

RULES OF THE ROAD

BEING TALKS TO BOYS WHO ARE IN THEIR
FIRST YEARS AT PUBLIC SCHOOL

BY

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"THE STRAIGHT LEFT"

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THE STRAIGHT LEFT

Being Nine Talks to Boys who
are about to leave their Prepara-
tory Schools. 1s.

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TO

L. A. R.

Quæris Alcidæ parem ?
Nemo est nisi ipse.
Ignis aurum probat, miseria fortes viros.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I SHOULD like to take this opportunity of thanking His Grace the Lord Primate of All Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh for kindly writing a foreword ; the Rev. T. S. Hall, B.D., for his valuable suggestions ; and the headmasters who answered my letters to them on the subject of this book, especially the Master of Dulwich and the Headmaster of Sherborne whose kind letters were of great assistance. I have endeavoured to keep in mind the opinions sent to me, where they were not widely opposed.

J. S. N. S.

DUNMURRY,
1928.

FOREWORD

VERY warmly I commend Mr. Sewell's attractive volume for boys, "Rules of the Road." It puts the great essentials with a directness and simplicity which could not be surpassed.

CHARLES F. ARMAGH,
*Lord Primate of All Ireland and
Archbishop of Armagh.*

THE PALACE,
ARMAGH.

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RULES OF THE ROAD

I

IN RUNNING ORDER

A MAN once advertised for a chauffeur ; and when applicants presented themselves the first thing he asked was : "How near the edge of a cliff can you drive a car without going over ?" One driver answered : "A yard." Another said : "A foot." A third said : "I would try to keep as far away from it as possible." "You are the man for me," said the employer, and engaged him on the spot.

In these days when almost everyone has some kind of car, from a Ford to a Super-Hyper-Sports model of something or other, it is advisable from two points of view to be able to drive sensibly and well ; first, from the point of view of those whom you meet on the road, who depend on your skill and cautiousness for their safety ; secondly, from the point of view of your own safety. No one can do anything in this world without some experience

and some knowledge of what he is attempting to do. The same applies to driving a car. It would be interesting to meet the man who could, for the first time, step into a car and drive away without mishap to himself, the car, or other people or property! It is difficult enough to drive with safety, sometimes, even with long experience. He must, anyhow, have some knowledge of the workings of a car—even if he does not know anything about the mechanism of it—and he must know also the rules which apply to himself and to others on the road. He would soon be in Queer Street were he, for example, to drive along the right-hand side of the road, or neglect to warn others that he intended to turn or to slow down.

No doubt you wonder what I am driving at. It seems a queer thing to begin a talk to you by a long dissertation on driving cars, nearly all of which you probably know already. Sometimes, though, things which we know—or think we know well enough—twist themselves round and we find that our knowledge is not quite so deep as we suspected. Here is a case: cars are so common nowadays that we have ceased to marvel at their structure and we take them as a matter of course. Not for the first time in history, either. At each milestone on the road of invention and discovery in the past, our

IN RUNNING ORDER

fathers have stood with wonder in their eyes. Sometimes—often—they have begun by standing there with a sneer on their lips, but always with the passage of time the sneer has given way to amazement ; and, finally, as time has flown, the wonder has vanished, and what seemed so miraculous, so beyond belief, has become an accepted state of things, and our fathers and we ourselves have passed on to the next milestone, there to repeat the same process. Our bodies have excited this wonder with each discovery made about them until they became too familiar—and familiarity bred contempt.

Does it seem far-fetched when I say that cars and our bodies have much in common ? There are rules of the road for both ; before we can hope to steer ourselves on a course which is safe for us and for other people on the road, we must know these rules ; we must know the everyday things about the mechanism of our bodies to keep ourselves in running order. We cannot expect to run smoothly and safely without that knowledge and some experience in applying it. Do you see what I am driving at now ? You have come to an age when you must hold yourself responsible, to a much greater extent than you have been, for your health : health of mind and health of body ; and they depend on one another in a

way that is wonderful, more than you yet realise. You have, as it were, been presented with a car—perhaps not a new one, but one which we hope has been carefully treated and kindly handled—and you need advice and help from, say, an owner driver with experience before you make your first essay along the road. It may be a long road ; it may, perhaps, be very short ; but one thing is certain, and that is that the road is tortuous and difficult, with dangerous cross-roads and nasty corners. It is of no use to make a big noise as you go along—only futile ; that is what most novices do, what we call “driving on the horn,” and it only makes them highly unpopular and dangerous to other folk. So I propose to set out for you, here and now, some rules which have stood the test of time and man’s changing ideas. Ideas have altered about many things in this world, but one of the unalterable things is the collection of rules for man’s guidance along this much-twisted, dangerous road of life which leads through many and varied difficulties to Life of an everlasting nature.

Especially at your public school, and in your first years there, will you need these rules. In those first years you are beginning to carve out your niche in the scheme of things, to fulfil the destiny which has been mapped out for you.

This is perhaps the most important part of your lifetime; spend it wisely, and you will make your future; unwisely, and you will mar it more than you dream of.

Some people sheer away from helpful advice in any form, and as if by design perversely take the opposite course—like changing into reverse gear and backing when some kindly and well-intentioned person tells you to carry on through. They seem to think that advice is “butting-in” and not minding one’s own business: that they are being “got at.” That is foolishness. There are very few people in this world who will give advice for the sake of giving it, without an object, and even these usually give advice worth taking—at any rate, worth consideration even if it is not taken. The counsel of people who have had a certain amount of experience is always deserving of consideration; and that counsel I propose to give you.

My first term at Public School was not so long ago that I have forgotten it—its hopes, its pleasant expectations, its great difficulties, and even its miseries. I think that the last are most in my mind as I write, and my object is to give you a leg over a stiff stile, one which is becoming less so, perhaps, as the years roll by, but which is stiff still and will never be an easy

one. I do not ask you to take my advice, though I hope for your sake and for your parents' sake that you will; but only to read it and think it over and not turn your back and say, "That fellow is talking through his hat. He knows nothing about it."

We all know that a car, however good, will soon become useless if not treated kindly or kept in running order, and that cars which are severely left alone ("Never touch the old bus," says its owner proudly!) quickly become very expensive items and difficult to get rid of. So it is with yourself, only you cannot get rid of your body if it wears out or if you tire of it. How many thousands of people, stricken down with disease, crippled beyond all hope of recovery, lying on their backs and waiting in agony until death comes to smooth away their pain, wish—a feeble word to express their yearning—for a new body in place of their worn-out, pain-racked one! No. This car of yours you can never exchange; though some people, in the cowardice of their hearts, have tried to get rid of theirs. It stands to reason that you would very carefully look after a car, did you possess one of your own; and is it not reasonable, then, to expect you to want to look after something infinitely more valuable than a million cars: something, too, which will be in-

finitely more expensive to you, in various ways, if you do not treat it properly? But you cannot hope to know how best to look after it without a little help from other quarters.

You—the mortal you—consist of two parts, just as a car does—namely, body and engine. They depend on one another and each is of little use without the other. We will consider, first, perhaps the less important of the two, your body, because the state of your body reacts on your engine or brain which drives your body; and it would be useless to have driving power with nothing to drive: or to have a 40 horse-power engine sitting in the middle of the road and no wheels for it to turn! How are you to keep this body of yours in good repair? Obviously by trying to avoid having to repair it at all, prevention being better than cure.

1. Keep your body clean. Dirt of any kind will harbour the seeds of disease and so clog the wheels of your machinery. Perfect and thorough cleanliness all over cannot be too strongly emphasized. The days of the low-water-mark on the back of your neck were over long ago, so I will not make a point of that. You probably have a shower in the changing-room after an hour's wallowing in the glorious mud of the "Rugger" or "Soccer" field. Some fellows do not, however, but they probably hear

about it from the rest of the changing-room and do not miss out the shower more than once. But do you have one after a hard game of fives, or of cricket, or after a fierce run? You may be just as dirty after fives as after "Rugger," though the mud is not caked all over you.

2. Keep your body as clean inside as it is outside. If you do not, Nature will assert herself and you will be sorry for it. You need medicine sometimes, as a car needs oil, and both will break down sooner or later without them. Do not, however, take any medicine "off your own bat," but get it from the matron or nurse, who knows better than you do what is good for you and what is rank poison. I once knew a boy who used to buy all kinds of stuff from chemists, in the same way as you would buy tuck, and consume it at odd hours, usually in dormitory. One day his stomach rebelled and he retired to the "sanny" with a poisoned stomach, and he had a sorry time of it there! Incidentally, he lost the only chance he ever had of getting his XV. colours.

So let there be moderation in all things, and do not dose yourself inordinately nor do without necessary medicine. There was a car in a garage in Nottingham in September, 1923—and there have been many in like condition since—which attracted the attention of a

customer. It was a very smart model ; and, though with the second-hand cars, looked brand-new. A mechanic, seeing the customer's interest, ventured to point out that the car was engineless. The engine had, he said, been removed, although the car itself was not a year old, and would have to be replaced by an entirely new one. " Why ?" asked the customer. " Oil," said the mechanic, and he pointed with a laugh to the very elaborate mascot still intact on the bonnet of the car. Just oil, or the lack of it, rather, had turned, in less than a year, a new and powerful engine into a worthless heap of iron. Yours can be ruined in less time than that by systematic poisoning with quack medicine, or by no medicine at all at times when your inside is crying out for it.

3. Do not stuff yourself with bags of filth which is, in " polite " society, called by the name of " sweets." Occasional chocolates, or wholesome eatables like that, will not do you any great amount of harm, perhaps no harm at all ; but that immoderate stuffing at the tuck-shop and between meals will do harm not only to your internal organs but also to your teeth. Teeth are things to cherish, not to lose before you are twenty-one. There are some fellows who seem always to have something or other in their mouths whenever you meet them.

Depend upon it, they will be sorry before they are much older.

4. Keep away from tobacco. There are many things which you are not forced to do at any time, but which you may do legitimately later on, whereas it would be altogether foolish to begin now. Moderate smoking cannot be regarded as a crime in any man, but it is disgusting when a boy does it. A boy with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth is a revolting sight and a silly one. Cigarettes and pipes will not make a man of you, but very much the reverse. If you smoke at all, wait for the time when you can do so without detriment to your system, and then smoke in moderation. If you begin now you cannot expect to keep a sound "wind," and that is essential to your doing anything in the athletic line or to playing any decent game. If you are going to make marbles or ludo your stock game, smoke by all means! But run up and down a field even once, and you will regret your over-eagerness to "be a man" before your time. Neither does it look manly, nor, if you are *really* honest with yourself, do you like it.

5. Lastly, though of immeasurable importance, do not make experiments on yourself. You would not, if you have any sense at all, pull your car to bits when you knew that you

would be unable to reassemble the pieces. You would not change the adjustment of the magneto if the car was running satisfactorily ; nor would you alter it even if you thought that the trouble lay there and the car was not running smoothly unless you knew something of the composition and delicacy of a magneto. So, I say, leave your body alone. You might—and probably would—do yourself incalculable and lasting harm ; and the years to come would be full of regrets, not only your own, but those of other people who were relying on your soundness to give them a decent start in life. Through your curiosity and selfishness they would have a future before them which they might well, if they lived to do so, fear with a hopeless and terrible fear. Leave yourself alone, and if you are worried about any part of your body go straight to a doctor and tell him all about your trouble. If you have been in the habit of making experiments on yourself, *stop* before it is too late.

So much for your body. Now, about this engine of yours : a more marvellous engine than any that has been or is yet to be invented—your mind. Keep your mind clean as you would your body. You have, no doubt, seen one of those plaster images which were made in Italy, and which, at one time, were quite

a craze over here. They are very beautiful to look at, but if you examine them more closely you will find that they are hollow. Their beauty does not go right through ; it stops on the outside. If you are strong and healthy in body and unwholesome in mind you will be like one of those images or like that car at Nottingham. Give your mind something to do, something which is worth the doing. Have you ever read the Bible ? You need not answer that, because I know that you have not. You have read only parts of it. No doubt your face grows long even at the mere suggestion that you should read through so mighty a tome. Yet a man, John Chrysostom by name, learnt the whole of the Bible by heart ! No. I am not suggesting that you should follow his example in this respect, or even that you should read the whole of your Bible ; but I do suggest that you should read a short passage every day, preferably from the Four Gospels, and so get a better insight into the life and character of some of the greatest men and the greatest Man who ever lived. You could do many worse things than read your Bible, and it is to help you to prevent yourself from doing worse things that I suggest it to you.

Let there be no doubt in your mind that

must keep yourself in running order by keeping yourself occupied with healthy things to do. That is one of the great values of hobbies and why they are encouraged by sensible people. But have a hobby which will do you some good, not an aimless and wholly uninformative one. (Instruction has rather a classroom ring about it, but you can learn many things from decent hobbies which you will find more useful than some things you learn in the classroom.) Make up your mind not to be an idler. A boy who is here, there, and everywhere and really does nothing at all is on the wrong road. Your mind can never be entirely a blank. If it is not filled with clean thoughts it will be filled with dirty ones: there is no middle road; and the state of your engine must have its effect on the state of your body. Sooner or later, as your mind is so will your body be. And then you will run down: perhaps slowly at first, but down, nevertheless, and there will be no means of repairing the damage. Keep away from the fellows who talk "smut" if you cannot stop them. Their engines are going to the bad pretty thoroughly. There is no reason why they should delight in making dirty jokes and telling filthy stories any more than boys of their age should revel in making

mud-pies. Both are equally unnecessary; one is harmful beyond words, both to themselves and to other people.

