

I love the breath of the opening buds, the sight of the blooming flowers, which gladden my eyes at every step, in field or garden...

THE ACITATOR

Devoted to the Extension of the Area of Freedom and the Spread of Healthy Reason.

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Humorous Sketch.

Dying Advice of Hon. Mr. Smirk.

Simon Smirk was on his death bed. His son Samuel was standing by his side; and while he was holding his father's hand, his father spoke to him as follows: "Sammy I am dying—at the age of fifty-five. I wish you to pay strict attention to my dying advice!"

"And I wish you to follow my advice after I am dead." "I will, father." "Sammy, the neighbors, and all my friends tell me I haven't an enemy in the world, and I believe I haven't. I want you to understand why I haven't. It's all owing to policy; Sam; policy, and nothing shorter. When I was of your age, my boy, I was poor as a broken down village horse turned out to die. Age has at last broken me down, but I ain't poor thank policy! Follow my example, and you will become richer by far, than your father, Sammy; and die without an enemy, as I do."

Samuel wept, as in duty bound, but grief and his handkerchief choked his utterance, so he said nothing. "It has always been my policy," resumed the dying Smirk "to avoid giving offence to any one. No matter what people said or did to me—or any one else—right or wrong—I have always endeavored to forbear or submit, wherever I could; to be calm and cautious on all occasions, and to avoid the exhibition of any sign of resentment. By long experience in this course, I have found that by persevering to agree with everybody's faults is a sure eventual guide to universal popularity."

"But have you never had any difficulty with any one?" "No, since I was twenty-one," said the dying man gasping for breath. "Reach me a little water, and wet my lips—they are too parched to speak plain. There, there," he added as his son obeyed him: "that will do, and you shall be initiated into my invariable, and invaluable policy. Be deferential, Sam; deferential, and contro your temper, and better whenever you get a chance, have a row, and a smile, and a snake of the hand to everybody, mark everybody; and then you will get along."

"But I must be friendly to villains, must I not?" "Friendly! humbly be friendly to nobody, seem so. Villains! they constitute three-fourths of the community, and are most numerous. As for the good third, though it is well to keep their good opinion, they are only subordinate agents in the building up of a man. But don't get affronted with them. Oh, no Sam; never do that. Never kick a dog unless you are sure he hasn't any owner, then kick away, if you like."

"Though my father was dying, Samuel could not help smiling at such language. "That's right," said the dying Smirk; "I like it. Smile again Sam, smile again;—by smiling I have gained many a friend. —but be careful you don't smile at the wrong time. A smile is a powerful weapon, but it must be used with judgment." "Do you know, Sam, why I was always such a favorite with the women?" "No, father."

"I was always careful, in the place, to see my way with women; took care to understand their characters, their sentiments, their particular vanities and hobbies, keeping my own ideas in the background, until I could coincide with theirs. I always took care never to speak disrespectfully of the sex; never in the presence of a woman, called a woman a woman, or a female. I had but one name, ladies, for all the feminine gender." "How did you do when they differed, and asked your opinion?" "I would agree with one, and at the same time wink at the others slyly, as much as to say 'it's all a humbug, what I am saying.' If a woman was ugly, I praised her intellect. I seldom knew anything. I'd praise her virtue. I'd seldom miss the mart; for it is ugly, immoral and a fool in the bargain. In fact, it is hard to find anybody who hasn't some good point, or who isn't susceptible to flattery in some way or other; and a man must be a fool who, determined to flatter, and make no mercy acceptable, can't seize hold of some merit, in mind, heart, form or face of the person he wishes to please, and feigning to admire it, make that person friendly."

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out and out, without an explanation, he might abuse you behind your back. I have made myself a great reputation for benevolence by merely refusing to subscribe in this way. This is a queer world Sam."

"Here the old man was seized with a violent fit of coughing, which nearly took him out of this queer world. "I fear father, that talking so much will be fatal to you," said Samuel. "No, no," resumed his father, "I'm determined not to die till I get through. As I was saying, Sammy, this is a queer world, as you can't get along in it without religion."

