

The following is an introductory Lecture, delivered by appointment before the Bloomsburg Lyceum, by Dr. Wm. H. PERRY, on Wednesday evening, the 10th inst., and politely furnished for publication at the request of the society, unanimously expressed.

Mr. President—Ladies and Gentlemen,

It having devolved upon me, to deliver a lecture on some important subject, on this occasion I have chosen that of *Self Cultivation*; which appears to me, peculiarly appropriate as an initiatory lecture, before a literary society. Self-improvement, is a word with which we should be very familiar in our language, for there is not one subject, end, or blessing, implied in any other word, that transcends it when taken in its broadest sense. It is not only the instinct of nature, but the dictate of reason, and is commingled with every thing, to which man can either aspire or rise to. As men, it calls forth the most ennobling principles of conduct, and informs us, that we may be great, in every situation of life. It presents to us the grandeur of nature, and, if we will but improve it, turns to naught all outward distinctions. It reminds each one of us, that knowledge,

Like a crystal spring, lies hid,  
Until the earth & rubbish, is removed;  
When it shoots forth, meandering on  
its way,  
And sparkles brightly, on the sunny  
day.

Such metaphorically, is the condition of the human mind, until by self-culture, its dormant springs, (or faculties) are developed, and the rubbish, of ignorance removed, when the intellectual acquisitions shine forth, with resplendent splendor, and serve to light and refresh us through life. The mind, like a precious stone in its roughness, would not, without cultivation, attain that high value, and splendid perfection, which it obtains by culture; but like the precious gem, would have its beauty and worth concealed beneath an unpolished surface, which would never reflect the precious light of intellect around us.

Knowledge & wisdom are not imbibed intuitively, but require study, and labour on our part, in reflecting, considering, and judging, to obtain, ascertain its value, and apply it to its proper uses.

But in order, to illustrate this subject, more fully, I will proceed, to treat of it, as follows:

Firstly, its pre-requisites; Secondly its elements; & Thirdly, its means of acquisition.

First its pre-requisites, or what it implies.—They are First, self-consciousness; Second, self-government; and Thirdly, self-formation, all of which are comprised in self-cultivation.

First self-consciousness. This is absolutely necessary. To have a knowledge of ourselves is a preliminary step in the attainment of knowledge.—If we would know ourselves, we must penetrate and look into our own minds and enquire as to their condition and culture, when after giving an impartial decision, we will be capable of receiving that information which is so desirable. We should while turning our attention to outward things, not neglect those of the inward man. If we do, we shall be like barren fruit trees, but encumbered to the ground. If we would improve, we must not be strangers to ourselves, but having a knowledge of the state of our own minds, we will be conscious of our ignorance, and will therefore be desirous of cultivation and improvement.

Having surmounted this first stepping stone to self-improvement, the next pre-requisite to it, is, secondly self-government.

It is indispensable to self-culture that we should be able to rule ourselves—be able to fix the attention upon the subject of study, and confine our thoughts to it, and it alone, allowing nothing else to engross our thoughts. When we have obtained this conquest over our minds, every faculty and power within us will become as obedient to our commands, as the servant to his master.

He who has acquired this desideratum, may be well assured that his mind is susceptible of improvement; while on the contrary, he who is without this acquisition, can never be sure of doing it, "but like a ship without a rudder on the boisterous ocean," or the leaf in the whirlwind, is at the mercy of every passing impulse.

The next step in connection with this subject is, Thirdly, Self-formation. In connection with these powers al-

ready mentioned, we possess the power to form ourselves, those guiding and impelling powers, by which the means and influences are directed, that promote their growth and strength. The mark of attainment being always kept in view, will stimulate us to press forward; and although we may not be able to attain perfection, will come within its precincts. We can adopt or suppress this or that trait of character; that habit cultivate or conquer; this propensity direct or eradicate. Every attainment we make should be considered but as the basis of another and more lofty growth—like a seed planted in the ground multiplying with every growth.

Second, the elements, or first principles of self-cultivation.

These commence their application in youth, and like the cultivation of the tender shoot rising to a tree, require not only watchfulness and attention, but the application of the aids and means of growth. Therefore in order to cultivate self, we must by a proper exercise of, endeavor to develop our mental organs; especially those which perform our highest and noblest actions, & that we may become well proportioned & vigorous, our physical powers should be equally exercised.