If you had a car I should strongly advise you to turn off the petrol at the end of the day and lock the garage door; and, of course, you would have to unlock the door and turn the petrol on again before starting. The car depends on its petrol for power; it *would* run for a little time without oil, but never without petrol. So do you rely upon the power which God gives you every day to run along your road of life. Without it you would be helpless, a prey to His and your enemies, and destitute.

When you open the garage door on to the trials and troubles and happinesses of the day, turn the petrol on every morning before breakfast by asking God to give you the power which you cannot do without. If you try to start without turning on the petrol you will never start at all. Turn off the petrol and lock the garage door every night before you get into bed, lock the door against marauders, by asking Him for His power to keep you safe in body and soul from all the dangers and temptations of the night and early morning. You cannot be too sure of the fact that you are utterly powerless without His ever-present

help and guidance. Sometimes a car will stop on the road for no apparent reason. This has happened very often, and the owner of the car has spent an endless time in tinkering about with the car's internals, all to no effect ; then he has discovered that he has run out of petrol. Do not run out of petrol. Keep filled up with the power you need, but which you must ask for before you can get it.

Your school is like a quiet lane along which you can proceed at your leisure, more or less, though you must keep a sharp lookout and take "blind corners" with care. You will find these turnings as you go along through your school life, as each stage of development of your mind and body will make itself felt in various ways. Approach and negotiate these turning-points most carefully, for the manner in which you treat them will mean much to you later on. Go slow and remember that the road is not all yours, as you will quickly see when you come out into the traffic of the larger world outside your school in a few years' time. There will then be a great deal of traffic on the road on which you have to drive your car. You must, even now, regulate your speed in all things in proportion to your strength and to the needs of other people. Do not travel so slowly, however, as to dis-

organise things, and not to fulfil expectations ; nor so fast as to injure others whom you meet, or to run them down. Your business is to make this road of life safe for other people as well as for yourself. Speed records are all very well, but speed without safety must not be your kind of progress through this world.

II

HOOPS OF STEEL

WHO are your friends? That ought to be a question asked of every man whose character you want to discover in the quickest and easiest possible way; but, instead of asking him that question, ask yourself first. A man should not be wholly judged by the company which he keeps, but certainly by the friends he makes out of that company. You are summed up by other people by the kind of friends you have and make. Who are your friends?

That is a more difficult question to answer than would appear at first sight. You must know the true meaning of the word "friend" before you can answer it. It comes from an Anglo-Saxon word "freond," which is part of the verb "freon," to love. Do not be afraid: I am not going to give you a lesson in Anglo-Saxon, or any other grammar: that was just to show you that the word "friend" and the word "love" have much in common. Friends are, therefore, not only those whom you love,

but also those who love you. Not everyone who gives you a pat on the back is your friend. It is the easiest thing on earth to be a "fair-weather" friend, and the real test comes in foul weather when the world is against you and everything is going wrong. Deeds, not words, and the conditions in which they are done are the test of a friend.

Your relatives—father, mother, brothers, sisters—were yours without choice; they were sufficient for you until you stepped over the boundary of your family life into the larger world of your school. There you are making relations of your own; relations which will depend on what you are and which will greatly influence what you will become in later years.

Friendship, the dictionary says, is the feeling which binds friends to one another. "Binds" is a fine word to express the relationship, but Shakespeare used a finer in that great speech which Polonius made to his son Laertes before the latter set off for the distant shores of France:

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel.*

That word "grapple" can express the true meaning of friendship in a way that no other word in the English language can do. A

* Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

grappling-iron is an instrument consisting of iron claws used for seizing and holding fast any object to be lifted, usually from the ocean bed. A friend is a person to *hold fast* through storm and sunshine alike; not to loose when the first puff of contrary wind blows in your face: to pull through the grasping weeds of this world into the sunshine above: and, above all, to pull *up*, not down.

It is unwise, if not almost impossible, to make a direct choice of your friends. You cannot deliberately pick out one—there are always two sides to that. Says Emerson: "My friends have come to me unsought; the great God gave them to me." And the making of friends is not so much a matter of picking and choosing but of discovery: and the discovery is mutual. It comes about in the same way as a magnet attracts steel, and it is just as unavoidable.

In the beginning of that magnificent friendship between David and Jonathan there was no choice. David was brought before Saul and Jonathan after the defeat and death of Goliath; Saul asked David who he was; and "it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."* Jonathan had

* I Sam. xviii. 1.

witnessed the seemingly unequal fight between a youth and a giant skilled in battle, and had marvelled at the pluck of the victor. Something about David had called out to his inmost heart of hearts and there was an immediate response. The admiration of one brave man for another had sowed the seed of a friendship that would outlive themselves and the valleys and the hills, and which would be handed down from generation to generation as the perfect example of friendship between man and man. Jonathan did not choose David any more than David chose Jonathan.

We learn in chemistry the word "affinity," which is the mysterious force which unites two or more sometimes entirely different substances and makes them one. That is the kind of friendship which must come to you if you are to have friends worth the keeping—worth the grappling, the holding fast. It is only in the finer feelings and thoughts that such unions as this can exist. Low people in coarse company may feel that they are at home, but this is not friendship and never can be. If you want such friendship as is worthy of the name to come your way, the friendship that excels kinship, which is a small part of God Himself, you must make yourself worthy of it before you can have a chance.

Then, perhaps, Kipling's Thousandth Man will come to you, the friend "that sticketh closer than a brother," who "will sink or swim with you in any water."

What an inestimable blessing would this friendship be to you! What a helping hand along the road of your life, both at school and in the world outside, would be someone with whom you can be really honest about yourself without concealing the greater part as you naturally do before the eyes of other people! What a chance! A chance of looking at yourself in a mirror which will not distort or lie like those mirrors which are friends in name alone; a chance of having someone always at hand, actually or in spirit, to give you heartfelt sympathy if you deserve it, and—which is infinitely more valuable—all kinds of help through tempestuous and difficult and gloomy paths. But you cannot get without giving; it must be a part of yourself which you have already given that you get back. You must be prepared to make sacrifices, to give of your best service, to have a frank and loyal heart.

This above all,—to thine own self be true ;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

* Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

Your friends will emerge from the company you keep ; be careful, then, about that company. Do not let it be that of bigger boys at school. They cannot have the same outlook on life as you have : their thoughts, their pleasures, all their ideas are on a very different plane from yours ; and friendship of that sort can never thrive. It is sown in the wrong kind of soil, and will grow as a weed, crowding out other and nobler plants which might have sprung up in its place ; and it will spoil the ground for future plants. Keep to the fellows of about your own age and form, who will give you all you need in the way of companionship, even if you do not meet any with whom you will form a closer relationship. If you try to fly too high the heat will scorch your wings, and the crash will come.

Sooner or later, if you have not done so already, you will discover that girls have a growing attraction for you. You will feel that attraction not necessarily for any one girl, but for girls as a class. Their society is good for you ; do not shun it. They are, in many ways, superior to you, and not to be sneered at. They will help you to talk and to behave as a gentleman should. You may, more than once, imagine that you have "fallen in love" with some girl you meet ; you may even try

secretly to write some "poetry" setting forth her many charms. That is nothing of which to be ashamed, and it is all quite natural and a sign that the days are passing, and that you are coming face to face with another milestone on your journey. That is but the first suggestion of what, I hope, will come to you much later : a thing even more sacred than friendship—love. But do not, before the *real* thing comes to you—and it will not just yet, however much you think it has done—do not unfit yourself for it by allowing your emotions to get the better of you, or by pandering to them. Do not give yourself to the right girl, when the time comes, *second-hand*.

Remember that there are many companionships, even alliances, which are not, and never can be, worthy of the name of friendships. Some will go by your side part of the way, and then turn back and leave you to finish your journey alone. They are not friends who do that, and you must know it and know it at the right time. Some will give you a helping hand at first, and then surrender to the first difficulty.

Adonijah, who wanted to oust Solomon from the throne, gathered together a large band of supporters. They shouted "Long live Adonijah!", priests anointed him, men ran

before him, and he banqueted them all in honour of his "accession." Unfortunately for him, however, the king had been warned, Solomon was anointed at his command, and the rebels at meat heard the shouts of the king's supporters. When the news reached Adonijah that his plan had failed, "all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way."* When the crisis came they forsook him. There have been many instances of that in history, and many more which are unwritten, but which are every bit as cowardly.

And so the question whether those who are helping you are your friends or not depends on two things: first, whether they are intending to go all the way with you; and second, what is your goal. If what you are making for is not above-board or right, then those who help you towards it are not your friends but your enemies. Your true friend must have the right ambitions. Anyone to whom you can tell a filthy story is not your friend, but rather he to whom you would never dare to tell it. Anyone to whom you can tell the story of any wrong action you have done and who will not tell you frankly that you have done wrong is not your friend. He

* 1 Kings i. 49.

must ask you for the best that is in you—and get it.

Finally, even if you do not make a friend worthy of the name on this earth, do not be disheartened. There is a finer and a better Friend waiting for you to acknowledge Him than any other you will ever meet. He is more sure, more powerful, more loving than any earthly friend; but He must have your whole mind and heart and soul and strength before you can be His in very deed. What a Friend to have! One who will never let you down! Yes, that is the test of a friend after all. Do you remember that fine story about the king's son who made three friends on his travels? When he returned home his father asked him what friends he had made abroad. "Three," answered the son, "one of whom I love more than myself, one as much as myself, and the third very little." His father advised him to prove their worth. "Kill a pig," he said, "put it into a sack, go by night to the house of your best friend, say that you have accidentally killed a man, and ask him to help you."

The son did so. The man he loved best answered: "Since you have rashly destroyed a man, you must needs be crucified. But, because you were my friend, I will bestow

upon you three or four ells of cloth to wrap your body in."

He went to the second, him whom he loved as much as himself. This friend received him as the first had done, and said: "Do you think me mad that I should run into such danger? But since I have called you friend, I will accompany you to the cross and console you as much as I can on the way there."

The prince then went to his third friend and repeated his story. "My friend," said this man unhesitatingly, "I will readily lay down my life in your defence; and should you be condemned to die on the cross I will be crucified either with you or for you."*

Does that not remind you of the Friend who *did* die on the Cross for you?

And if you make a true and loyal friend on earth, remember to regard him—or her—as the symbol of a greater one. That friendship will be but a very small part of the everlasting friendship between God and man, but a sign of the nature of God Almighty, who is, was, and ever shall be the Eternal Friend of man.

* Taken from *Gesta Romanorum*.

III

COBWEBS AND CABLES

A VILLAGE cricketer who bowled no-ball after no-ball, when asked why he did it, said, "It's just a 'abit." Indeed it was a habit, and a bad one, too. But there are many worse. Yet bad habits and their effects are too often stressed and the value of good habits too often slurred over.

The word "habit" comes from the Latin "habeo," I have. (Perhaps you find these excursions into dead languages rather boring, but it is always a good thing to go to the root of anything and discover just what it really means.) It is your mind crying out to you, "I have it, I've got it." You try to learn something and find it difficult to remember and master; you do it over and over again and, in time, you learn to do it without difficulty, then almost without knowing that you do it, and finally like a machine, automatically. Your mind says to you, "I've got it," and is now free to tackle something else. There is an old proverb which says that habits are at first cobwebs, at last

cables. A very apt illustration, this, when you think of the clinging nature of cobwebs and the strength of cables.

When you learnt to walk you had to give it your whole attention : your mind, your arms, your feet, your eyes, all were used to do it with success. When you learnt to write, every stroke of the pencil required almost painful attention : you could think of nothing else but the formation of each letter. As time passed you learnt to walk so that walking became a habit and then you could think of your destination : and then, when your brain cried, "I have it now," you were able to walk and talk while you walked, to walk and think a myriad different kinds of thoughts as you walked. You learnt to write until the formation of each letter became a habit, and you then became able to think of what you were writing : and you then began to do compositions. In such a way does every new thing which you set yourself to do require your whole attention for its mastery, until a habit is formed and your mind and energies are liberated and turned into new channels. Time is saved, energy is saved by the formation of habits.

So it is quite obvious that habit is necessary to life as it should be lived ; without habit you can never rise to where God destined you to be.

And habits which will prevent or hinder your rising and pull you down into the mud must be a defiance of His will and a degrading influence to yourself.

All men are given the power to act of their own free will, whether what they decide to do is their Maker's pleasure or His pain. You have that power in you, and it is just that power which helps to make you a man and higher than the beasts of the field. If you use that power as God intended you to use it, when He gave it to you, then you are on a higher plane than those beasts; misuse it, and you are on a lower one.

So it is with the power you have in you to form habits. It was placed in you for the highest and noblest purpose; and you may use it for the lowest and most evil one. There are some habits which you must form, which must become your second nature, which must be cables and not just cobwebs, if you are to fulfil the purpose of Him who gave you life.

1. The habit of Truthfulness. You cannot make truthfulness a habit until you think before you speak. More than half the lies told are due to lack of thought. Exaggeration is a lie called by another name, if it is intended to be misleading. Cultivate for all you are worth this habit of telling the truth, the whole truth,

and nothing but the truth, even if it is to your own hurt.

2. The habit of Thoughtfulness. Before you can make this one of your cables you must learn to think. Thoughtfulness is merely the habit of thinking with thoroughness; and it will be difficult at first, but all the more worth cultivating on that account. You must become accustomed to looking right into a thing, as well as studying its effect from a distance, and to weighing it up from every side. This power of fixing your mind to something is a power which you will have to develop before you can hope to make any headway against the currents at school and afterwards. Let your mind wander, and you can lose every atom of character in you, and think yourself into the mud and slime of everything bestial; fix your thoughts on things worthy of attention, and you can uplift yourself into the starry heights. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."* What was good advice for the people of Philippi will be good advice for you.

* Phil. iv. 8.

Do not let your mind be a tramp with no fixed abode, wandering hither and thither, without decent work to do, with no object in view, not knowing nor caring whither the road is leading, nor what lies at the journey's end.