"Without what?" exclaimed his son, in amazement. He never mentioned religion before in his life. "Without religion. Hire a pew by all means. Talk religion occasionally, and you can soon get the hang of it. Profess and practice when you are obliged to. But, at any rate, profess; it helps a fellow along in business. I got some of the most profitable customers and best friends by professing religion. Pew rent is no object when you come to think of that."

"But if you belong to a church you will have to defend its doctrines; and religious controversies create enmity, don't they?" "Sometimes. But whenever I found that I was getting into trouble on account of my religion, I was always careful to yield a point or two, or smile in a christian like way and then back out of the scrape. That's the way to do it, Sammy, that's the way to do it."

"It is best, I suppose, to be some kind of a politician?" "By all means; but take care and always be on the strongest side. You can, though be rabid as a mad dog in your views, when nobody but your side is present; affect to be very liberal in your sentiments when you talk with those of an opposite political creed. Mankind love a liberal man; and if you flatter your foes, you disarm them."

"There's a good deal in that," observed Sammy, musingly reflecting on many existing instances of its truth. "That there is," responded the sick man, nearly exhausted, and his lips as pale as ashes. "Double dealing does well. When I lived in Squealbury, a hogish set there, Sam, I was a great gun. I was a general favorite owing to my management, and I had money. They were going to build a town house. There were two parties each favoring a different site. They sent committees to ask my opinion. As the parties were about equal in numbers and influence, I hesitated at first which to favor."

"And how did you overcome this difficulty?" "I told the committees that if they would call a meeting of both parties, I would give them my opinion. That meeting was called, and I went. "Smirk, Smirk, Smirk," they all cried, and after complimenting the rowdies generally, the town, its character, and so forth, disclaimed my right either to the distinguished honor conferred on me, or to deliver my opinion on the subject. I would not express my preference or opinion; I had confidence that the intelligence of the Squealburians would enable them to choose. I bowed and withdrew, in the midst of the cheers of parties."

"That was well done, father," said Sam, admiringly; "and was that the reason you were elected to the Legislature?" "Yes," said senior Smirk, faintly; "I made a bit. My firm-ness became proverbial. I was compared to Cincinnati and Washington, and put up for representative, and elected by both parties. Do as I did Sam, and you will prosper—oh!"

"God bless you, my dear father! what is the matter?" "I am going Sam, I shall be off in a minute. Call in the ministers quick! but remember policy, Sam, policy."

And with the unfinished word, which had been his guiding star, through life, upon his lips, Hon. Simon Smirk expired. Intelligence of his death was telegraphed all over the Union, and a great many editorial obituary notices were written upon him ending with "None knew thee but to love thee, None named thee but to praise."

A Pet Lion.

The Westminster Review, in a recent article on Gerard's (the celebrated lion-hunter of Algiers) account of his adventures, relates the following anecdote of a pet lion, Hubert, which Gerard caught when a cub, and raised till he was big enough to be dangerous, when he was sent to the Jardin des Plantes at Paris:

"Hubert was sent to Paris, and placed in the Jardin des Plantes, where, sometimes afterwards, Gerard went to see him. "He was lying half asleep gazing with indifference on all the visitors, when suddenly he raised his head, his eyes dilated, a nervous twitching of the muscles of his face and the agitation of his tail showed that the sight of the well-known uniform had roused him. He had recognized the uniform, but had not yet identified his old master. His eyes vaguely interrogated this vaguely remembered form. Gerard thrust his hand into the cage. It was a touching moment which followed. Without taking his eyes from Gerard, he applied his nose to the outstretched hand, and began to breathe deeply; with every breath his eye became more affectionate, and when Gerard said to him, "Well, Hubert, my old soldier," he made a terrible bound against the bars of his prison, which trembled beneath his weight. My friends, alarmed, sprang back, and called on me to do the same. Noble beast! thou art terrible even in thy love! He stood pressed against the bars, striving to break through the obstacles which separated us."

