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Contact:

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Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

Dissertation - Encouragement due to Bath and Genius
Wm Woodvard
D. C.

When we look abroad into the world, we sorrowfully perceive how few there are who have gained that height of knowledge and usefulness, to which all might attain. Hence, there seems to exist, within us, a natural tendency to admire the man, who, by the powers of a cultivated mind, can astonish the world! and indeed we are forced to do this, without taking into consideration the assistance which he may have had, in his advancement.

If such are our feelings on beholding the man, who has only drunk the beverage, offered him, and become great, what emotions must spring up, within us, when we look at that man, who, without one friend, save Patience, to encourage him; one arm, but that of determination, to sustain him; or one tempting prize, but that of toil, to reward him; bursts the strong fetters of adversity; surmounts all difficulties, rises with a steady flight, far above his fellow man; and calms a nation's distress, or rouses a people's indignation, by his eloquence, and humbles a haughty world, by his nod.

Of this latter class we have seen many striking examples, whose fewness has but increased their lustre and brilliancy, and the names of those who might become of this class form the subject of this dissertation.

It is to be much regretted that the poor, either ignorant, of their own powers or disheartened, by the many unpropitious circumstances surrounding them, or believing that all their own efforts will only tend to sink them deeper in embarrassment, will, not un- frequently submit themselves fit subjects to intellectual supineness and guiltless remorse. We candidly believe that, could they be well convinced of their great and immortal powers, which now lay dormant, and of their ability to improve them, we should have far less of igno- rance, vice, and misery to lament, and more of intellectual and moral greatness to admire, in the world.

It is remembered in the history of the past and known among the things of the present that many of the greatest men - men superior in intellect and morals - that have adorned the world's annals were men who were devoid of all which, in our day, too often constitutes happiness, save an invincible thirst after knowl- edge and as an invincible determination to acquire it in spite of all opposition.

nothing We might ^{cite} the names of many who governed by the praiseworthy passion, this beautifying ambition, to excel, have, notwithstanding the ridicule of companions, the opposition of the world, - obstacles which in our day would dishearten and terrify us - risen to such a proud preeminence in Literature, Science, Politics, and Religion as to call forth, from the less fortunate, voices of ad- miration; from the scholar, exclamations either of great love or deep, abiding envy. We desire pardon, for citing, from among the many, the case of Prof. Heyne who, with persevering toil, a worthy determination, and a sure step, rose, from the humble occupation of a poor weaver to the most honourable office in the justly proud institution of Göttingen! Of Duval who, from an

illiterate peasant became one of the most honorable among
the officers of a Crown; of Alex Murray who, rejecting his situ-
ation as shepherd boy, became a distinguished prof in Edinburg; of
Wm Gifford who, at one time, compelled, by poverty, to work out his
problems of pieces of leather, handed him, by his master, for a dif-
ferent and more suitable purpose; of another took charge
of the most celebrated review in the world and became a guide
to all literary men; of a Simpson and Ferguson both very
familiar to every mathematical student; of Sanderson who
though, with his poverty, deprived of sight, when a babe,
gave to Edinburg its brightest charms and ^{Comparison} challenged competition
with the most brilliant stars in the Literary world.

Such are examples of those who well knew and severely felt
the wants of the comforts of life.

It is not however necessary to search the records of
foreign countries of of past times. We can and do find ex-
amples in the history of our own age and country.

We need scarcely mention Franklin who is known to ev-
ery reader and familiar to every student of America and whose
name is that of Science. A Nelson might be named.
Although, like Sanderson, deprived of sight and the comforts
of life, he has firmly identified his name, with the respecta-
bility of Rutgers College, and with the advancement of classi-
cal education, in America.

Others might be cited but these are sufficient to show
what the poor, the unfortunate, have become and to promise suc-
cess to the youth, whose hopes have been scattered by adversity's
withering blast or crushed by afflictions' cruel hand.

No one dare affirm that the destitution of the com-

facts of life implies a like destitution of intellect. Nor can any reasonable man deny that the Cultivation of the intellectual is as important as the Cultivation of the Moral and Physical powers.

We admit that we can form but an imperfect idea of the height of Moral or intellectual grandeur, to which every one, by his exertions, might attain. We candidly Confess that, without our personal exertions, the Wealth of Croesus or the extraction of the Scipias, would but sink us deeper in the unfathomable depths of ignorance and vice: but we well know that many, lacking not in exertion, have, from the want of the means of bodily support or of a genuine knowledge, been compelled to relapse into ignorance, sink into misery, or fall an early victim to horrid Death.

Conscious as we are of this fact, have we no duty to perform, with regard to him whose poverty ~~alone~~ prevents him from engaging, with us, the delicious fruit of knowledge?