I will now proceed to treat of self-culture in its various departments; and notwithstanding they advance together, and each has an influence over the other, will notice each by itself, that the subject may be distinct before us.

First self-cultivation should be physical.

We are so accustomed to hear this subject treated of, without the relation of the body being taken into consideration, that it may appear singular that it should become the first object of attention.

Self-cultivation is the improvement of all that we are, both physically, mentally, and morally. It is absolutely necessary, in order to have sound and healthful minds, that our bodies be healthful and sound. The exercise of the body and mind, should go hand in hand, in order to keep up a healthful action in both. This is a subject which is often entirely overlooked, in consequence of which, years of suffering are entailed upon us. This example is applicable to parents. This one from an honest but mistaken intention of proving the mind of his child, has it cooped up in an ill-ventilated school room, confined and bent down to studies three fourths of its time, at an age when it is of the utmost importance, that the chief care should be taken in the exercise of the physical system. Perhaps also, from mistaken tenderness, when not at school, he confines his child almost entirely, to warm apartments, as though the pure air of Heaven was not intended to be breathed, until heated within walls by a furnace. So that between confinement at home and at school, the poor sufferer is almost as much confined as if in a penitentiary; and languishes, for want of bodily exercise in the open air.

Dr. Rush says "they should be drawn from study, by teaching them useful or ornamental bodily exercises. Rousseau was of opinion, that the exercise of the body should always precede that of the mind.

Dr. Rush describes very beautifully, an exemplification of this remark, which occurred at the house of a gentleman in the neighborhood of Edinburgh; who introduced one of his daughters, then about five years old, with a little spinning wheel, at which she worked with great dexterity, singing at the same time, a well known song, suited to her employment, to the great delight of a large and respectable company.

When will this sacrifice of the health, for the pride of having a superior child be done away with, so that its physical, may not be sacrificed by its premature growth?

Such are the causes in present times, of so many instances of wilted, feeble, and sickly, or remarkable children, of mushroom growth of mind, which by this forced hot-bed action of the brain, are rendered prodigies by their second or third year, and die by the next. No wonder there are so many nervous and hypochondriacal diseases, and spinal and consumptive affections, when from stooping with the shoulders, the lungs from very friction, might become disengaged; and if along with this, it wants for pure water, air, and exercise, how can it enjoy health.

That physical health, is one of the most important items in self-cultivation, must now be apparent to all; & I shall therefore proceed to consider it in its other relations.

Second, self-cultivation is also intellectual. The mind of man being the recipient, and also the distributor of intelligence, its cultivation must necessarily be requisite, in order that we may have its full and proper exercise. The desire for knowledge is like an endless thirst, never satisfied, but only increased, the more it is gratified. It is our minds that render us superior to brutes, and we should therefore, cultivate them, so, that our animal (which we possess in common with animals) should not predominate over our intellectual faculties.

In a perfect system of intellectual culture, care should be taken to avoid the two extremes arising from particularization and generalization, which they are apt to fall into, as the one who happens to acquire the first habit, will obtain a character only for particular business, and a facility of expression on some one subject or other; while the latter, will possess a character for general intelligence and will be able to express himself eloquently in general terms, but in the details of business, exhibits every mark of irresolution and incapacity. The first marks the man of business, the last the philosopher.

There is no country in the world, perhaps, that affords so great facilities, or so great inducements, for the attainment of knowledge as our own. Talent is here, the recognizing mark of distinction, when combined with moral worth; which enables every man, however humble his occupation, to attain the highest rank of philosophers and statesmen, as we have many examples of.

"Expert men," says Lord Bacon "can execute and judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots, and marshalling of affairs, come best from those who are learned."

We would be strangers to self-cultivation if we were only to obtain knowledge (which is but the food of our mental growth,) and were not to use it.

We must learn to think also as well as know, so that we will have a foundation for more elevated and wider truths.

The mind when cultivated, like a flower nurtured by the hand of art, will expand in proportion as it is cultured. Or in the language of poetry: 'Tis cultivation, that unfolds the mind, Expands our reason, beautifies the whole,  
Leaving the impress, of its course behind.