3. The habit of Praying, which I have mentioned before, but which is so all-important that it must have a place here. I carefully do not say the habit of "Prayer," which might mean that you should pray mechanically without thinking about what you were saying. No, the *habit* lies in the *act* of praying, not in what you say. A very present help in trouble, all kinds of trouble, and difficulty is this habit of asking God for forgiveness and strength. In your happiness, in your sorrow, in your trials, in your desperation, the habit of wordless prayer will stand by you in your need as nothing else can. And nothing is more sure than that God will do exactly what is best for you in every way.

4. The habit of Effort. Before you can form this habit you must first have the resolution or the power to act, a firm determination and a right direction. Nothing ever gets done without will-power; and in this life which is so full of countless different attractions and distractions, you must *will* ever so strongly to do what is right and clean and true. "Tell

the fellows at school that it's Effort, all Effort that counts," were the last words of a subaltern who lay mortally wounded on the Indian frontier. A magnificent message, this, to you who have your life before you and the chance of making it—or breaking it—lying still unused in your hands. As Hercules said to the waggoner who asked his help to get a waggon out of a rut—"Put your shoulder to the wheel!"

Yes; put your shoulder to the wheel of everything lovely that you intend, you *will* to do; and, once put, keep it there and *shove* with every ounce of strength in you, using every muscle, every sinew taut. It is effort that counts, not hanging back. Nothing is worth doing that can be done without effort, whether the effort is knowingly used or not. Do not look for the wide and easy path in order to avoid the uphill one which is shorter in the long run.

As Charles Kingsley said, "It is better to wear out than to rust out." And this habit of always putting your back into everything you do will bind you with another cable, that of Punctuality. Effort and Punctuality are inseparable things, for if you are keen to get a thing done you will be there in time to do it. When I see a fellow late for anything it always

reminds me of a remark made to a man who continually kept other people waiting for him: "You belong to the three-handed species." Namely, two hands like other people and a little behindhand.

You have read the story of the Flood; but did you read the most important part of it? It was when Noah came out of the Ark that he "builded an altar unto the Lord; . . . and offered burnt offerings on the altar."* The first thing he did was to worship when he came out into the new world which had been purged of its foulness. Your world is new, too; build your altar and worship. It will influence all else you build in the years to come; it will consecrate your thoughts and deeds and make them God's.

5. Just one more. The habit of Reading. By that, of course, I mean that you should read decent literature, not trash, and make a habit of reading nothing but decent literature. The reading of good books is essential to the right development of your mind as it is, also, to the uplifting of everything worth while in you. I spoke about and suggested a more thorough reading of your Bible. To this I now add those books which you can find anywhere, written by authors who had a right

* Gen. viii. 20.

understanding of life, and who recognized the beauty and the fine and noble things in it. There are many such authors, and they have written many books; a list of them would itself fill books; and it is impossible to pick out two or three and to suggest that you read them in preference to any others. Get hold of people older and wiser than you and ask them to recommend things for you to read. You will never regret it, and it will have an inestimable effect on what you are and what you will become—the thoughts of gentlemen will help you to be a man.

IV

CLIMBING

WE hear, very often, the question asked: "How are you getting on?" People speak of a boy at school and say: "How is he getting on there?" You watch a man doing some work or other and you ask the same question; you meet anyone who is recovering from an illness, and you say to him: "How are you getting on?"

Someone else asks that question, too. God is always asking how you are getting on, for you were meant to get on, not to stand still. As you grow older every minute of the day, so you ought always to be moving forward in every other way, by learning, by improving. You are sent to a public school to get on so that you may do so when you get out into the world. The world is merely another school for you where you will have to get on to become fitted for that greater and fuller life beyond. The world is God's school and He means you to get on there; but if you are to get on the first thing that you must do is to

climb. The boy who gets on is not content to be at the bottom of everything, and sit and sleep on the back bench of his form until such time as he is superannuated. He climbs until he reaches, if not to the top, at least higher than he was before.

There are two things to remember in climbing: (1) To keep on and not to turn back, and (2) To look up, not down. Often, if you climb to a height, up a steep cliff or up a church tower, when you look down your head will begin to swim and your knees to knock. If you look up again you will be all right, and you can climb higher in safety.

A man once climbed up to a natural bridge which spanned a deep ravine in America, and he carved his name on it higher than any man had done before. When he tried to come down, however, he found that he was quite unable to descend in safety; and he also discovered that it was possible to climb on to the top—which he did, and got away safely, after all.

There is no *going* down in your climbing in this life. You can only climb up or fall headlong into the depths below.

Before you can reach the top of anything at all you must *climb*—not sit at the bottom and talk about it. Many of our greatest men began

at the bottom of the ladder, having no advantages, nothing but difficulties to face : but they laughed at the difficulties ; they were climbers and they got to the top. There is room to mention only two or three of these men. Their examples of energy and determination and grit will always live in the hearts of men, and you will do well if you can follow them.

That great chemist, Faraday, was almost uneducated when he became errand-boy to a bookseller in London. He distributed papers to the customers, and got up in the small hours of the morning, wet or fine, summer or winter, to do so. His energy attracted the attention of his employer, who made him an apprentice, and young Faraday managed to read, during off-hours, almost every book which came into his master's shop. He became, finally, one of the greatest chemists who ever lived. He climbed, and he reached the top.

Nathaniel Greene, a famous American general of the War of Independence, started in the blacksmith's forge, enlisted as a private and ended as a general, second only, perhaps, to his friend the great Washington. He was a climber.

Sir William Herschel was the son of a band master ; by his discoveries of star-systems he ended by being probably the first man to give

us any real idea of the immensity of the universe which surrounds this earth. He, too, was a climber.

So was Gomez, a slave who waited on the pupils of the great painter Murillo. Gomez was a negro, and on that account a source of perpetual merriment to the pupils: but he turned out to be a greater artist than them all.

All these started at the bottom and came within sight of the top; and it was no easy climb. There were many jagged rocks in their way which helped to make progress very difficult.

There is one other climber who comes into my mind just at the moment, and I should like to add his name to these.

Somewhere about 1790 a visitor might have seen over a small shop in a Northamptonshire village a sign-board with the words:

“SECOND-HAND SHOES BOUGHT AND SOLD.
WILLIAM CAREY.”

The owner of this little shop was the son of a poor schoolmaster, and he was forced to earn his living by mending boots and shoes, and he was sickly and worn out with worry—nearly as worn out as some of the tattered shoes he mended. Yet he worked all the time with

books open on his bench ; and he at last opened a village school. He climbed to the highest point of any I have mentioned, that of life-service to God as a missionary. Lord Wellesley, one of the greatest of Indian statesmen, when Carey had praised his noble work in India, said : “ I esteem such a testimony from such a man a greater honour than the applause of courts and parliaments.” Carey died, a Professor of Oriental languages, honoured with letters and medals from Royalty, and he left his mark firmly pressed on India : the footprint of a giant and a mighty man.

There is another story about Carey which is characteristic of his great perseverance. His foot slipped while he was climbing a tree, and he broke his leg in the fall. He was in bed for weeks ; but when he had recovered and could walk again without help, the first thing he did was to go and climb that tree ! An unimportant anecdote, perhaps, but it gives one a very clear insight into the amazing determination that climbers of the world's ladders must have. He was a climber in the real sense of the word, and he reached the top. There is a host of others. I have chosen these names entirely at random from that tremendous number of men and women who

started life in difficulty and poverty, but who determined to get on ; and who did get on because they climbed. What they have done you can do. You have the benefit of decent schools and decent parents, and an untold number of other advantages which none of these climbers had. After their efforts you can have no excuse for not climbing.

But to be great and famous must not be the sole end and aim of your existence. There is another kind of climbing which is expected of you, and you must climb every day, every hour, every minute and every second if you are finally to reach so great a height. It must be a matter of mounting step by step, as you would a ladder, looking upward to your goal all the time. Every day you must make one step upwards so that you get farther away from all that is low and mean and contemptible. God is saying to you : "Come up higher." Up you must climb to Him—higher in thought, higher in word, higher in deed. The higher you climb the purer the air will become ; the wider will be your view. You will see things as they really are, not as they seem to be.

We have not wings, we cannot soar ;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone
 That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
 When nearer seen and better known,
 Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains that uprear
 Their solid bastions to the skies
 Are crossed by pathways, that appear
 As we to higher levels rise.

*The heights by great men reached and kept
 Were not attained by sudden flight ;
 But they, while their companions slept,
 Were toiling upwards in the night.*

Standing on what too long we bore
 With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
 We may discern—unseen before—
 A path to higher destinies.

*Now deem the irrevocable past
 As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
 If rising on its wrecks, at last
 To something nobler we attain.**

The italics are mine, and I want you to pay special attention to those two very fine verses. Not only are they fine poetry, but they are true, which is more than some poetry is. You must, whether your companions idle away their lives or not, toil ever upwards. The toiling must be gradual ; it must be sustained, thorough ; not in leaps and bounds, with intervals in which you may fall back farther, probably, than you climbed.

The second verse in italics is a wonderful

* Longfellow, *The Ladder of St. Augustine*.

message to you if you have fallen back at any time, as you are sure to have done, and are sure to do again—spurring you on to greater things, to consider the fall not as having wasted your energies and as having made you a failure, but as a timely lesson that you may learn, and be the better next time for having learnt it ; that by having fallen once you may avoid the loose or broken rung in the ladder when you climb again.

Things that are worth the winning
Must ever at cost be won,
A feeble wish can accomplish naught,
And see no great thing done ;

They that are wise press onward,
They who are strong ascend ;
So be not stilled by a great defeat,
But begin again, my friend.*

There will always be difficulties in the way as you climb. You must regard them as tests and only step a little higher than you did before, so that you may take them in your stride. Do not give up and come headlong down the ladder at the first suggestion of the climb's being a little hard. The ways through this world are lined on either side with the skeletons of those poor-spirited ones who fainted and fell by the way during the march

* Marianne Farningham.

to better things. Let your way be like that of the man who—

His way once chose, he forward thrust outright,
Nor stepped aside for dangers or delight.*

You cannot start too early to mount your ladder. If you have not started yet, start *now*. The rungs of your ladder are your prayers, your temptations, your trials, your sorrows, your efforts; God is giving you His helping hand up it, and at the top is the Life which is eternal, perfect, and with God Himself in His Kingdom of Climbers.

* Cowley, *Davideis*.

V

HIGH AND LOW

A CERTAIN man once visited the school to which he thought of sending his son, and the first thing that attracted his attention there was this : that when the master came round the pupils all struck an attitude which varied according to their ages. The youngest of them folded their arms and held their heads up, looking at the sky ; those a little older held their hands behind them and looked towards the ground ; while the eldest stood in a line, and turned their heads to the right (like a "right dress" on parade), so that each looked at his next-door neighbour. And every face, whatever the owner's attitude, was cheerful and smiling. The visitor asked the meaning of these attitudes, and was told that they all stood for reverence, reverence of three distinct kinds. The lookers-up stood for reverence for things above them ; the lookers-down, for things beneath ; the lookers-to-the-right, for things about them.*

* Taken from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*.

Life, in its fullest sense, is impossible without these three kinds of reverence rolled into one. The tendencies of the age in which you live are all towards the losing of this reverence, and the result of its loss would be too disastrous for words. Reverence is one of the great wellsprings of life, of noble words, noble deeds, noble thoughts; and history all through the ages has served only to emphasise its tremendous importance. Where reverence for the highest, the lowly, and one's equals is not, there in its place are tumults and wars, national disasters, strikes, and every kind of petty strife and bickering. The seed of reverence must be sown in your heart while the soil is still capable of giving it life—before it becomes attacked by weeds and refuse.

Self-reverence is a combination of those three kinds I have mentioned, and they are absolutely dependent on one another. It is only a stronger expression than self-respect, and is a deeper feeling. Reverence for the highest and purest and noblest things of this life and for the Maker of them must come to you first; then a reverence for those who are not so well equipped for the battle of life, or who have not the great advantages which you have. So will you form a feeling of reasonable equality—of brotherhood—with less

fortunate beings in this world : of condescension without showing that you are stooping. You *must* bend down to raise a fallen man from the ground, but you stand up straight as you help him to do so. Lastly must come the reverence for your companions, shutting out any insinuation of priggishness and the contempt due to self-satisfaction which may be in your heart of hearts. Without this reverence in all its forms, and the keeping of it through life, you can never be what you ought to be, nor can others who depend on the help born of the reverence you feel for them.

The first is the most important and essential kind of reverence ; for if you give God His right place in your heart, you must also do so to everyone and everything which He has made. That reverence should be easy to you and every man, and as natural as breathing ; everywhere you go you see God in some form or other : in the dawn, in the sunset, in the grass and flowers, the hills and valleys, in the sunshine and the cloud and the storm, in the face of a good man or woman ; you hear His voice in the chords of beautiful music, in the sighing of the wind, in the rippling of a brook or the roaring of the mighty sea—everywhere. It is impossible for you not to reverence the Maker of, and the Dweller in all

these wonderful things. It should be impossible for you not to reverence all things in which God unmistakably is. Hold fast to that reverence, and you will cast off from you everything that is common and unclean and see the worth that lies everywhere in everything on which God has laid His hand, though it be hidden by the thickest, blackest cloak.

You will discover, if you have not done so already, that your parents are not perfect. No one but God Himself is perfect, anyhow ; but this reverence for God and all His works must permeate your feelings towards your parents, in whom God's authority and love is vested. Reverence is not love ; it has something in it which makes it a worthier possession. You love your parents very deeply—how could you help yourself after all they have done for you ?—but if you do not reverence them as well your love is worth nothing at all. You may love them, yet rebel against their wishes which reverence would never allow you to do. Your parents, in view of all their wonderful service to you, their added worth because of that service of devotion and self-sacrifice, demand your reverence, and must have it. It is one way by which you can hope to repay them to a very small extent for all they have done

for you since you came helpless into the world.