He was magnificent as he stood there roaring with joy and rage. His rough tongue licked with joy the hand which I abandoned to him, while with his enormous paws he tried to draw me gently to him. No sooner did any one approach the cage than he flew out in frightful expressions of anger, which changed into calmness and caresses on their retreating. It is impossible for me to describe how painful our parting was that day. Twenty times I was forced to return to reassure him that he would see me again, and each time that I moved out of sight, he made the place tremble with his bounds and cries. Poor Hubert! this visit, and the long tete a tete of subsequent visits, made captivity a little less painful to him, but the effect seemed to be injurious on the whole. He drooped, and the keeper attributed it to these visits, which, perhaps, made him languish for the camp and his old days of liberty. He died leaving Gerard firmly resolved to kill as many lions as he could, but to capture no more; death in the forest, by a rifle, being infinitely preferable to a pulmonary disease bred in a prison."

Keep Your Eye on Your Neighbors. Take care of them. Don't let them stir without watching. They may do something wrong if you do. To be sure you never knew them to do anything very bad, but it may, on your account they have not. Perhaps, if it had not been for your kind care they might have disgraced themselves and families a long time ago. Therefore don't relax any effort to keep them where they ought to be; never mind your own business, that will take care of itself. There is a man passing along—there he is looking over the fence into his neighbor's garden—be suspicious of him, perhaps he contemplates stealing some of these dark nights; there is no knowing what queer fancies he may have got in his head. If you see any symptoms of any one passing out of the path of rectitude, don't say anything to the erring individual about it, but tell every one else that you can see, and be particular to see a great many. It is a good way to circulate such things and though it may not benefit yourself, or any one else particularly, it will be something equally important about some one else. Do keep something going—silence is a dreadful thing, though it is said there was silence in the Courts of Heaven for the space of half an hour, don't let any such thing occur on earth; it would be too much like Heaven for the inhabitants of this mundane sphere. If, after all your watchful care, you can't see any thing out of the way in any one, you may be sure that it is not because they have not done anything bad; perhaps in an unguarded moment you lost sight of them—throw out hints that they are no, better than they should be—that you shouldn't wonder if people found out what they were after a while, and that they may not carry their heads so high. Keep it a going, and some one will take the hint, and begin to help you after a while then there will be music, and everything work to a charm."

Gougat's Description of Cold Water.—"Look at that liquid which has been produced from the clear distillery of nature," holding a glass of water. "The Eternal Father of us all has brewed it for his children. It has been produced not in filthy distilleries, but in beautiful, fragrant places. It has been brewed down in your grassy dell, where the deer lingers, and the rippling rills sing their wild lullaby; or away upon the ocean, where showers and storms are born. It sparkles in the ice-berg. It makes the graceful frost-tissue on which the moon-light plays. It dallies in the cataract; weaves the snow wreath and the emerald setting on the mountain peak. It never injures, but always does good. It is blessed always, at evening and at morning. It is ever beneficent and kind. God made it glorious. Take the pure liquid which God, our father, gave us. Take it as it is—bright beautiful and blessed.—Mail."

A friend of ours, being told if he wanted good health he must "forego cigars," replied that he would rather "go four" cigars than forego one.

Education and Occupation.