Let the orphan, whose Cry is for that which will check the Corroding Canker of the mind: Let the unfortunate but exceedingly apt blind: Let the Young man, who, from his excess in daily labour and midnight toil for the sustenance of the body and mind has subjected himself to the ghastly disease which, racking his system, with demoniacal fury, sits, on her throne, and laughs to scorn the convulsive throes of her dejected victim: Let the spectre of the once manly Youth who, goaded on by the horrid famine of the mind, has become a victim to the loathsome inhabitants of the Grave.

Let the still, small voice within us answer,

They will say that our encouragement and aid is due

to the improvement of another's talents. They will tell us in language, not to be misunderstood, and with a reproach, not to be disregarded, that to our charge, must rest, much of the misery of the human race. They would point us to the graves of thousands who, for that knowledge which came not, have wasted their bodies and shipwrecked their immortal souls. They could tell us of many, whom we have known, who have been compelled, for want of assistance, to turn from the pursuit of knowledge while we, more fortunate, have withheld, from them, that small aid which, while it would have saved them, many years of toil, has only assisted us, in our own selfish indulgence, in urging us nearer destruction.

These would certainly be the mildest answers we could receive, in regard to those who have toiled, suffered and died, to acquire that "pearl of the mind that pure banquet of the soul" which would fit them for a higher, holier, a more useful, and distinguished sphere of action.

I am aware that I have chosen for my subject one, which lacks not of unpopularity, which savours of intrusion, and which gains for me not a winning smile or concurring sentiment, but a finger of scorn or term of reproach. It pains me not, however, to learn my duty, nor should it pain me to proclaim it.

Aged Men - your course of life is nearly run, and your goal is already in sight. Let the unmarrying portion be distinguished, by one act, towards the poor but worthy youth, which while it will make your death bed

"Soft as downy pillows are"

will gladden many a glad heart to gush forth its joy and will

lighten many stars, in the firmament of that world to which you are fast hastening.

Young Men - devote but a portion of those means, which, too often, are squandered in self gratification and idleness, to the education of that less fortunate youth, who is your equal in every respect, save the possession of this world's goods, and you will discover much to bind you to honour virtue and religion.

Christian - obey that precept of the bible, in behalf of the poor youth, and you will do much, by your assistance, to adorn your own life and to add a bright and living testimony to the purity of your holy religion.

Let no one of us withhold from him who now stands a suppliant at the door of the aged, the youth, the Philanthropist, the Christian, and the Scholar that aid, the denial of which

"Not enriches us but makes him poor indeed"

Let us all determine that, if the penitence of the present and the practice of the future can expiate the neglect of the past, we shall leave the world lighter in intellect, holier in principle: more Godlike in practice than when we entered the theatre of action and we shall leave America far beyond her sister Kingdoms in the march of Intellectual and moral improvement.

Thus as we depart, when we depart we must, we will do so happy, proud, with the reflection that we leave a nation great: a people prosperous, but more particularly the poor virtuous, intellectual, triumphant.

Wm Woodward

Commencement Oration of William Woodward, Class of 1838
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Encouragement Due to Worth and Genius

When we look abroad into the world we, sorrowfully, perceive how few there are who have gained that height of knowledge and usefulness, to which all might attain. Hence, there seems to exist, within us, a natural tendency to admire the man who, by the powers of a cultivated mind, can astonish the world; and indeed we are forced to do this, without taking into consideration the assistance which he may have had in his advancement.

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Of this latter class we have seen many striking examples, whose fewness has but increased their luster and brilliancy, and the claims of those who might become of this class forms the subject of this dissertation.

It is to be much regretted that the poor, either ignorant of their own powers or disheartened by the many unpropitious circumstances surrounding them, or believing that all their own efforts will only tend to sink them deeper in embarrassment, will so tamely submit themselves fit subjects to intellectual [supineness?] and fruitless remorse. We candidly believe that, could they be well convinced of their great and immortal powers, which now lay dormant, and of their ability to improve them, we should have far less of ignorance, vice, and misery to lament, and more of intellectual and moral greatness to admire, in the world.

It is remembered in the history of the past and known among the things of the present that many of the greatest men, men superior in intellect and morals, that have adorned the World's annals, were men who were devoid of all which, in our day, too often constitutes happiness save an invincible thirst after knowledge and as an invincible determination to acquire it in spite of all opposition.

We might cite the names of many who governed by this praiseworthy passion, this beautifying ambition, to excel, have, notwithstanding the ridicule of companions, the opposition of the world – obstacles which in our day would dishearten and terrify us – risen to such a proud pre-eminence in Literature, Science, Politics and Religion as to call forth, from the less fortunate, voices of admiration; from the scholar exclamations either of great love or of deep abiding envy. We desire pardon for citing, from among the many, the case of Prof. Heyne who, with persevering toil, a worthy determination, and a sure step, rose, from the humble occupation of a poor weaver to the most honourable office in the justly proud institution of Gottingen; Of Duvall who, from an

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Wm. R. Woodward