

**THE MERCHANT'S
CLERK CHEERED
AND COUNSELLED**

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The Merchant's Clerk Cheered and Counselling by James W. Alexander

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BY

JAMES W. ALEXANDER, D.D.

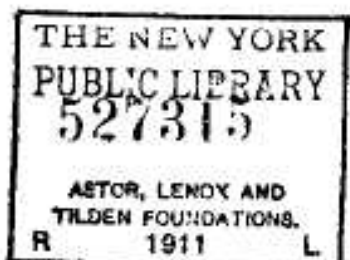


NEW-YORK :

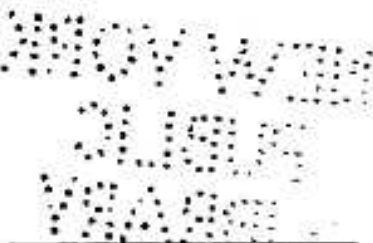
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P R E F A C E.

At an earlier period the writer of what here follows was led to address himself with earnestness to the task of counselling Young Mechanics and other Working Men, in a book which has had its day. In other circumstances, he was called, by official duty, to spend much thought upon the case of Youth in pursuit of a liberal education. But since his residence in this great city, his interest has been awakened towards the unnumbered boys and young men, who are aspiring to the honors and gains of merchandise. To such he respectfully and affectionately dedicates these advices. They claim, and they can procure, no literary applause; but if they find favor with those for whom they have been

written, they may rescue some wandering youth and gladden the heart of some aged parent.

Much has been written about the Dangerous Classes of Society; is it not right that more care should be bestowed on the Endangered Classes? Among these, city clerks stand conspicuous. If we except mariners, there is perhaps no one description of persons so exempt from parental guardianship and any strict watch of society, as the youth who flock by hundreds from country to town. Those who concur with the writer, on this point, may do something to make his present suggestions effectual.

Although this is not a religious treatise, it contains some important religious advices. To have refrained from these, in such a connection, would have been both unwise and cruel; and they will be found such as need not offend any Christian mind. These plain counsels are thrown on the stream, with a prayer for the benediction of Him who is the Benefactor of the young and the Father of the fatherless.

NEW-YORK, October 24, 1856.

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YOUTH MOMENTOUS.

THERE is no going back to correct the errors of youth, as Plato reports Heraclitus to have said that no man ever bathes twice in the same river; all things are in rapid flow, and what is to be done for character should be done quickly. In our hurrying age boys, become men by a sort of start or explosive advance. Impressions upon society must, therefore, be made upon youth, and if we would have good merchants, we must first have good clerks.

CLERKS INNUMERABLE.

The young men engaged in the commercial houses of this metropolis are innumerable; the numbers rise by tens of thousands. Hence we are justified in giving a character somewhat local to these remarks, believing that the youth of other cities are not so diverse in nature or situation as that they may not derive benefit from advices calculated for the meridian of New-York. Within limits so narrow, much can not be said; but all that is offered proceeds from true sympathy and earnest good will.

AWAY FROM HOME.

Of the countless throng of city clerks, some are living under the parental roof, but the great majority have come from the country. An increasing centripetal force bears the youth of rural districts towards the great emporium. While this infusion of fresh blood into the old veins is useful in many ways to the receiving party, it involves losses and exposures on the part of those who come.

Each of them has left a beloved circle, which, alas ! he has not yet learned to prize, and has entered into a comparatively homeless state. Many a man of business can look back to this juncture, when he sallied into the great world alone ; and he shudders at the pitfalls and precipices which he has escaped. " Well do I remember, even at this distance from the time," says a celebrated writer, " the scene which my own home presented when I finally quitted it to embark on life's stormy and dangerous ocean. My mother, one of the kindest and tenderest that ever bore that dear relationship, unable to sustain the parting, had retired to the garden ; my sisters wept ; my father walked silently by me to the edge of the town, where I was to take horse and ride to meet the coach that was to carry me to London ; while my own heart was almost overwhelmed with emotion, under the idea that I was leaving home to encounter the anxieties, dangers, and responsibilities of a new and untried course."*

* " The young Man from Home," by the Rev. John Angell James of Birmingham, England. When I name this admirable and affecting little volume, I could wish it were in the hands of every youth who is separated from his parents. Mothers could hardly select a more loving gift for their absent sons.