Home Reading.

JOY OF INCOMPLETENESS.

If all our lives were one broad glare
Of sunlight, clear, unclouded;
If all our path was smooth and fair,
By no soft gloom enshrouded;
If all life's flowers were fully blown
Without the sweet unfolding,
And happiness were rudely thrown
On hands too weak for holding—
Should we not miss the twilight hours
The gentle haze and sadness?
Should we not long for storms and showers
To break the constant gladness?

If none were sick and none were sad,
What service could we render?
I think if we were always glad
We scarcely could be tender;
Did our beloved never need
Our patient ministration,
Earth would grow cold, and miss, indeed,
Its sweetest consolation.
If sorrow never claimed our heart,
And every wish was granted,
Patience would die and hope depart—
Life would be disenchanted,

And yet in heaven is no night,
In heaven is no more sorrow!
Such unimagined new delight
Fresh grace from pain will borrow—
As the poor seed that underground
Seeks its true life above it.
Not knowing what will there be found
When sunbeams kiss and love it,
So we in darkness upward grow,
And look and long for heaven,
But cannot picture it below
Till more of life be given.

JEFFERSON.

Thomas Jefferson alone stands in a different relationship toward Hamilton from any other of his contemporaries. As one cannot serve two masters, so one cannot respect both these men. He must hate the one and love the other; he must hold to the one and despise the other. That Thomas Jefferson so conducted himself during the eight years of his Presidency, that a large number of persons still believe him to have been a great, good, and useful statesman, is due in no small measure to the fact that during that period he was reaping what Hamilton had sown, and that he did not feel it incumbent upon himself to plow up the field and sow it anew with that seed which in earlier years he had declared to be alone fit for use. As has been observed of other men, he who in opposition had been so radical, in power became quite conservative. The anti-Federalist of Washington's Cabinet sought to divest the Central Government of none of its substantial powers when he himself was at the head of that Government. The *sans-culotte* Democrat during the days of the French excitement presided over a pure republic without manifesting any anxiety to revolutionize it.—When treating of the antagonism between Hamilton and Jefferson, and of the question which divided them, it is necessary to speak of Jefferson and his principles as they were at that period, not as they appeared at a subsequent date and under changed cricumstances. Jefferson was a political chameleon; and it is not fair in discussing any particular era of his life to cast over it the widely differing hue which belonged to some other division of his long and mottled career.

The character of Jefferson's mind was peculiar. He has been generally called a philosopher; and perhaps that vague and extensive term is well selected to describe his intellect, also vague and extensive. He was by nature a theorist, not a practical man. He could discuss the science of government better than he could administer affairs. His genius was not executive. He always failed in emergencies requiring the activity and energy of the man of business. As Governor of Virginia in the Revolution he did not distinguish himself; some persons have thought he disgraced himself. He was a man of wide attainments, knew languages, read many books, dabbled in many pursuits, was inclined to be cyclopedic in his style; yet he had not an accurate and thorough habit of mind.—His speculations were bold and interesting; an iconoclastic age could not always keep pace with his reckless thinking. But when he dealt with facts it was necessary to accept his statements with caution. Nearly his last act in Washington's Cabinet was a report concerning commerce. He had been three years about it; and it was a great party document, sure to be subject to keen scrutiny. He had every motive as certainly he had taken plenty of time to make it a thorough instrument. It was replete with elaborate theories and plausible advice; but in its statistical and narrative parts it proved to be so full of error, so utterly untrustworthy, that a supplementary report in the nature of pages of "Errata" had to be furnished.

Jefferson's knowledge was respectable; it was his inability to put it to practical use which betrayed the deficiency in his intellectual structure. He had an uncontrollable passion for thinking, for theorizing; his entensive reading, a natural plausibility, an astonishing fluency with the pen, enabling him to indulge largely in this absorbing propensity. As every one in his native country and in that foreign land of France, which for a large portion of his life possessed half of his thoughts and more than half of his heart, was forming and discussing schemes of government, he naturally turned to the same labor. He conceived most attractive plans, quite fascinating upon paper and impregnable in conversation, and having no worse fault than that in the world of real men they would not work.