Remember that disappointed hopes are the stabs of many swords in their sides, they who hoped for so much for you. They had a right to hope for it, too, for they have made you their one care, and everything about you—your gladness, your sorrows, your expectations, your small triumphs—was theirs as well. You owe a great debt of gratitude to your father and mother, the debt of a life which is good and straight and decent in every way.

You must have a reverence for all who *know* more than you do; who can *do* more; who *are* more than you. Without it you cannot live the life of service—and all *right* life consists of service in some form and to someone—for which God destined you. So you must reverence those who are below you, physically or mentally. They have some small part, and it may be a bigger one than yours, to play in the Divine scheme; they are part and parcel of the Great Plan: they have a little part of God in them, and it is His will that you should raise them, help them to climb higher, help them to work out the purpose for which they were born.

The Hindus recognised, in one of their

ancient books, the part played by seemingly unimportant things. A father noticed that his son had no reverence for anything in Nature and told him to bring a fruit from the great banyan-tree. The son brought the fruit. "Break it," ordered his father, "and what do you see inside?" "Some seeds," answered the son. "Break one of the seeds," said his father, "and what do you see inside?" "Nothing at all," said the son. "My son," said his father, "where you can see nothing at all lives a mighty banyan-tree."

And there is that old story about our Lord, too. He had arrived one evening at the gates of a city, and He sent His disciples on to prepare the evening meal. Meanwhile, He walked through the streets as far as the market-place. There He saw a crowd of people standing round something lying on the ground. It turned out to be a dead dog with a rope round its neck, by which it appeared to have been dragged some distance along the ground. The people round it were expressing their disgust and holding their noses—and generally making it quite clear to any spectator exactly how unclean they held the dead dog to be. Jesus walked up to the poor animal and looked down with compassion at it. "Pearls," He said, "are not equal to the whiteness of his teeth." And

the people were ashamed and went every man his way.

Your reverence for all things, when you have pierced the darkness of them and have seen the brightness in them, is one of the safeguards of your well-being. It will help you to be loyal even unto death to the things which matter. It will help you to kneel when others are wondering whether their trousers or silk stockings will get dusty.

There is a Voice within you which you must reverence, too. It is the Voice of God speaking to you ; a still, small Voice. It is always higher than you are, higher than your actions. Listen to it, pay heed to it, reverence it as a great gift ; so may you know wrong when you come face to face, and fear it. In the journey which you are making, a journey which began in the cradle and which will end in the grave, you will meet much evil. Reverence your conscience and do not dull its keen edge by neglecting to keep it sharp and true. Your earthly journey has just begun and you may have far to go, over hill and down dale, over jagged rocks, up steep mountain sides ; carry with you all the way your power of reverence that it may give you wisdom and keep you pure and true : with an abiding sense of your inferiority to those superior to you in *any* way : with an ever-ready

helping hand to those who stand in need. Who knows but that you yourself may stand in the self-same need, some day; and that those whom you pulled out of the mud may stoop again and help you to your feet?

VI

WHILE YOU MAY

THERE is a great deal of kindness in this world, but most of it comes too late. The "charity" given to the dead is wonderful; so is the "charity" extended to the living, but in a different way. At a funeral everyone is wonderfully tender and full of talk—now that the opportunity of doing any good has passed away—about how they would do good if the chance of doing it returned. On all sides are heard the smoothing over of vices and the bringing to light of virtues which the dead possessed. If they had any faults—and dead people seem rarely to have had any at all—they were "led away." During the dead person's lifetime, however, these talkers were more occupied with criticism than they are now; they were more severe; and the possessor of all those unsuspected virtues was more harshly treated, his vices taking the position which his virtues occupy now that he is left to the mercy of God, and the opportunity of making life easier for him is gone, never to return.

Wreaths and flowers galore are brought or sent to the funeral, now that they can no longer be appreciated and smelt and admired by the recipient. During his life how many flowery acts of kindness did he receive? How can these things benefit him now? Those flowers are wanted during our lifetimes; kindness is wanted while we are still able to appreciate it, during a time when we all suffer more or less. We are all so kind to memories instead of to the people themselves.

So many people quarrel during life, and then, when death comes along, they say: "If only he would return I would tell him how sorry I am, that I didn't mean it at all; and then I'd have been so kind and decent to him." What is the use of that now that he is gone? If he did come back things would be just the same as ever they were, and the old quarrel would be just as bitter and just as many cruel and thoughtless words would be spoken. It is like bringing food to a man who died of starvation, like bringing drink to a man who died of thirst, and saying: "This is what I would give you if you would only come back again." Remember, before it is useless to remember: "Four things come not back—the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life, and the neglected opportunity."

The one thing indispensable to life is love. Everyone cries out for love of some kind or other, and, if they can love nothing else, they love a dog or a cat or a parrot or a Pekingese. The one thing which we must all have is love. Without love there can be no life as it should be lived; the love whose other name is unselfishness. And at a funeral we all realise that this is true, and forget it again as soon as we have left the churchyard. What is the good of wearing black clothes and a long face, and saying: "There was no one else in the world who was a patch on *him*," when, while he was alive, you behaved to him as no one else in the world would have behaved? When I die I want no mourners or flowers or wreaths, or people to say this, that, and the other about me; it is during life when illness or tiredness, sadness or loneliness, comes that one wants kindness.

Do not let your life be one long waste of opportunities. Do not let the sands of time slip through your fingers and then try, when it is far too late, to gather up the grains again. How many kind words have you said during the past year? How many kind deeds have you done? And how many *could* you have said and done? There is too vast a difference between these numbers. You may not live

long, and if you do your powers will not be so great when you are old. While you are young and at your best, bodily and mentally, then is the time to do good, while your blood is hot and while you still have your best to give.

While you have time learn the value of time, remembering that sooner or later you, too, will be put into the ground, and that it is in this life, and this life only, that you have a chance of helping, and being kind to, and cheering on human beings. Who knows what will happen afterwards? Lots of people will tell you that they know, but no one really knows. The subject of Heaven is a much discussed one, and ideas about it are many and varied, but no one gets any further. One says this, and another says that, but no one fully knows. But one thing is certain—that life flies, and opportunities fly with it.

There is one thing you do know and must know: that you are alive in a world where there are countless things to be done and only a short time in which to do them; a tremendous amount to be done for other people, so much that there is no time left for living for oneself, no time left for being selfish. The selfish part of your life should have passed with your cradle, and your bottle, and your long clothes,

when you were helpless and entirely dependent on other people to do things for you. With trousers came a little independence and a realisation, perhaps, that you were not the only pebble on the beach.

If you are going to spend your life in struggling with evil things you are not carrying out the whole Purpose for which you were born. It is splendid to fight against sin and the low and mean things, but you were born to do good on this earth. You must become good before you can do good; and the struggle with the evil things will be a lifelong one. To be decent and noble and true is the struggle of a lifetime, until your very last days on earth. But you are meant to do more than struggle all your days, you are meant to help. Forget yourself and remember others—that is the key to the whole business of life.

But how are you to do good? Yours seems a limited field just now, at school. You think that it will be easier when you leave? I wonder. You think that it all sounds a large order? It is. So large that you have no time for anything else; no time to listen to the whisperings of evil; no time to go a little way with it to see what the road is like and then to turn back. There is a tremendous number of people who want doing good to, either ex-

ternally or internally. It may be difficult for you at school to do good externally, though when you get out into the world you will have countless chances. There are millions of wretched people without a rag to their backs, who have to live anyhow or not live at all ; who have to exist on less food in a day than a self-respecting cat would consider necessary for its welfare. That will be a great chance for you to do your bit. Do not pass by on the other side when the chance comes to you, and then be sorry afterwards.

If there are millions of people crying out for external help, there are infinitely more who need it internally. There are probably many of those at school with you now ; there are certainly enough of them all round you to keep you busy. By the way, remember one thing, before I leave the subject of doing external good : try to keep it in your mind in after years. Do not wait, if you make any money, to leave it in a will. It will do a great deal more good if you give it away while you are alive.

Everybody needs some internal help. It is needed as much at school as anywhere else. And the way to do most good in this world is by—love. If you love anybody you will do him more good than by giving him all the

golden wealth in the world. Many a man, many a boy, has been pulled out of the gutter and the filth in it because he has been loved. The love of your father and mother has stood you in good stead, I am sure, before now. What it has done your love can do. There is no one on earth who can honestly say that he does not want to be loved. Before the time has gone for ever, love all you can, and lessen the loneliness of other people by it. Those you love now, love a little more still. Shove yourself into the background, and save the love you spend on yourself for other people who stand in need of it, and whose lives might be made all the happier for it. Be unselfish while you have time. You may say that you might make a mistake, and give your love to worthless people or to the wrong people. There are no worthless people in this world, and the sooner you make up your mind to that fact the better. Anyhow, if you did make a mistake, mistakes of that kind would do you no great harm. If you do good to one person out of fifty you will do well.

Help others to gather the rosebuds of life, and never mind about picking them for yourself. They will come to hand of themselves if you help others ; but, as Herrick says, help to gather them while you may, for tomorrow they

may be dying.* Lose your opportunities and you lose yourself, too.

“I expect to pass through this world but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can do to any fellow-being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”†

Never mind about asking, “What time is it?” You do ask it so often when you hope that it is half an hour later or earlier than it actually is. Your business of life is not run on those lines ; it is not one in which you can “down tools” at five o’clock every evening, work just as much or as little as you think fit and convenient, and go on strike if you prefer not to work at all. Your heart must be in this job of living without having your eye on the clock and your ear on the dinner-bell. The only advantage of glueing your eyes on a clock lies in your being able to see how little you are getting done in the time set for it ; but your eyes will not be where they ought to be—on your work—and the chances are that you will get nothing done after all.

If you have read *Adam Bede* (George Eliot) you will remember the workshop scene where the men were at work until the church

* Herrick, *To the Virgins*.

† Anonymous.

clock began to strike six. At the first stroke, almost before it, Wiry Ben, who was driving in a screw, left it as it was—half in the wood and half out—and hurled the screw-driver back among the tools. Sandy Jim was getting his coat. Mum Taft was lifting his hammer to strike a nail, but threw it down. And Seth was putting out his hand for his cap. Adam looked up from his work. "I can't abide," he said, "I can't abide to see men throw away their tools i' that way the minute the clock begins to strike, as if they took no pleasure in their work, and was afraid o' doing a stroke too much. . . . I hate to see a man's arms drop down as if he was shot, before the clock's fairly struck. . . . The very grindstone'll go on turning a bit after you loose it."

Do not let your life be carried on on those slack lines, and so join the great army of "world's workers" who live for nothing but shorter hours and more pay, and who go to Hyde Park to hear "gentlemen" from Russia and elsewhere talk about it. Your youth is one of the golden opportunities of life if you choose to make it one. You can live as if you had nothing else to live for and nothing else to do but to enjoy yourself at other people's expense and to let others do your thinking for you ; you can live as if you had nothing to live for ; and

your life will pass emptily and idly away. You can live by working decently, as if your conscience had something to do with work after all, and by doing some good to your fellow-creatures for certain set spaces of time and then downing tools before the first stroke of the closing hour dies away. Or you can live as if all that matters is your job and the way in which you do it; and your job in life is to do good, do not forget that. Just suppose that you were to die tomorrow—why should not you die tomorrow?—do not wait until tomorrow or some other day, when it may be too late, to do some good thing before you leave this world. You cannot say that you have no time—you have just as much as other people have, and that is all the time there is!

VII

DOGS

THE first mention of a dog in the Bible occurs during the time which the Israelites spent in Egypt. Dogs are generally regarded in Bible writings as unclean, and the word "dog" is often used to denote someone evil. In Eastern countries dogs are still looked upon as being unclean animals, and one of the worst names by which you can call a man is "dog."

It seems a curious thing to us, that, when we think how much we owe to our dogs and how badly off we should be without them. We talk about going "to the dogs," and mean that anyone who does so is going rapidly downhill to the valley of destruction. The Bible tells us to go to the ant, to consider her ways and be wise;* it might well have said "go to the dogs" instead. There is a French saying, "The more I see of men, the more I admire dogs," but that is unnecessarily bitter. There are, of course, good dogs and bad dogs; though there are remarkably few of the latter kind. You

* Prov. vi. 6.

can almost invariably trust a dog, and history and fable provide us with many stories of dogs whose courage and faithfulness and heroism have left their indelible mark on men's minds.

I expect that you know the story of Gelert or Killhart, the famous dog of Prince Llewellyn, which was left in charge of his child. When the prince returned he saw the cradle overturned and the floor red with blood, and thought that the hound had killed the child. Whereupon he drew his sword and plunged it into Gelert's body. A moment after he found the child safe and sound under the cradle and a wolf lying dead in the corner of the room, and saw too late the devotion of his dog. Gelert was buried in the lovely village of Beddgelert under Snowdon, and his tomb is there to this day.

At Montargis in France they will tell you the story of the famous "Dog of Montargis," which showed up its master's murderer, Macaire. The dog not only pointed out the place where its dead master was buried, but also picked out the murderer. When Charles VII. ordered a trial by combat to be made, the dog flew at Macaire's throat and quickly avenged the murder of its master.

There are hundreds of stories like these: stories of the faithfulness and cleverness of all

kinds of dogs. If you can ever get hold of R. J. King's *Sketches and Studies*, read "The Dog in History and Folklore," which is among them.