It is said that of the six hundred and six convicts who now occupy the Ohio Penitentiary, two hundred and forty-four cannot read or write, and four hundred, or nearly sixty per cent, of the entire number, have no trades. This brief return is full of meaning. It at once admonishes and instructs. There are two great essentials for success in life—education and regular occupation. There are others, but these are among the most important. Moral training should of course never be lost sight of. But without a habit of industry, which can only be induced by regular occupation, the perils to the young are fearful. Almost any trade is better than none. The error with many parents is, to neglect the great essential until too late, when the habits become formed and fixed, and thus all useful control is lost. The figures quoted from the annual report of the Ohio Penitentiary point out the true causes of the misery and crime that prevails throughout the land. The annals of other and like institutions abound with singular details. Many children are over indulged, and thus are ruined. They are permitted to follow their own inclinations, and with no experience of the world and its ways, they naturally go astray. It is indeed difficult at times to know what is best to be done. We are all apt to fancy that our own offspring possess remarkable qualifications, and hence to look to some very elevated pursuit or calling, as eminently calculated for them. Too often we misjudge, and by a mistaken partiality, place them in a sphere for which they are unfitted. But, we repeat, regular occupation should be regarded as essential. Some trade, calling or profession should be selected, and fully acquired. At least the habit of industry would be secured, and thus the first great step to success in life. But the longer we delay, the greater will be the difficulty. The old and experienced cannot encounter idleness without great risks.—How cruel then, to submit the young and thoughtless to such a fiery ordeal! The parent, too, who neglects to give his son a business, may well be reproached by that son in after life. Occupation is the great safeguard. It not only engrosses the mind, but it curbs and restrains the passions. It not only elevates the individual in his own estimation, but it makes him useful and independent. He feels that his faculties are tasked, and he therefore contributes something to the well-being of society. Nay, the real powers, mental and physical, can never be full known, until called into play by some emergency of professional life or business requirement. Nevertheless, there are hundreds of young men who are permitted to grow up with false notions of position, influence and pride, and who find to their regret, when they become a little older and wiser, that they have been wasting the best years of their youth in the vain conceits produced by idleness, of the visionary speculations engendered by idleness. Again, therefore, we earnestly urge the necessity of a regular occupation. It may seem irksome at first, but it will soon lose its severity and terror, while the tact, and art thus acquired, will strengthen and fortify for almost any emergency of life. A fair education, industrious habits, and a useful calling, are infinitely more valuable than a fortune without these priceless qualities."

A METHODIST PARSON LOOKING FOR LOST SHEEP.—A preacher of the Methodist Church was traveling in one of the back settlements, and stopping at a cabin, where an old lady received him very kindly. After setting provisions before him, she began to question him: "Stranger, where might you be from?" "Madame, I reside in Shelby county Kentucky."

"Well, stranger, hope no offence, but what meant you be a dunn' up here?" "Madame, I am searching for the lost sheep of the tribe of Israel."

"John, John!" shouted the old lady, "come nite here this mornin'; here's a stranger all the way from Shelby county, Kentucky, a hunting stock, and I'll jest bet my life that angle haired ole black ram, that's been in our lot all last week's one of his'n."

ORIGIN OF A CURRENT ADAGE.—Our readers have all heard the saying, that "nine tailors make a man." Possibly, however, some of them would like to know the origin of the saying. Here it is: "In 1742, an orphan beggar boy applied for alms at a tailor's shop in London, in which nine journeymen were employed. His forlorn but intelligent appearance touched the hearts of the benevolent tailors, who gave him a skilling each. With this capital the young hero purchased fruit, which he retailed at a profit. From this beginning by industry and perseverance he rose to distinction and usefulness. When his carriage was built, he caused to be painted on the panel, "Nine tailors make a man."

Science in Observation.

Science should enchain all nature by its golden links of consecutive thought. It teaches us, that in the material world, the slightest alteration in the force of gravity would alter the position of the tiniest flower; that an earth greater or less, by the smallest increase or diminution, would require a change in the structure and strength of our flowers; and that, therefore, the whole mass of the earth from pole to pole, and from circumference to centre, is employed in keeping a snow-drop in the position most suited to its vegetable health. This indeed is wonderful and beautiful—surpassing the sublime ideal of "Not less wonderful and beautiful are the results of science applied to human character."

"How wonderful! that even The passions, prejudices, interests That sway the meanest being, the weak touch That moves the finest nerve, And in one human brain Causes the faintest thought, becomes a link In the great chain of Nature!"