To whatever else he may have been blind, he never was blind to the political aspect and bearings of a measure. That he should have been a dupe or a tool in a bit of political jugglery it is altogether incredible, even though he himself asserts it. In partizan strategy he was greatly superior to Hamilton. He had always the appearance and often the reality of a thorough belief in his avowed doctrines. He could use individuals with great skill, rewarding them always, but acknowledging or denying his connection with them as he saw fit. He understood demagogic arts, though practicing them with his pen rather than with his tongue. He was eminently successful in putting himself into accord with the mass of the people; with the educated few he was never on good terms, nor could ever wean them from their allegiance to Hamilton; but he was a good gatherer of the vulgar suffrages. He was too pliant to let a conviction stand in the way of an expedient action, and he never demoralized his party by leading it against a strong gale of unpopularity but made his forces lie down till the hurricane was over. Toward individual opponents he was rancorous and unsparing; he fully believed and freely spread all ill reports of them, and ceaselessly sought their utter destruction. He kept all his antagonists for ever on the defensive, not confining himself to charges grounded in fact, but drawing freely upon fancy, and deeming it a fair ruse in political warfare to disseminate a false report and leave the sufferer to clear himself if he could. His most striking faculty was that of writing poisonous letters. He excelled in insinuation, and could destroy one's character in written words on a sheet of paper with such consummate subtlety that the defendant himself with the sheet before him could find no specific sentence on which to ground a charge of plain falsehood. As leader of the of the anti-Federalists fully comprehended the situation, and adapted his strategy to it with a perfect skill and sagacity. He did not fight hard all along the line, but regarding the Treasury, so long as Hamilton was intrenched therein, as constituting the key to the Federalist position, he maintained an unintermitted series of attacks upon that post—showing that, if the opposition party obstinately denied the wisdom of concentration in government, they at least fully appreciated it in assault.

AUNTS AND OLD MAIDS.

We do not know how the world would go on without "aunties" and old maids. When every one else is hurried and heated about their own affairs, the old maid of the family, dear, kind, sympathetic auntie, with nothing more important in her own life to occupy her than a change of maids or a rebuke to the man, comes in fresh as a daisy to take her turn at the mill, as a relief guard of some one else. With plenty of leisure and inexhaustible love, what may she not do in the way of help, and to her honor be it said, she generally does all she can.—This is the ideal old maiden auntie, but there are others of opposite characteristics.

There is the peevish old aunt who has lived only for herself, narrowing her sympathies and contracting her understanding till she sees evil in everything; the veritable old maid who thinks that wedlock is at best a doubtful matter, and that a girl who is in love, and lets her love be seen, is by no means a nice kind of person, but one whom she calls with unction "chit" and "hussie;" who is snappish to children, severe and repressive to all the young; who sniffs at new fashions, and speaks with asperity of those girls and women who aspire to look pretty, and like to attract attention, and gain admiration. Well, she is not a very comfortable specimen of her class and of no use to anyone save the abigail who tyrannizes over her, and the pet she kills with overtreating.—And there is the moneyed aunt, who jingles her purse before the eyes of her expectant heirs, and makes them understand that the one who is most assiduous in his or her attentions is the one she will "remember in her will." She probably leaves the bulk of her fortune to a local charity, the funds of which go more into the pockets of the administrators than into those of the recipients; or she endows her whole wealth to the home for lost dogs. The discontented aunt, who thinks no one was ever so badly treated as she has been by every one, and who resents as being put upon the request to do any human being a kindness; who keeps her purse tightly shut, and her heart like her purse.

The juvenile aunt is another mistake—the aunt who tries to rival her young nieces, and who thinks she looks as well as any of them when she has dyed her poor scanty locks a bright canary color, because Ada has golden tresses dyed and gilted by nature; when she has copied Mabel's last new hat, the pattern of which is too audacious for anything but fresh youth and undeniable beauty; the aunt who never grows old, who objects to being called "aunt" at all, and only answers to her Christian name, and who is as silly as the silliest and youngest of her nieces, and as unfit to chaperon them as if she was a girl herself. Differentiated she is the jealous aunt, who has quite an enmity against her young nieces all around, because they are young, and because men admire them more than they admire her, treating her with civility and them with devotion. And there is the cross aunt, who is always scolding, and from whom her young relatives fly as from some old fairy tale witch of the woods, terrified and oft weeping.

All these are aunts not of the ideal type, but existing in full proportion. Let them pass.—Though real, they are too unpleasant to dwell upon; let us leave them for the dear, kind, smiling auntie, who helps, and loves, and works, and chaperons, and who has all the joy of maternity without its taxes—blessed in her life, because unselfish in her love.

Garibaldi receives visitors in an arm-chair. He is supported by pillows, and is incapable of moving without crutches. The fingers of both hands are stiffened into utter rigidity, with the exception of the thumbs. His face, however, bears the hue of health, and his mind remains as vigorous as ever.

A cynical man insists that the fewer relations or friends we have the happier we are. In your poverty they never help you, and in your prosperity they always help themselves.

Dissensions, like small streams, gather as they run.

True religion builds her grandeur on the public good.