To brighten, and to elevate the soul. Train up the faculties of the mind in the correct course, and it will not fail to be manifest, not only by increasing the size of the brain, but by a manifest increase of its operations or emanations.

We will now proceed to consider it in another relation viz:

That of Moral-culture.—The importance of the cultivation of the moral faculties will be very apparent, if we take into consideration, that in our ordinary transactions and intercourse with the world, our selfish propensities and sentiments are almost exclusively exercised, which unless some portion of our time was allotted to the reception of moral instruction, would tend greatly to the production of depravity. It is of the utmost importance, that the moral faculties should be particularly exercised early in life, when the mind is least influenced by the antagonist influences; so that the impression may out last every other. All our efforts should be in accordance with the moral government of God, and with the moral constitution of the universe. We should analyze our moral and religious faculties, and adopt those practices which they clearly point out. The doctrines and precepts of revelation are considered as the best, and only correct law extant upon this subject, and must therefore be our chief guide.

The limits of a lecture not admitting of a more general discussion of this part of the subject, I will proceed to consider some of the means of self-culture.—This subject occupies such a large field, that my time will not admit of my treating it more than briefly.

The principal means of self-culture are: Observation, Thinking, Reading and Lyceums or Literary Societies.

First, by observation is meant, the notice of passing objects and occurrences with which we make ourselves intimately acquainted. It requires the exercise of all the senses of the body, ever awake to receive impressions from any source by which they may be presented; that is, that we should be "all eye, all ear, and all

grasp." Knowledge imbibed in this way, is either obtruded upon us, or obtained by questioning. It is not only a very delicate matter to ask questions, but considered impertinent, and therefore it is requisite to make use of a great deal of address in doing so, or the suspicion of ignorance will be inferred, and ridicule and contempt the consequence. The fear of this mishap, militates against the acquisition of information in this way in consequence of which, so many persons derive so little knowledge, in the course of their travels and life.

In order to cultivate our minds in this manner, much previous culture will be necessary, so that by engaging those we meet in conversation on general and particular topics, in such a manner as to draw forth the extent of their knowledge, without exposing our own deficiencies. In our daily walks we should remark every change in the temperature of the weather, and every other circumstance that occurs, which will be likely to be of utility to ourselves or others. If in conversation with those who are engaged in commerce, enquire into the state of it. We will also make inquiries into the effects of different manufactures and occupations upon the health, morals and longevity of the workmen. Every person with whom we meet, such as fellow travellers upon the road, ferry men, innkeepers, grooms, & even beggars, will afford us some information or other, that could not be obtained from any other source. Many of our greatest men have acquired an immensity of knowledge in this way. Information obtained in this way, is generally more correct than that obtained otherwise; as it is subject to the examination of our sense and reason, before it is treasured up in the mind.

But enough has been said on this branch of the subject, and I will proceed to consider, Thinking, as a means of self-cultivation. That thinking acts as a means of self-culture, is evident from the writings of men in active life, bearing a stamp of excellence, not attainable by men who pass their lives in a library, shut up from the experience of the world. Solitary travelling, by invigorating our thinking faculties, favours this means of cultivation.

In order to prosper by our thoughts, every worthy one should be noted down in a common place book kept for this purpose; one side being kept for facts, and the other for thoughts.

Many great men have pursued this plan, among whom are Voltaire, who noted down in large companies; and Pope, of whom it is said, he often rang a bell while a guest at Lord Oxford's, in order to call up a servant with a candle, in order to record a thought suggested perhaps by a dream. A thought to a Philosopher Statesman, Poet, Literarian, or Historian, is often of great value; as his future fame or usefulness may depend on it.

"Self-cultivation may be obtained by: Reading.—By means of reading, we become acquainted with the observations of thousands in part ages and countries, and thus as it were, multiply ourselves."

The choice of books requires some judgment.—"Books written on subjects, that are in a state progression or improvement, such as natural Philosophy, Chemistry, and Medicine, ought to be modern; but upon many others, more especially Theology, Morals & Metaphysics this should not be done."