There are names of dogs that will last, perhaps, as long as the world will last: names like Arthur's hound Cavall, and Hodain, the hound which was so curiously linked up with the fates of Tristram and Ysolde; old Argus, the dog which was the first to recognise its master in the *Odyssey*; the dogs of the Knights of Rhodes, which could distinguish a Turk from a Christian by smell; the Spanish bloodhounds which helped in the conquests of Peru and Mexico; the spaniel which saved the Dutch Republic by rousing William the Silent during the night attack on the camp before Mons; Pope's Bounce and Sir Walter Scott's Maida; Roswal in *The Talisman*, the hound of the Scottish knight which guarded the English Standard and discovered who had insulted it; the dogs of St. Bernard, which rescue travellers lost in the snow. Read the wonderful stories of them for yourself, and then look at your dog, if you have one, or at someone else's if you have not, and notice six special things about him which would be splendid examples for any man to follow.

1. *Watchfulness*.—The slightest noise will

rouse him. He seems almost to sleep with his eyes open, and when he is awake he hears sounds so far away and so slight that they do not reach our ears. So must you be watchful: watchful over your words, your deeds, your thoughts. You must go through life with your eyes "skinned," for danger will come upon you before you are aware of it if you close them to anything. Christ said, "Watch and pray," and He knew that they were inseparable acts if either of them is to be of any use at all. Watch the end of things, not their little beginnings—it is the end that counts, after all; and never go to sleep at night before you have run over in your mind—

Every act and thought and word
From dawn to set of sun.*

2. *Cheerfulness*.—How jolly glad he is to see you every morning, and when you have been away from him even for a very short time. Disgrace is the only thing which makes him put his tail between his legs and look miserable. What about you? Are you always as pleasant as that, or only when the sun is shining and there is a "half," or when the week is over, or when the end of term is

* Pythagoras.

coming very near? What are you like on Monday morning? Or when things are not going as well as they might do? No, cheerfulness is not worth much when you could hardly be otherwise than cheerful. It is worth a great deal when circumstances are against it. You must get its song into your heart, and then you will hear the music of it all round you. It is far more infectious than measles, so catch it yourself and hand it on to others. Smiles are cheap to you, but of priceless value to those with whom you come into contact. Learn to rejoice, to be—like Mrs. Fezziwig—one vast substantial smile. The hardest thing on this earth is always to be happy in spite of everything, and it is also the bravest.

A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.*

So do as your dog does, and make the best of everything; think the best of everybody, and keep your tail up.

3. *Forgiveness*.—You know that wonderful quotation, “To err is human, to forgive divine.”† Forgiveness is divine, yet your dog is probably a great deal more forgiving than you are. However unkind, however unjust

* Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale*.

† Pope, *Essay on Criticism*.

you are to him there is no resentment ; he is just the same as ever. Kick him and he will come up again and lick your foot. What is the good of revenge after all ? If you want to "have your revenge" the best and surest vengeance is to forgive, and that kind of revenge shows that you are above pettinesses. You say every day, I suppose, the Lord's Prayer. Do you ever think of the meaning of those words, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us" ? If you do not forgive other people you will never be forgiven either. Life is too full of decent things to do to bother with meanness.

4. *Obedience*.—I need not dilate on a dog's obedience for it is proverbial, and you know how attentive to your slightest word a dog will be. Are you half as obedient as your dog ? It is easy enough to do as you are told when what you are told to do happens to fit in with your own wishes. That is a twopenny-half-penny kind of obedience ; it is not worthy of the name ; rechristen it "selfishness," and be done with it. The test comes when you are told to do things which you not only positively dislike doing, but which you positively *hate* doing. But that is not real obedience yet. You must do these things *willingly*—the obedience must be in thought as well as

action. That is what obedience means, and nothing else is. Do you know Franklin's story about his visit to a friend? He was received in the library, and his friend showed him out by a shorter way through a narrow passage over which a beam was placed. The two were still talking as they left the library, Franklin in front and his friend following, when the friend said suddenly, "Stoop! Stoop!" Franklin did not gather what he meant until he hit his head hard against the beam. The friend, a man much older and wiser than Franklin, did not lose the chance of giving him some sound advice of which his sore head served as an admirable illustration: "You are young, and have the world before you; stoop as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps."

People who carry their heads too high in this world are always knocking up against its misfortunes. Carrying your head low implies obedience, and if you do not bend yourself to other people's wishes you will break your head thoroughly. "Independence" is all very well, if it is of the right sort; but if you mean by independence that you shall do exactly what you want and that nothing else matters, then you are on the wrong road. You can only reach independence of a sort by being de-

pendent first, and even then you will never be entirely independent. No one on this earth can do without certain other people, and if you are not depending upon your parents you are depending upon your employers: and, later still, on those who serve you. Obey your parents and those older and wiser than you and you will learn to obey a Greater than they. And on the implicit obedience to His voice your whole well-being depends.

5. *Courage.* — Whoever saw a decent dog who would not show fight when he got the chance or when it was expected of him? Size never seems to enter into the question at all. I shall never forget the sight of a terrier-pup putting to rout a full-grown collie-dog who did not appear to have a very clear idea as to whose dinner he was eating. The justly incensed owner of the dinner said nothing, but he made that collie-dog sorry inside two minutes.

I do not mean that the only courage you should have must be the putting up of your fists when the necessity arises, as it must do now and then; you would be a poor thing if you did not. No, there is another kind of courage which you must have and which is a much more difficult thing to develop; the courage of saying "Yes" when you mean "Yes," and "No" when you mean "No." That sounds

rather simple. It is, sometimes: yet at most other times you will find that it is almost impossible. That is the courage of the true soldier of Christ which you are destined to be. You are in no fool's paradise, but on a battlefield where you have got to take your side and where the stakes are life and death. You will have to fight it out to the last gasp and your last drop of blood. And it all consists of saying "Yes" and "No" when you mean them; and in *doing* yes and no when they are the right things to do!

Some people who have no moral courage will tell you that they say "Yes" when they mean "No" because that is "tact." If it is tact, then the other word for tact is "funk," funk of the worst sort, because it involves lying as well.

Christ, at that stupendous moment when He was standing His trial and life and death hung in the balance, and when He was asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" did not falter and shuffle and scrape His feet on the floor, and say, "Well—er—somebody told Me that and I took their word for it. But, of course, I didn't mean any harm." He held up His head proudly and looked His questioner unflinchingly in the eyes, and said without an instant's hesitation, "Thou sayest it." There was

death to follow, a terrible, torturing death; but did it make any difference?

6. *Faithfulness*.—A shorter word will do—Loyalty. Has your dog ever let you down? Would he ever do so? Could you imagine his going off with the first person he meets and leaving you alone? No; he will stick to you as long as he lives—and, perhaps, after—even if you are unkind to him, if you ill-treat him; even if you do not deserve any affection at all. Of such stuff are dogs made.

Loyalty, of a sort, was one of the first things that you ever learnt. You learnt to be loyal to your family; then you passed over its barrier into a prep. school, and you learnt to be loyal to that; now you are loyal, in your own way, to the school at which you are now; later on you will learn to be loyal to your employers, and, perhaps, after that to those who do work for you. So your life is one long act of loyalty without an interval, or should be, if you are worth anything at all. But are you *really* loyal? Like cheerfulness and obedience, being faithful is an absurdly easy matter when all is well and the sun is out; when your faithfulness costs you nothing, when those to whom your loyalty is due are in the sunshine with you. Things which cost you nothing are worth little more. You will value

something very much more highly, and so will other people, if it has given you a little trouble, and more highly still if a great deal of trouble and, perhaps, unhappiness and a drop or two of your life's blood.

It was during a severe and bitter war, some twenty-two hundred years ago, that a very noble man who was in command of one army was taken prisoner by the other. The enemy were most eager to make peace with his country, because they were utterly weary of war, and their trade had suffered greatly through it, so they sent an embassy to offer an exchange of prisoners and to propose terms for a treaty. And they sent this prisoner with it under promise to come back again should the embassy's purpose prove a failure. When he arrived a meeting of the ambassadors and his fellow-countrymen was held outside the gates of the chief city of his country. The prisoner confirmed the wavering minds of his countrymen by advising them to *leave the prisoners (of whom he was one) to perish* and to continue the war until victory was won. He went back as he had promised, to suffer terrible tortures: he was placed in a barrel with spikes pointing inwards, his eyelids were cut off, and, finally, he was left exposed to the glare of an African sun to die slowly and

lingeringly of thirst and pain and fever. Regulus knew, when he gave that advice, of the tortures he was bringing upon himself, for the tortures of the Carthaginians were notorious. But Rome mattered more to him than such a comparatively unimportant matter as himself. He would not have his country submit to any ignoble terms of peace with its arch-enemy, Carthage. That was loyalty of some worth; its worth was in proportion to its cost.

There was another man who was loyal in the true sense of the word, the brave sense of the word. He began by being loyal only in deed: he alone drew his sword on behalf of his friend whom he believed to be in danger against a multitude. But he had not enough moral loyalty then. When the test came he denied any knowledge of his friend, but that changed when he had seen the meanness of it and was ashamed of his cowardice. Not so long after that exhibition, when his friend had been foully murdered, he was up on his feet—almost alone again among a vast crowd of enemies—and was bravely telling them that they were murderers. Peter began by having physical courage and ended by having *moral* courage as well, a far finer thing and more valuable than much fine gold. He stuck to

his Friend after He had gone, and in the face of those who might easily have treated him as they did his Friend. That was loyalty.

Think of the great number of men who gave their lives for the sake of loyalty to the country which inspired it in them, of that great army of martyrs who suffered agonies for the sake of loyalty to the things that mattered above all else to them, and ask yourself whether that sort of loyalty is not worth while. It showed men what loyalty really is—the sacrifice of self for greater causes and nobler ends.

It is loyalty in little things, too, that matters. It is far, far easier to be faithful in the big ones. Give me the boy who is loyal enough not to sneak when he could do so without his companions' knowledge, and could profit by it, rather than all the martyrs who ever lived and whose names are gloriously set out in the pages of history.

They say that "'Tis love that makes the world go round," and loyalty is a part of love. You cannot have the one without the other. And if you have the true loyalty, where loyalty is due throughout life, the world will go round all the more cheerfully and happily and peacefully.

CHAPTER VIII

HAWTHORN TIME

“IN hawthorn time the heart grows light.”* Why? Because the world is being supplied once more with fresh beauty, Nature is clothing the earth with a cloak of green dotted with a myriad marvellous colours, and the song of new life and energy is entering our hearts. “The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”† That was a song, too, which entered the heart of a man in the old love-song of Solomon, and it has helped to gladden other hearts during the three thousand years since it was written. We all love the Spring and the eternal freshness of it, the eternal song of it; but it was not made solely for our pleasure and enjoyment. It was

* Swinburne, *Tale of Balen*.

† Song of Solomon ii. 11-13.

made for our learning as well, as all things made by God are, and there are one or two things to be gathered from it : better things than you will learn in a classroom.

1. In the catacombs of Rome there are some very beautiful epitaphs written on the tombs of Christians buried there. One of them is very striking in its simplicity—*Tentianus vivit*. That is one of the truest epitaphs ever written. Albrecht Dürer, the great painter who was buried at Nuremburg, has on his tombstone the one word *Emigravit*. Both of those epitaphs point to the same thing ; and, when combined, they bring the meaning of death into a much clearer light than many wise men, who try to make us think that they know a great deal more than they do, would have us believe. *Tentianus lives* : he has gone to another land. How much more splendid that sounds than “*Tentianus vixit*”—He *has* lived !

Spring, when it comes along, with its beauty and its freshness and its new life, should always remind you of the curtain which is being rung down every moment on men's lives. I do not mean that your thoughts should strike a gloomy note, but very much the reverse. You must remember that death is not the end of the road but only a turning on it ; that it is not the end of all things but only a change of scene ; that

dead bodies, like the seemingly lifeless trees in winter, will spring to fresh vitality. Death comes to all houses sooner or later and brings sorrow with it. It may have come to yours already. Whenever it knocks on the door of your home, do not forget that wonderful message of Spring with all its hope and gladness.

2. What would this earth be like without flowers? Some people with minds which can only think in the narrowest of grooves seem to have queer ideas of what is useful and what is not. They turn up their wise noses at flowers and say that beauty is, at its best, only skin-deep: and are full of long-windedness on the subject of the uselessness of beauty in faces and flowers and other things. Do they pause to think what a bare, terrible place this earth would be if God had the same ideas about usefulness as they have? Anything which helps to brighten and to bring smiles instead of sadness cannot be otherwise than useful. The world is given its flowers—bits of solidified sunshine—to teach it that men's lives should not grow vegetables only. Straightforward dealings, truthfulness, cleanliness in word and deed—those are some of the vegetables so necessary to life; but the flowers of manners, civility, cheerfulness, and the like must grow,

too, in order that the garden may have all the beauty of which it is capable. As Ruskin so truly said, God grows poppies in cornfields to teach mankind that everything is not to eat.

3. The seeds sown earlier in the year are beginning to come up as flowers. "To every seed his own body,"* said St. Paul; as you sow, so will you reap. If you sow wheat it will come up as wheat; if you sow thistle-seed and other weeds they will come up as weeds. Your words and your deeds are as seeds which you sow. They will spring up later. Jason sowed dragon's teeth, and there sprang up a fierce body of armed men. Judas sowed greed and disloyalty, and he reaped a rope about his neck and the tortures of a black heart. See that you are sowing good seed, the right kind of seed, now that you may reap the happiness of a decent and noble life.