These may be the subjects of observation by all—the philosopher as well as the clodpole, the poet as well as the prosier; yet how transcendently superior in delight and wonder is the observation of him who ranges his observations under their appropriate laws. The eye of science penetrates the superficies of nature, and "opens out a way for the imprisoned splendors of the soul" to illumine and beautify all outward objects. True illumination and beauty are the daughters of science, not of fiction. Science is the harmony of truth. Not a bird trills its carol to the hushed air; not a vine curls its ringlets over the glassy lake; not a petal is painted by the sun; not a tear trickles down the cheek of beauty; not a ripple frisks over the face of the river; not an eddy dimples its placid features; not a fish cleaves its silvery way through the stream; not a rainbow arches the fountain but has been watched, admired and embraced by the Genius of Science.—To each, now beauty and grace have been added, by placing it in his precise relationship in the domain of nature.

Science requires facts, and men have been collecting them about human nature since the deluge; still the grand temple is not yet perfected. Facts, like the blocks for the Washington monument, must be brought from every quarter of the globe, from every age and nation. The remarkable Minerwa—birth is no fit companion for the generation of science. A fitter comparison is found in the little coral of the Indian Sea, which adds slowly and silently, to its small beginnings, until in time it rises surely and strongly above the waves, an islet of beauty, a gem set by the Genius of Perseverance amidst the wild waste of waters!

The sources of our observation upon human nature are numerous. Our every day association—being conversant with the best and most acknowledged treatises on human character, and with the biographies and experiences of remarkable men—with writings of fiction which have a verisimilitude, as Shakespeare and others of similar fidelity to nature—studious observation of the peculiarities of the prominent ages of the world, and the influence of different characters in development and controlling the age; all these are the reservoir whence facts may be drawn for illustration.

The best time for truthful observation, is when a whole class of which we are enquiring are in action at once. We have had a heroic age, a chivalric age, a fanatical age, an artistic age; each so termed from some predominant characteristic. It is well to observe the general opinion, the laws of the land, and especially is it requisite to understand the literature—not alone that which was born at the time and reached maturity afterwards; but the currently received literature. If you doubt of the age, study its men. If doubt still exists look to the physical influences. If the flower be new and unclassified, examine the stalk; if the stalk beget misgivings, look to the soil; if that be not satisfactory, turn to analogy and the elementary and universal principles of human nature.

Take the age of Queen Elizabeth. It is full of great and distinctive features. Literature was linked with learning; courtesy was combined with christianity; and philosophy went hand in hand with poetry. Howard was on the sea; Coke upon the bench; Bacon in the chair of philosophy; Shakespeare on the living stage; Sydney in the field and in the boudoir. Hooker in the church, Raleigh every where, at one time polishing a "sonnet to a lady's eye-brow," at another cutting with his keen the western sea after splendid Eldorados; and Queen Elizabeth the real of Spencer's fairy ideal, sat enthroned as the Genius of the time. Given these spirits, their works, their dispositions, and the principles of human nature, and you may construct the science of the age. No such age can occur again. True, it can never afford basis for certain prediction. True again. Does it require that knowledge should attain the degree of prophecy, to be practical? May there not be a great power of influencing future phenomena in an imperfect knowledge of causes? No one can tell the elements now at work in society, nor what they will accomplish, but we can tell the tendencies. We cannot tell certainly that an age of heroism and letters like that of Elizabeth, will invariably give an impetus to Puritan freedom and true philosophy. As well attempt to tell certainly that old age will always give wisdom; or that youth will always be accompanied by inexperience. But the tendencies of old age and of youth are to these several ends. These tendencies

may be counteracted. Bacon hath said that "a man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he lose no time;" but alas! that the world should have profited so little by his wisdom. Who has not observed, during the last throes of Europe, the distinguished part taken by the scholars of the Academies, and the students of the Universities, and always on the side of popular freedom, and against royal aggression? Here is a class in action. Combine these facts with the recognized influences of liberal study, and the generosity inculcated by imbibing the spirit of "the humanities," as the classics were wont to be called; and you may safely predict what the future conduct of scholars and students will be, under similar circumstances.