"New books are composed principally, from the decayed materials of old ones, reanimated and clothed in a new dress of language, with the addition, perhaps, of such new ideas or improvements, as the lapse of time, the experience of the age, or the reasonings of the writer may have suggested. The elementary matters exist in all; and are often the same in books upon the same subjects, in successive ages.

The celebrated Dr. Rush, during his life, in conversing with Dr. Nesbitt, was much struck with the great extent and diversity of his knowledge, and took the liberty of inquiring from what source he had obtained it. He informed him, that he had lived in Montrose many years, next door to a pastry-cook; and that his neighbor imported hogheads of old books from London every year, to tear up, in order to defend the bottom of his pastry from the excessive heat of the oven; and before using them, he sent for the Dr. and bade him select for his own use, all such as he thought valuable. He did so, and acquired by this means, a valuable and cheaply obtained library, from which he derived the greater part of his knowledge, with which he astonished and delighted all who conversed with him.

Mr. Addison was induced to read Baxter's works, in consequence of meeting with a fragment of a leaf of them, under a piece of pastry at a gentleman's table.

Such books as are valuable should be selected for reading, and read often which is preferable to reading a great number on the same subject. Too great variety and excess in reading, weakens the mind, and should be avoided. It is of importance to take notes of the most important passages in a book when reading, so that we may look over them frequently without much inconvenience, and have whatever is interesting fixed in the memory. An author of eminence says, we dream only, when we read without a pen in our hands.

I come next to consider Lyceums or Literary Societies, as a means of self-culture. Lyceums or Literary Societies are highly appreciated, by those who have had connection with them. The advantages of such a society in the procurement of a library of books, at but a trifling expense to each member, for which they have an opportunity of storing their minds with useful knowledge, & in greater variety, than the limited means of the majority of us, living in small towns could individually afford to purchase. "A chair in a library," says a distinguished author "I should consider as the throne of human felicity."

In this opinion I heartily coincide, and after storing my mind with useful knowledge, I could resort to the shelves of the library and rest it, by exchanging the subject for some light and interesting literary one, which might refine my feelings and taste, while it imparted vivacity to my ideas. Here we are informed, amused, instructed and delighted. Here the past and present times are united, and all the world with its governments & customs are portrayed; and here are described in abstract, all the opinions and systems of knowledge, that the world has ever produced. Encourage therefore the establishment of Lyceums in every town and village; let those who have not become members of this society, become awakened to the importance, and they will fully appreciate this means of cultivation.

Much more might be said, but time will not permit; & in fulfilling a duty enjoined by this society, I have satisfied their expectations, and been instrumental in awakening the public mind as to the means and importance of Self-cultivation, so as to conduce to the general advantage, I will be well rewarded.

## SHERIFF'S SALES.

BY virtue of sundry writs of Venditioni Exponas, to me directed, will be exposed to public sale, at the house of Charles Deebler, in Bloomsburg, on Thursday the 4th of March next at 10 o'clock in the forenoon, the following property viz:

A certain tract of land situated in Greenwood township, Columbia county, adjoining lands of Joseph E. Sands, John Conner, E. G. Rickois and others, containing ONE HUNDRED AND TEN ACRES, about fifty acres cleared land, whereon is erected a small

## LOG HOUSE

AND STABLE.

Seized, taken in execution, and to be sold as the property of David Ut.

—ALSO—

A certain lot of ground, situate in Hemlock township, Columbia county, adjoining lands of James Roat, William Galaspy, Veniah Reese, whereon is erected a

## FRAME HOUSE

AND STABLE

Seized taken in execution, and to be sold as the property of Charles Neikart.

—ALSO—

## FIVE ACRES

of unimproved land, situate in Brier creek township, Columbia county, adjoining lands of Jacob Shellhammer, John Conner and others.

Seized, taken in execution and to be sold as the property of John Dennis.

—ALSO—

A certain lot of ground situate in Rhoadsburg, Greenwood township, Columbia county, adjoining lands of William Mather, Andrew McClure and others, containing ONE HALF ACRE more or less, whereon is erected a

## LOG HOUSE

AND

Small Tailor Shop.

Seized, taken in execution and to be sold as the property of John Kinoy.

JOHN FRUIT, Sheriff.  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE, Danville,  
Feb. 12, 1841.