4. The birds are singing. There is no music in the world to beat that. It is God's own music played on instruments made by His hand. That is one of the gloomy things about the winter—the silence of most of the birds. It is a silence that one can almost *feel*. Now the world is alive with song and it should make you *feel* in your heart that God wants you too to sing. Only, His kind of singing has

* I Cor. xv. 38.

nothing to do with your voice. You could have no voice at all and yet sing better than all the choirs in the country in the sense He means. You must be happy! You must be full of hope! No grousing about this, that, and the other; no rotten sulking when things are not quite to your liking. There are a good many people in this funny old world who find fault of some sort with anything and everything, anyone and everyone they come across. I expect that, if you pulled them out of bed in a fire, they would grouse at being woken up. The more's the pity. Do not be one of them; do not let that kind of thing grow on you, as they have done. They have probably started grousing when the milk in their bottles was not quite the right temperature, and they have been carrying on ever since until their minds are so warped that they can only see tarnish on everything and cannot pierce it to find the glitter underneath. Do not, I repeat, be one of them. Even if it is Monday morning and you have lost that "beastly back collar-stud" somewhere down the back of your neck, and you have lines to do for being late for chapel or breakfast because it took it into its head to lodge in your pants! Even if the "grub" is foul and the milk is sour and the "marg" is rancid; and you have to fag just when you

wanted to "swot" up that bit of Livy that you had left over from Saturday night's prep. : and you will be sure to "come a cropper" and be "sent up for bad." Keep a stiff upper lip and make the best of a bad job. It might have been worse : and it does not help matters any more if you curse and bite the nose off other people than if you grin and bear it all. You are not the centre of the universe, nor does the world revolve on you. Do not want always to have your own way about everything. There must be a good deal of give and take, with a good deal of the give on your part and a great deal less of the take, to make this world a fit place to live in. Keep a good firm hand on that temper of yours and push it down with a bang if it tries to rise to the top and to come out. We all boil at different temperatures, I suppose, and some of us at very low ones. See to it that your boiling-point is as high as possible, and take away the flame if you feel yourself on the boil. Think of all the splendid things and the cheerful things in your life and listen to the singing of the birds in your heart.

5. And the last thing about the spring-time to which I want to draw your attention is the glorious promise it gives for all the good things in store later in the year. But it is only

a promise, remember, and spring gives no guarantee that the promise will be fulfilled. It may not be fulfilled at all unless later conditions are right, and destroying elements are carefully guarded against or rooted out.

God Himself has planted a garden as He did "eastward in Eden" countless long years ago. This a different kind of garden from the one which Adam dug, the garden of your own life. Your parents, your masters, are in charge of it at the moment, and will remain in charge until you are more capable of looking after it entirely on your own account.

A gardener does not spend his days in admiring the beauties of his garden; if he did there would soon be no beauties left to admire. Only by constant weeding and pruning can he keep it at its best: can he reap the fruit of which spring gives the blossom as a promise. So your parents do not spend their time in admiring you and in praising you up to the skies; nor do your masters. They know better than to let the weeds grow under their feet while they sit and dwell on the beauty of the flowers. But they must have help from you to root out the harmful growths which will stifle all that is best in you. Spring must call you to look to your character as well as to your garden, and if you keep a careful

and a watchful eye on it you will be amply rewarded by the fruits of a decent life. Pull out the weeds and prune the boughs; find and kill the worm which seems so small and yet in time will kill the largest tree. Your parents and your masters on earth, God in heaven, are all watching your growth of body and mind and soul with the same deep interest as you would watch a fruit tree you had planted. Satisfactory reports—less of the “could do better” and “does not do his best” and “insufficient application”—hard work, hard play too; effort, honesty, sincerity, cheerfulness: these are the blossoms on your tree, and the promise of good harvests in the years to come.

IX

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE

PAKHOM'S neighbour had bought a piece of land. That was bad news to Pakhom, for Russian peasants were poor, and Pakhom poor as the poorest of them. Yet he believed himself every whit as good as his neighbour—indeed, much better—and now the wretched man was better off than he.

It was fortunate that the owner of the land round the village was going to sell out. Pakhom went in haste to her and soon persuaded her to let him have a piece of it. The money was hard, very hard to get, but not impossible. He scraped together half of it, and promised to pay the remainder in two years.

He was so happy when he became a man of property; his neighbour could boast no longer, nor could he gaze any more at Pakhom with the pitying contempt which was the due of a landless man. Pakhom soon paid off his debt by dint of much labour, but the thrill of ownership began almost as soon to wear off.

How much more good he could do had he only twice that amount of land !

He met one day a peasant from the Volga, who was a bearer of news that was most pleasant to hear. A man could get as much land as he liked there, and for a song. Pakhom's wife, his friends, his neighbours urged him not to go ; but they were jealous, thought he, and his interests were not theirs. Doubtless they had "fish to fry" on their own account.

So he moved to the Volga and he bought his land—one hundred and thirty-five acres of it—and before long he had added considerably to it. He was prosperous if ever any man was.

One night, however, a weary traveller from the Bashkir district visited his house in quest of a night's lodging. Their conversation inevitably led, as all Pakhom's conversations did lead, to the subject of Pakhom's land, about which the visitor greatly surprised him by appearing most contemptuous. In his land, said the traveller with barely concealed pride and scorn, a man could purchase as much land as he was likely to want, and all for one thousand roubles.

That was a chance which Pakhom was not going to miss—not he. Out for the land of

the Bashkirs he set, and he found that the visitor had not lied; that he could buy as much land as he wanted, and all for one thousand roubles. But there was a condition attached: he could have only the land round which he could walk in the space of one day—from sunrise to sunset—and he must be once more at his starting-place at sunset or his one thousand roubles would be forfeit. That did not seem a very difficult condition to fulfil, thought Pakhom.

Early to bed he went that night in order to be fresh and hearty for the morrow, but he could not sleep. A grim laugh which constantly recurred somewhere outside his tent set his nerves on edge. It became more than he could bear, and he stepped outside his tent, but he could see nothing there, and he returned to bed to pass the sleepless hours till dawn.

At sunrise Pakhom paid his thousand roubles and received in exchange a spade with which he was to mark his progress. Off he started, shouldering his spade, and behind him heard the same mocking laugh which had so disturbed him the night before. He looked round, but the men's faces were expressionless; so on he went, for there was a fortune in front of him that day and there was no time to

be lost. Every hundred yards or so he dug his mark in the ground and chuckled to himself at the thought of the deal he had made.

The heat of the sun soon became troublesome, and he shed his coat; the spade was beginning to be a tremendous weight, he thought; but on he went, and ever on, digging, walking, digging, walking. Soon—so soon that he could scarcely realize that the time had passed—the sun began to sink. He was very tired now, but he must hurry to get back to his starting-point. His legs became so heavy that he had difficulty in lifting them; the spade, too. Now the sun was getting very low in the sky and he had still some way to go. Sweat was running down his face and body. He heard the shouts of the men waiting for him. His heart beat faster and faster, he felt an agonizing pain.

The sun was just dipping below the horizon as he made his last great effort and leapt towards the men. As he got to them his spade dropped, and he fell at their feet—dead.

Those men picked up his spade and they dug six feet of earth, laughing all the while, and thrust his body into it. It was all that he had got for his one thousand roubles, and it was all he needed.

That is a gruesome story of Tolstoi's, but a very striking one. I have told it to you because it serves as a good illustration of the evils which attend wanting more than your fair share of things. It is a very good example of the more-you-get-the-more-you-want spirit which is at the bottom of so many troubles today. Everybody thinks that he would be so happy if he could get something which he does not already possess, and when he has got it, so far from being happy, he merely wants something more. On it leads him, on and on, till there is no knowing what the end will be, except that he will never be happy. Happiness is not got that way.

Nor is honesty, and it is about this which I want to talk to you just now. The greed which Pakhom showed and which led him to his death can lead you on to many other kinds of evil. The stories of Achan and Gehazi were not very much out of the common; just because they are in the Bible is not a reason for supposing that they are not applicable to modern times. They are, unfortunately. Achan was not the only one, by any means, to covet fine clothes and silver and gold. Gehazi was not the only man who lied to get hold of other people's property. Nor was Judas alone in his betrayal of a friend for the

sake of what he could get out of it. Greedy desire for what you have not got may not bring you Achan's stoning nor Gehazi's leprosy nor Judas's rope; it will, perhaps, bring far worse things than those upon your head—the cold shoulder, contempt and scorn of companions: the bitter disappointment and wrecked hopes of those who love you and of whose world you are an all-important feature: the loss of God's help and His companionship. Terrible losses, these; worse by far than the mere loss of your life.

What is honesty? Paying back Robinson his "bob" which he had forgotten and which you borrowed from him weeks ago; when you could quite easily have said nothing about it and no one would have been any the wiser? In other words, not stealing? No, you know that it is more than that, more "by a very long chalk." There is nothing negative about it. It does not consist of *not* doing this and *not* doing that, but of *doing* the other. The threefold honesty that makes a man, that makes a gentleman, does not consist of don'ts. Why did I say "threefold"? Because to be honest, really honest, you must be—

1. Honest with other people,
2. Honest with yourself, and
3. Honest with God.

1. To be honest with everyone with whom you come into contact during life is so essential that this world would not be a fit place to live in without it. What would happen, for instance, if everyone told lies about everything and about everyone else, and Truth hid her face and was ashamed? Gone would be that wonderful trust which exists between gentlemen; gone would be all that makes for decent feeling of any sort between man and man. The sole reason for the lack of trust and confidence among many in the world today and yesterday is that men have been humanly and inhumanly dishonest at various times. I say "humanly," because no one in this world is perfect, or can hope to be, and so there must be lapses from the high ideals; and I say "inhumanly," because there are some people who spend their mean and beastly lives in dishonesty of the meanest and beastliest kinds. There are men whom the law cannot touch who are more dishonest in their own way than the men who break into houses and steal. They are responsible for much of the misery of the poorer people whom they employ and whom they treat as machines and incapable of suffering. The expression "grinding the faces of the poor" has been much scoffed at of late, but there are still many people today who certainly

do so—grind them into the mud and filth. They will have their reward some day. There are others who go about with velvet tongues and bland faces, and they lure other innocent people into the toils of their nets. They bleed them white, and cast them away on the muck heap. They, too, will have their reward.

Stealing and lying, probably, are the first things to enter your mind when dishonesty is mentioned, as being the most familiar examples of it. They are both dishonest and both contemptible, but lying is a meaner, lower kind than stealing. It is meaner because other people are far more at your mercy and a much greater advantage is taken of them. It is, too, more common because it is easier and less likely to be discovered. Why does anyone tell a lie? Either because he is afraid of consequences or because he has some end in view which will profit him. I have never punished a boy of mine for the former, and I never shall. But it is cowardice, it is "funk," all the same, and therefore contemptible. Take the consequences, whatever they may be, if you do anything wrong, but do not make things worse by lying about it. The consequences of that will be worse and more far-reaching in the long run, even if they are not worse at the moment. Make no

mistake about that. It is only too true, as so many have found to their cost when God Himself has taken their punishment in hand.

Then there is the matter of cribbing. A great mistake, that, if you go in for it. You may not suffer for it now—you probably will not, unless you are caught and beaten—but you will do so very deeply when, later in life, you want to use what used to be brains and what have become a mass of useless “sawdust.” Cribbing—relying on other people’s thought and effort, when your own need exercise to make them grow and be strong—will kill your brain as surely as it will make you a despicable member of the community. Because others do it is no guarantee of its harmlessness, you know. There are more fools in this queer world than you dream of; and some of them happen to be at school with you, that is all.

Then there is that question of “School-boy Honour” which, as far as school-boys are concerned—leaving out the fatuous old men who ought to know better than to shake their heads wisely and talk rubbish about the “Code of Honour” that existed at their own schools when they were boys—confines itself to a fixed idea that no boy must “sneak” about

another boy, no matter when, or why, or how, or where. The result of that, of course, has been like the result of all originally good things when they are carried outside moderation; it has been abused. And the result of that, again, has been that atrocious evil can exist in a school and can be allowed to go on without a murmur. It must be an understood thing with you, if you are going to have a real sense of "School-boy Honour"—which, really, is no different from any other kind of honour—and not a twisted, deformed idea of it, that anything which is not right must be put right, and as soon as possible. And if its being put right means giving information to a prefect or a house-master, then do so. You will have done the right thing, come what may, and you will live to be thankful; and your school will live to be thankful, too.

2. Being honest with yourself is like having a sense of humour—it will save you much of the rottenness and hard knocks of life, both at school and after. What is the use of cloaking over from your own eyes any of your failings, anyhow? Hide them from yourself if you can and if you will, but hide them from other people who live with you—that you can never do with success. The truth will out, and when you least expect it. You are shown up and

you look both knave and fool. Be honest with yourself and try to rid yourself of the faults, not gloss them over and excuse them to yourself. Be honest with yourself and you will be honest with other people as well. Be honest with yourself and you will be worth knowing and you will do something worth doing. Sham is only fit for fools of frogs who would like to appear as big as bulls ; and as with the frog in the fable, it will lead to trouble.

3. Be honest with God, be honest in the sight of God, and you will be honest with yourself and with others. It is comparatively easy for anyone to be straight and above-board when the world is watching him and he is in the light of day. It is the honesty in the darkness, when none is there to see, that counts. It is when you need not be honest, yet you are honest, that you are honest with God. All else is poor stuff beside that. I do not mean the honesty that concerns itself with shillings and pence : but the honesty of purpose ; that you must be sure that what you are making for lies along the right road, and that you must take only the right road to get to it. The end does *not* justify the means, whatever people say to the contrary when it suits their ignoble actions. It cannot be right to benefit some people at the bitter expense of others. This being honest with

God is one of the hardest things to be ; and on that account all the more worth being.