Have a candid and obliging manner in conversation.

If your brain is on fire blow it out.

OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

It is an almost universal practice to throw the blame of our failures and deficiencies upon our lack of certain advantages. We are quite sure that, had we been more fortunate in ancesters or education, in circumstances or surrounding influences, we should have been altogether superior persons to what we are.—Especially do we excuse lack of mental culture on these grounds. Our early education was neglected, or we had to struggle with poverty, or our time has been so intensely engrossed as to leave us no chance for study, or those with whom we mingle have no intellectual sympathies, or we live in the country and have no access to books. These and many similar reasons are given, and believed in, as sufficiently accounting for all our lack of knowledge, or mental inertness.

Certainly such unfavorable circumstances must be regarded as impediments which we would gladly have had swept from our path; but to imagine that they are the real causes of intellectual inactivity, is altogether a mistake. We have only to look around us, at the multitude of persons who appear to be blessed with every possible facility for mental progress—whose parents have spared no money on their education—who are in the enjoyment of health surrounded by books, and urged by every motive to improve their minds, and who yet fail to do it, to be convinced that the secret of culture does not lie in opportunity. On the other hand, if we read the history of those who have distinguished themselves in literature, science or art, we shall be astonished to find how many of them have encountered obstacles that appear insurmountable, and have almost conquered fate itself.

A remarkable instance of this indomitable energy is found in the life of Professor Heyne, of Gottingen, Germany, one of the greatest classical scholars of any age, who spent the first thirty-two years of his life in an incessant struggle with the most depressing poverty. Before he was ten years of age he was earning a part of his school fees by teaching a little girl to read. Earnestly desiring to learn Latin, he found a young Leipsic student who was willing to teach him for four pence a week, but for a long time this was an impossible sum to raise. At length he obtained the coveted instruction, and, after two years of indefatigable study, without a dollar in his purse and against the advice of all his friends, he entered the University of Leipsic. Here, amid the deepest poverty, often hungry and cold, and always laboring strenuously, he obtained an education. During six months of this time he only allowed himself two nights' sleep in the week, and when in the utmost destitution he was offered a flattering situation as tutor, he declined it, because it would have obliged him to leave Leipsic. His subsequent life, however, fully recompensed him for all his previous sacrifices, for he held the Professorship of Eloquence in the University of Gottingen for fifty years, and his death was acknowledged as a public calamity.

This is by no means an isolated instance.—Many others have triumphed over obstacles as great. Not only poverty, but want of time, absence of books and instruction, uncongenial occupations, the opposition of friends, sickness, care, anxiety, even imprisonment and slavery, have all exerted their influence in vain to check the eager student in his search after truth.—There are many things that are favorable to successful culture, but only one that is indispensable, and that is love of knowledge. Whoever is inspired by this will triumph over the most perplexing difficulties, while he who has it will not waste the most glorious opportunities. For this reason, the first and most prominent object of all education ought to be to animate the student with this love. It cannot be taught, like reading and writing; no drill or discipline will call it forth; no mechanical efforts will awaken it; no mere instruction, however extended and thorough, will insure it.

These may all be sufficient aids, but only enthusiasm can kindle the spark which is needed. The teacher who is himself inspired is the best inspirer of others. If he can but awaken and satisfy the curiosity of his pupil, his work is half accomplished.

LETTERS.

By many things we may know a man; by his friends and photograph book; his enemies and what they say of him; by his pursuits and his pleasures; the woman he marries and the woman he might have married, but did not; by his servants and the household he keeps; his habits, and the things he allows and the things he forbids; but by nothing is he better known than by his letters, and how he writes, and whether he is punctillious in answering at once, or uncertain and full of delay; brief in reply or prolix; careful in taking up your points, and satisfactory in the way in which he handles those which it is important to you should be touched on, or haphazard in his replies, clearly focussed, or with thoughts a-wool-gathering, giving four pages to futilities that are no good to him or you, while compressing all the important parts into one paragraph, if, indeed they are not forgotten altogether, or at best huddled up in a postscript written across the page, and difficult to decipher. All these traits come in as parts of the puzzle, by which, when fitted together, can be read the true nature of a man.

The tiresome and trustworthy, the egotistical and the exact, the affectionate, the conscientious, the ostentatious—each writes a different kind of letter; and all declare themselves, with more or less distinctness, according to the amount of training in each, and the more or less influence education has had on natnre.

Too austere a philosophy makes few wise men; too rigorous a government few good subjects; too harsh a religion, few devout souls—we mean that will continue so, for nothing is durable that is not suitable to nature.

Use not evasions when called upon to do a good thing, nor excuses when you are reproached for doing a bad one.