Observation is a prolific source of information. It has been the only schoolmaster some great minds have ever known,—some who have made the world ring for centuries in admiration of their great names. Men's faces in the busy world have been their library. Men's actions their lecture room of history and science. "While Cæsar, by diligent study and varied experience gained that knowledge and power with which he made Rome the 'Mistress of the World,'"—Pizarro, ignorant in every branch of learning and unable to write his own name, yet by his acute observation of men and things, and his rough experience, carved out for himself a name as dazzling and enduring as any on the scroll of fame—the renowned conqueror of Peru. Combined with a thorough knowledge of books, what an aid is here to education! Not an education useless and chimerical, depending on man book knowledge; but an education of the soul wholly and complete. How many sparks of excellence have been smothered by the perversion of education. It is a remark of Lander, that "very wise men—wary and inquisitive, walk over the earth, and are ignorant, not only of the veins of gold and mineral wealth beneath, but of the very herbs and plants they are treading."

How true is the remark applied to the gold of thought—the spiritual wealth of the soul, and of the glowing intellect. How shall a man grow, how shall his character become completed, unless he gropes after every means of goodness, greatness and usefulness? To produce growth, there is more to be done than the mere planting of the germ; it requires thought within, and keen observation without. We all wish to make ourselves men of honor, men of mind, men to be esteemed and revered. Great and good characters are the illustrations of every age and country. "The immediate advantages and remote influences of such, are happy and benignant. They raise the standard of morals, arrest the progress of degeneracy, and awake in distant bosoms the sparks of kindred excellence. The mythology of the heathen, and the tradition of the savage, consecrated the memory of their heroes; invested them with great attributes, dilated them in imagination, and clothed them with all the awful associations of supernal power. We can easily pardon the simple blindness of such devotion, even when it partook of the vices and defects of its object. They had no revelation of the consummate character of the Deity."

But how is it, now that we have a perfect standard displayed in the founder of our religion? Are we yet to bow to every hero, and to idolize his earnestness and energy, regardless of the motives which prompt and the aims which guide? Is resolution to be regarded as character; or, is it truly, a means to character? Is energy of decision to be praised, when away from the guidance of principle? Shall we disregard voluntary and reflective action, and become enamored of a heroic something which sways the head, heart and hand, and overmasters intellect, nobility and virtue? Oh! but it is prettily said,—better that the human soul ran riot in its native spontaneity, than to have it pinched and confined by the laws of science; better that Apollo's locks were dashed and dishevelled by the hurricane, than that they be cropped and cued!

But is it true, that the human soul becomes enervate, or that virtue wanes, because men reason about them? Does the dialectician degrade human nature? Is Socrates to be reproached, because he confuted the Sophists with his interrogative method? Is Aristophanes to be adored, because he obeyed the impulses of a depraved humor? Such an idea would make Paul an object of contumely, and Luther an object of suspicion, because they reasoned of hope, faith and the judgment.

We should bring to the study of the lives of the great, the well defined principles of observation, study and experience. They will at once dispel this crazy worship of headlong heroism, and unfold character, so that it may be truly and philosophically revered or detested. Under the eye of such discrimination, worth will always be worth; and no glitter of intellect or flash of genius, shall ever sink it into contempt or raise its opposite into honor. It needs no wild, unreasoning mummery, no ceremonial observances, no blast from the trumpet; to usher in its presence. It is humble and among us.

We would admire, cherish, love, revere and venerate it, upon well grounded reasons, worship it—never! There has been but one character incarnate, worthy of worship. And we no pure religion, in which His character is the guiding star, this devotion to earthly heroism, might be pitied and pardoned. Its very similitude to Religion makes it more execrable. He who would place human character in any other than its appropriate place in the parthenon of science, deserves the reprobation of the good. It has a temple in the hearts of men; but reason is the presiding minister there. Let human greatness rise. Let it rise even above the clouds of the sky, and be gilded by the glories of imagination; but let us remember that its noblest splendors are but the shadow of the Almighty, to whom alone the soul should rise in its native strength, spiritual beauty and inborn independence.

A colored preacher eloquently told his good brethren that "would mount on weagle's inge, and soar to de land ob catfish and gels, where de verby runs down bofe side yer mouf. Yes, verby, do day will cum whan you all will mount on de weagle's inge, and play upon de barp ob a thousan' strings."

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