Here is a story the truth of which I can vouch for. A small boy (we will call him Rex, for want of a better name) was one of a gang of fags who had a supposed grievance against a certain prefect. The fags met in consultation and decided that the prefect's study should be "ragged" (in other words, reduced to a state of chaos which would waste much time and more temper to clear up), and as Rex was this prefect's fag he was delegated to be the one to produce this chaos. Accordingly, he chose a time when his lord and master was out on the fives-court, and went up to the study to begin operations ; but, before he had time to make a start, to his surprise and horror, in walked the prefect. He had come back for a pair of gloves which he had forgotten.

"Hullo, Rex," he said. "What in the world are you doing here at this time o' day?"

Then, perhaps, he noticed the guilty expression on his fag's face : for his own changed from geniality to severity.

He said sternly : "You've no business to be here, my lad. What mischief are you up to?"

Still no answer.

"Is it anything that you deserve a beating for?"

"Yes," said Rex, without the slightest hesitation.

He was beaten.

People who begin like that deserve watching to see what becomes of them in after life. Here are two more episodes in Rex's career after he left school.

His father died suddenly, and left an enormous number of debts behind him. Rex was still only nineteen years old (he had only just left school), and he went to see his father's solicitor. The latter showed him the state of his father's affairs, and, being very sorry for the young man, told him that he was not legally responsible for the payment of the debts.

"Not *legally* responsible?" queried Rex. "Perhaps not. But do you think that I'm going to lie down and take things easy while other people suffer? Not much. I'm going to see this through."

The Great War broke out soon after, and he went to the Front. Whatever his moral courage—and that was pretty great, if we are to judge from the incidents above—his physical courage, as we understand the expression, was not conspicuous. He was deadly afraid of physical pain in any form, and the fighting in France was one long nightmare of dreading

what might happen to him. He was just one bundle of "nerves," and he wished himself anywhere but in the fighting-line. He did not, however, show this "funk" outwardly (only his closest friend knew of its existence), but it was very much there all the same.

One night, during an expedition in No Man's Land, he found himself in a shell hole to which he had hastily retired during a barrage. There was no one with him, and he was perfectly safe, and felt like staying there as long as it was humanly possible to do so. But he noticed, after he had been there only a few minutes, the body of a man lying some distance away. The barrage was still going on. But he got out of the hole. In spite of his terrible fears, he made his way to the wounded man.

Rex's body lies under the green turf in France in a grave surmounted by one of the innumerable little crosses which mark the last resting-place of those who have fought their fight and have fallen as gloriously as it is possible to fall. He was killed on his way to rescue the man lying near his shell hole. In spite of his bodily "funk" he went to him because it was the right, the only thing to do. That was bravery in its real sense, for those who do not know what fear is are not brave; and it was honesty,

too. In those three incidents I have described he was honest with others, he was honest with himself, he was honest with God. May he rest in peace.

So honesty is—just as I said at the beginning—not a matter of *don'ts*, but a matter of *do's*. It does not consist of a list of things which are forbidden. For example : do not covet, do not steal, do not tell lies, do not crib, and so on. But it means instead : *Do* be content with what you have, *do* treat other people's belongings as sacred, *do* speak the truth whatever happens, *do* rely on your own brains, *do* the right thing in the right way come what may.

X

GROWTH

You do not have much chance of forgetting that you are growing ! It seems a recognized thing for people who have not seen you for some time to say, " How you have grown ! " You get tired of hearing it so constantly, I expect ; but it is good for you to be so often reminded that you are getting taller.

It is not so very long, really, since you were in long clothes, and were fed on nothing but milk ! You have grown a great deal since then. The clothes which you wear now would have done five times over for you then. You can sit down to dinner and put away the toughest of beefsteak and plenty of it. You have grown. The tailor's bill and the butcher's bill would advertise that fact even if it was not noticeable in other ways.

This growing of yours is a most interesting business : interesting to you and also to others who love you, and who are watching you grow—they do not seem to mind its effect on the butcher's bill ! They are proud of the way

you can kick a ball, proud of the way you can "hit a four" or run "the hundred." They remember so well the time when you were just learning to walk—you have grown wonderfully strong since then.

You have been discovering ever since you could toddle a few yards or so that you can do new and more difficult things as time passes and as you grow with its passage. It has all been vastly interesting to those whose first act, almost, was to measure you and weigh you, and who have, no doubt, been doing so periodically ever since. And when you left home and went away to school your growing was more noticeable than ever; instead of watching you develop every day there was an interval of three months before they saw you again. No wonder everyone said, "How you have grown!" when they had not seen you for so long a time.

You have grown: that is obvious. But *how* have you grown? Fortunately you have not had very much time as yet in which to grow in any way but that in which God intended you to grow; not much time to grow anything but straight and strong. But the chance is coming, if it has not already come to you, of growing crooked and of becoming weak. You have the whole of your lifetime

before you in which to do so. How are you to grow in the years to come? How are you to grow now during your school life? Those are most important questions to you and every boy who is to do some good in the world and to make the most of his life. Here are the answers to them :

1. You must grow in strength. You must develop both body and mind. Have you ever visited the slum districts of any great city? If you have, you will never forget the terrible sight of the children there who have no proper food to eat and no fresh air and sunlight. Their bodies have become stunted and weedy, and their faces like those of old men and women. They have not a chance to grow as they ought to grow. You have a fair chance, a clean start in life, a better chance than they will ever have of growing strong in body. Do not throw away that chance by wanting to "see life." If you pull away the curtain and peer into the mysterious room of your bodily workings you will not see life—you will see death.

You must grow strong in mind ; in spirit. The other names for that are self-control and courage. Courage of the kind which is not bravado and boasting, but the real stuff ; self-control which will not allow you to taste all the

pleasures of life before you are ripe for them. Are you a Daniel when there are no lions near you? Have you a hand on yourself like a clutch of steel when there is need for it?

A few years ago a London doctor was operating on a child who had diphtheria. During the operation, however, he discovered that the child's life could be saved only by sucking the diphtheritic matter out of the windpipe through a tube. No one could know better than the doctor himself the probable consequences of what he was doing when he put his own lips to the tube. The child's life was saved, but the doctor developed the terrible disease a few days later, and died not so long afterwards. He was only twenty-eight, that doctor, and he had a wonderful life of usefulness before him; yet he was a Daniel when the lions were there to put him to the test, and he gave away his own life for the sake of a child who was a stranger to him.

If I were to give you all the examples of courage and self-control which have been shown since history began—if it were possible for me to do so—the names alone would fill countless books. They had grown strong in spirit, those men and women; they had the determination to do the right thing, and there was no counting of the cost. With a weak

will you will never be anything worth while—you cannot be. Weak wills are like shoes without soles : of no use for walking along the road. Grit and determination and a firm hand on yourself will get you to where you ought to be, walking up the straight road of life with your face turned in the right direction.

2. You must grow in wisdom. That does not mean that you are to imagine that you are wise, and wiser, too, than other people. That is not wisdom but rank foolishness. It has always been very much the custom for young men and women to think themselves wiser than their parents. It has led to many a bitter ending. Even as long ago as 1700 that feeling was rife, and still the children have never learnt wisdom. Pope said :

And still tomorrow's wiser than today.
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow ;
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.*

That is no wisdom at all. Never forget that your parents have all their experience of the world and its ways behind them. No one in this world can know as well as they do what is good for you and what is very much the reverse.

Now is the time to grow in wisdom, now

* Pope, *Essay on Criticism*.

at school, when you have all the advantages which a boy can have. Do not throw away these very precious years, with all their boundless opportunity, and so live to regret it deeply ever afterwards. It may seem a pleasant way of passing your life always to be seated on a back bench in company with those who have no other end or aim in view; but it will rot your mind. You must learn neither too slowly nor too fast, but at the speed which agrees with your age and your capacity for learning. "Hasten slowly," as the tortoise did when he beat the hare, and try not to disappoint the expectations and hopes of those who are so keen on your growing in wisdom. You cannot do that if you are continually on the search for knowledge of the wrong sort. Wisdom does not consist of probing mysteries which are better left unsolved until you can approach them in the right state of mind, and can grasp the essential sacredness and godliness of them. You will not find wisdom in trashy literature in which the holiness of human nature is held up to ridicule, its mysteries shown up in a false light; the Divine love which can exist between men and women misrepresented and twisted to make a story which people with nasty minds and no common decency will read, or the poisonous descriptions of law-

court cases in some penny newspapers made to form a groundwork for stories in which men are always at pains to invent methods of doing wrong in complete safety. Wisdom cannot be found in unspeakable "literature" of that sort, but only in books which tell of wise people and which are written by wise writers.

3. You must grow straight. Straight in word and thought and deed. What is the use of a straight body with a twisted mind inside it? Fit to be thrown on the rubbish heap, that is all.

Sometimes this growing is a difficult process when there are many things which are all about you ready to hinder straight growth. Grow straight in spite of them. Never let other ideas, other opinions, other examples which you know to be crooked ones interfere with your determination to speak right, think right, do right.

A judge who was always being annoyed by sneering, sarcastic remarks from a young fool of a lawyer was asked why he did not do something about it. The judge, who was having dinner at the time, dropped his knife and fork on the table and said:

"Up in our town there lives a widow who has a dog which, whenever the moon shines,

goes out upon the steps and barks away at it all night."

He paused, and quietly began eating again. As he did not go on with the story one of his friends asked:

"Well, judge, what about the dog and the moon?"

The judge looked up.

"Oh, the moon keeps on shining," he said, "that is all."

The average public school boy is one mass of convention. He wants to make himself as inconspicuous as possible by doing what other people do. He must follow the herd whatever happens. That is all very well, and it is a sure medicine for any boy who comes to his public school full of great ideas of his own importance in the world in general, and in his school in particular. Follow the herd, by all means, if the way leads in the right direction. But, for your own sake and for God's sake, break away if the direction is a wrong one. It is quite easy to be trampled down by the herd in their mad rush downhill. It does not matter whether popular opinion is in favour of swearing, and holds it as a recognised form of everyday speech; that cribbing is a recognised method of getting work done; or that anything to do with chapel is a complete bore:

strike out—if Public Opinion is not *your* opinion—on your own line, and make sure that your own line is the right one. Grow straight.

And as you grow from strength to strength keep God's presence ever with you, keep Him ever before your eyes. All true strength and wisdom and straight growth are His, and as you grow in other ways so must you grow in knowledge of Him.

A man who did not acknowledge Christianity met a farm labourer going to church. He asked the labourer where he was going. "To church, sir." "What are you going to do there?" "I'm going to worship God, sir," said the labourer. "Tell me," said the man, "is your God a great or little God?" "He is both, sir," answered the labourer. "How can He be both?" "Oh," said the labourer, "easily. He is so great that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, and He is so little that He can dwell in my heart."

Be careful that, as you grow, your heart grows too and does not shrink into so small a space that there is no room for God. And so, with the wonderful help which His presence will give you all the day long, you will come very near to being "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of

Christ," and "may grow up into Him in all things."*

And then, truly, will God Himself, when He receives you into His Kingdom Eternal, be able to say, "How you have grown!"

* Eph. iv. 13-15.

XI

DANGER !

I HAVE made one or two remarks already on the subject of changes which are taking place, and will take place in your body just as they do, from time to time, in your mind. Those remarks were all leading up to this talk in which I want to explain more fully the nature of these changes and how they will affect you.

It is going to be a difficult talk to give you, because we all have that natural "shyness" which always comes to the fore when such subjects are given even the barest mention, except in low company when they are discussed in a shameful manner by shameless people. And so I will ask you to throw off, just for the time being, at any rate, that shy feeling and look more closely and in the right spirit into these wonderful transformations and revolutions in your body and the effects which they have on your outlook on life in general.

They are all, more or less, trials for you, and you can rise triumphant above them or you can let them shove you down with your face in the dust. They will make you or break you bodily and mentally; it lies with you which it is to be.

1. The years from fifteen to twenty-five or so are the most dangerous of your life. It is during this time that you are really forming or deforming your character and your physique, and what you are now you will be in after life to a very great extent. When you were very young indeed your idea of the world and everything in it was good, except, perhaps, yourself when you were sent to bed early or spanked for something or other. That was Adam's idea of the world, too, before he tasted the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now, like Adam, you are to taste of that fruit, and you are to discover that there is much evil in the world. It comes as a great shock, especially when the evil begins to come near and you see it face to face and there is no disguising it. You discover that good and evil exist together everywhere, and that evil exists where you never dreamed that it could exist. You are no longer innocent. That does not mean that you are guilty, but that you are no longer ignorant of evil.

It is this discovery that sin is inevitably mixed up with all good things in the world, that everything is stained in some way, which helps to make this period of your life a particularly trying one. To find that some things which you have always believed to be clean and beautiful are befouled and ugly

must necessarily be a great trial to you. Believe me, you can only surmount this ordeal and come through it triumphantly by one way, and one way alone. You must believe steadfastly in God's power over evil things and that, in the end, they will work together, by some means which God alone knows, for good. And by that faith in Him you will realise more and more that the good things, the true things, the clean things of this world are the eternal things and that evil is only for a time.

2. You know, and have known some time, that out of your life will grow the lives of those who come after you; that in your body God has placed the marvellous power of reproducing life. As this power develops in you, as it must do before you can use it, its development must be accompanied by important and marked changes both in your body and in your mind. The outward changes in your body will be confined to the breaking of your voice, the growth of hair on your face and limbs, and the general development of your bodily physique. These changes which are beginning now to make themselves felt will probably not be fully completed until eight or ten years after, but you will feel them most at your present age because of the suddenness of them.

