that the Great Creator made the earth subservient to man: that is, subservient to *his growth*.—The earth was never designed, therefore, to offer a premium to idleness on the one hand, nor on the other to spurn the nobleness of labor, and withhold her