The changes which are not obvious to other

people's eyes are the most trying, and it is about these that I want especially to talk to you. You will feel that fresh energy is being poured into you, that hot blood is running through your veins, and that your limbs are possessed of a strength which is new to you, and with it all, perhaps, will come an oppressive sense of "shyness" which is usually called self-consciousness. You feel that you must do something with this new-found strength of yours, that you must give the energy which is overflowing in you some channel of escape. You have energy before you know how rightly to use it, and that is dangerous. You must have an outlet for it, and the outlet must be a healthy one. That outlet is provided by games and athletics and hard work in fresh air. Be careful, however, not to overtax your strength; it is not quite so easy to remedy as a broken limb; you may take years to mend, or you may never mend at all.

With this pouring-in of vitality that self-consciousness will make itself apparent sooner or later. You begin to feel that you cannot make yourself conspicuous in any way without going red and making yourself feel an awful fool. Your arms and legs are always in the way when they are not wanted. You think that everyone is closely watching everything

you do. It is all very trying for you, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, and people who have been through the same thing will sympathise with you in their hearts. The only remedy for that feeling of shyness is to try to make yourself realise that you are *not* being watched, and that not one-third of the interest you imagine is being taken in you. You are not as important as all that. Do not avoid the company of others because you feel afraid of it; associating with other people will do more to help you through than anything else will.

With these changes in your body there will come—and it is only natural that it should come—a great curiosity about yourself. You want to explore the hidden ways of your body, to know what it all means, to find out everything about yourself. That curiosity may be fatal if it leads you on to experiment with yourself, and to taste new sensations and to discover new things which God does not mean you to discover, at any rate yet. Parts of your body are crying out for investigation, and you feel an almost overwhelming desire to investigate them to the full. Let me say with my whole heart, for your sake, for your parents' sake, for the sake of those to whom you will give life when you reach manhood, for God's sake Who gave you the power of sowing the seed of life, do not let that desire overwhelm

you. It will be dreadfully difficult sometimes not to let it, and you can only prevent it from doing so by giving your abounding curiosity some clean channel to run along. Give yourself healthy things to think about, healthy things to do. Read decent books. Play decent games. Associate with decent people. Have a decent hobby. Anything, to stop that overmastering inquisitiveness about yourself from getting a hold on you which will be like a grip of iron. You may not be able to shake it off for many years ; perhaps never. If your curiosity is given a chance to run along the wrong road it will lead you on from bad to worse. It has been the means of crippling men in body and soul. It has been the cause of unmentionable suffering, endless suffering, often of innocent people. Turn your inquisitiveness to things which it cannot harm—to science, to the study of nature or literature or religion, or some of the myriad other things which are crying out for investigation and interest. There are still countless things to be invented, innumerable things to be discovered in nature and the world of science.

Later in life it will be your very great privilege, I hope, to discover that there is someone you feel that you cannot live without. You will discover your love for the right girl, and you will indeed be blessed of God. Has she not a

right to expect you to come to her sound and whole in mind and body ; unstained with the foulness which evil curiosity must bring ? Keep away, then, if you think—rightly—that it would not be “cricket” to give yourself to her anything but undamaged and healthy—keep away, I say, from other “affections” for things altogether unworthy of you. You can so pander to your senses at this period of your life that when you reach manhood’s estate you will be quite incapable of the only affection worthy of the name, and you will miss one of the greatest glories and happinesses which this life can hold for you.

Keep a grip on yourself, on your actions and your thoughts : you can think yourself into the blackest hell as well as walk there, you know. Look for the right kind of knowledge in the right places. That is the secret of health and strength and of keeping yourself from growing old before your time. Those changes which are taking place in your very nature will be changes for the good if you treat them in the right way, and make use of the outlets which God has provided for you in this wonderful world that curiosity and bodily vigour may be satisfied as they should be.

Deeper knowledge of life’s mysteries will come to you later—it will come to you as a

great river, surging upon you and bearing you along with it. Be careful that it comes from the proper source, the high mountain springs of wise minds which know how best to give it to you. Do not look for it in the dirt and scum of the earth, where you will find knowledge, certainly, but the knowledge which will destroy you, body and soul. God will give you that knowledge through the mediums which He has chosen. Remember that the Tree of Knowledge may not be the Tree of Life, but of Death.

Finally, try to make up your mind to the fact that all of us, parents, masters, doctors, clergy, friends, are here to help you in this hour of difficulty and trial. We have all been through the mill ourselves, and we can sympathise. We can do more—we can help, but only if you will let us. Do not be afraid to go to your father or your doctor or your house-master and tell him quite straightly if you find that you are in difficulties, that you are nearly going under. How can we blame you for it? How could we do anything but sympathise and hold out a ready hand to pull you out of the quicksands? We are all so anxious that you should grow up decent *men*, clean *men*, gentlemen.

XII

ONE OF MANY

Do you realise what it is to be a citizen of the British Empire? You have a love of hard, firm facts and figures, so I will give them to you. Out of the eighteen hundred and fifty millions of people in the world today, nearly a quarter (four hundred and fifty millions, to be more exact) are citizens of the British Empire; and only sixty millions of those are whites. Sixty million people have to govern four hundred millions—think of it! And you are going to be one of those sixty millions.

Can you realise what an enormous task that is? Do you know that the area of the land on which these people live is nearly fourteen million square miles? Perhaps these figures will come home to you more fully when I tell you that it would take you four days and four nights—counting as fast as you can, with no intervals for food or sleep or anything else—to count up to one million!

I do not propose to go into the question of how this mighty Empire was obtained; that you can find in your history books if you do not know it already. Some of the ways in

which we got it do not shine too brightly when brought into the light of day; others are beyond praise. Most of the stories of Empire history are those of men who showed tremendous grit and tremendous patience: of small beginnings and vast endings: of slow building, but steady building, by which each pioneer left behind him a greater inheritance for his successors. And the result of that has been that one quarter of the whole world looks to us for government.

At present you have nothing much to do with responsibility in any form, except the responsibility which belongs to every boy of keeping himself a gentleman. But what responsibility you have now, of any kind, will increase as the years go by, and as you show yourself more capable, more reliable, more trustworthy. Soon, I hope, you will become a prefect. There are prefects and prefects, as you know. See that you are the right kind of prefect. It is so easy to abuse power of any sort when it is given to you, and yet it is quite easy to use it wisely. See that you are an Anti-Smut, Anti-Swearing, Anti-Cheating, Anti-Smoking prefect, and a Pro-Discipline, Pro-Decency, Pro-Authority prefect, too. There is so much that you will be able to do to make your school a worth-while place to which parents need not hesitate to send their, as yet,

innocent sons. Make it your ambition to help to make the school the finest in the world, not only in work and in games, but in *tone*—morally. It is that which counts.

But you must make yourself fit to have the responsibility of having power over others. You must practise—and practise most faithfully what you preach. The force of example is one of the most powerful forces in the world; it begins as a leading-force and ends as a driving-force, and it can drive downhill or uphill, whichever direction the wielder of it may choose. Set your example, your brave example, and see that it is followed—that is the secret of the whole business, whether you are a prefect or a prince.

So we come back to the responsibility which is now unfolding its wings, but which will be fully fledged when you leave school: the responsibility which will, which must, be part and parcel of your possessions in the years to come: the responsibility attached to you as a citizen of the British Empire. Strife and bloodshed and many an uneasy conscience have been the reward of men who have neglected, or who have not recognised, that great responsibility.

Those four hundred million people present a tremendous problem, an astounding, fearsome task. The problem of the right way in

which to govern them : of the wise method of developing, to their fullest extent, the lives of these people, of uplifting them to higher and nobler things, must be faced by every single member of the Empire ; by *you*. Not many more than a hundred million out of all the four hundred and fifty millions can speak English ; their religions differ as the sun from the moon. In India alone there are Hindus, Muhammadans, Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Parsees, and Animists, all of them with different conceptions and ideas of religion. In India alone there are about two hundred and twenty extraordinarily different languages. Can you realise a fraction of the responsibility attached to bringing all these under one rule ? We have before us the task of keeping them quiet—and it has occasionally been much more than we could manage—of governing them wisely, of advancing their civilisation, of bringing the glorious light of the knowledge of Christ to them in their darkness. That is the task which lies before you : the care and charge of four hundred millions of bodies and minds and souls.

How are you fitting yourself for this responsibility ? That is an appallingly serious question. By turning your face to the wall and saying, “ Oh, let others do it ! I can't be bothered.” What would happen if everyone

did that? Revolution, chaos, destruction. Or by making up your mind now to help to supply England's great need for *men* by being a *man* yourself?

Take some interest in things which are going on all round you. Not in the latest murder case, or what won the Derby, or the "literary" scum of news which appears in the columns of almost every newspaper; but in events of national importance, of historical importance, events the inner knowledge of which may help you to develop a right judgment between important things and trivial ones. The ignorance of some boys—even men—is often petrifying. One of the worst cases I have ever met was that of a boy (aged fifteen) who actually did not know (and did not appear to care) the name of the reigning King of England! I am quite sure that his ignorance is not yours. I hope not. But it serves to show to what depths ignorance can descend. I have a very vivid picture before my mind's eye at the moment of the blindness of some people during the Great War. Some of them did not even know anything much about it. I asked a boy one day if he had heard what was happening at Cambrai, and he stared at me as if I was mad. So I made a point of asking various people the same question just to see. Net result—out of fourteen people

only two had heard, even, of Cambrai, never mind what was happening there! One of them went so far as to tell me that "this bally old war" did not interest him! It was hard to believe that, when hundreds of thousands were bleeding out their lives to keep his rotten, flabby body safe. It would have interested him, perhaps, if he had had a father or a brother fighting out there. But he had not, so it did not interest him. Do not let that sort of thing grow on you. There are things happening every day which are of the greatest interest, and of vital importance to you and to everyone.

What are you going to be? You may think this a premature question that I am asking you before you have had time to make up your mind about it. Perhaps so. But I am asking you that question as a warning against making up your mind *too late*. I want to warn you, too, against setting too high a value on yourself and your capacities. It is always a good thing to have high ambitions in any walk of life; but do not attempt to fly too high. Every boy cannot become an analytical chemist, or a statesman, or a doctor, or an electrical engineer; it is just as well so. The world does not want an overflow of any one profession. If you think because you can take a motor bicycle to bits or because you "like

chemistry" (which usually means that you like gossiping with your neighbour when you ought to be doing an experiment!) that you are thereby marked out to be an engineer or a chemist, you think wrongly. They mean more than that: a great deal of hard, honest work, a vast amount of drudgery, and fierce competition. Be content to fill your vacant niche in the world's scheme, however lowly it may look in the world's eyes. However high the top-most stone in a spire, there must always be some at the bottom to support it. It is no uncommon thing to see in advertisement columns a notice to the effect that someone wants a "cushy" job, one in which no great effort is expected or required of him. Beecher once had a letter from a young man who wanted a job like this, and he answered it as follows: "If you wish an easy berth don't be an editor. Do not try the law. Do not think of the ministry. Avoid school-keeping. Let alone all ships, stores, shops, merchandise. Abhor politics. Don't practise medicine. Be not a farmer nor mechanic; neither be a soldier nor sailor. Don't work. Don't study. Don't think. None of these are easy. Oh, my friend! you have come into a hard world. I know of but one easy place in it, and that is the grave!"

Though a railway now runs over Niagara,

and the bridge which carries it across is a mighty monument to engineering, there would be no bridge and no railway had not a kite first flown over the river taking with it a rope, the rope a wire, and the wire a cable. Whatever you do, do it well; see that you are the best man on the job, not in your own opinion, but in that of those for whom you work. That is the part you must play in this great business of life.

If I were a cobbler, I'd make it my pride
The best of all cobblers to be.

If I were a tinker, no tinker beside
Should mend an old kettle like me.

But whether a tinker, or whether a lord,
Whatever my station may be,
Determined to play second fiddle to none,
I'll climb to the top of the tree.

Let who will be second, the first I'm determined to be.

And with one man as you must become, if you view these matters in the right light, and with some more men like you, the whole problem of Empire is going to be solved. A great deal has been done by your fathers and their fathers before them; the whole mighty Empire was built up without you, remember that. But the building is far from being completed, like a house with no roof, and you are being called upon to complete it by those who are passing on. Do your bit, and the rest will follow.

XIII

H O M E

I THINK that I am fairly safe in saying that there is no schoolboy in the world who does not experience some delightful thrill at the thought of approaching holidays, and that thrill lasts after school days. It is one of the things which you have in common with your elders. They may be very fond of their jobs, they may be heart and soul in them, but they welcome holidays with open arms, and the "holiday spirit" breathes new fire and vigour into their lives.

You may be intensely fond of your school—I hope that you are—yet you long for the holidays, and count the days until they arrive. No more work! No more hard-and-fast rules, almost countless in number! Home food! *Home!*

It is a small word, that last, but think of all it means. It is not only the four walls, and the roof over them, but the spirit of love and sympathy of family life. It is a wonderful word, a "trunk" word, packed full of the most

delicious and delightful meanings. Holidays ! They will soon be here again.

How are you going to spend them ! How have you been in the habit of spending them in the past ? Do you make your parents feel sorry or glad when they are over ? Do you try to break away so far from school rules and school routine that you break away, too, from your parents' wishes ?

I have dwelt before on what your parents are to you ; what they have done for you. They brought you into the world, they watched over you when you were too feeble to do anything at all for yourself. They made you their one care and anxiety ; watching always, expecting always, hoping always that they were going to make a decent man of you ; praying God, night and day, that their ambitions for you would be realised. That is their highest ambition for you, not that you should be a great statesman or scholar, with a whole alphabet of letters after your famous name, but that you should be just a gentleman in all senses of the word.

They have done, they are doing, and they will yet do all in their power to make you one. Their disappointed hopes (and they have had many of those) have been bitter, but they have always, in their great love, risen above

them. You can wound them, but never defeat them.

And your Mother (she deserves a capital letter)—what of her? Is she not the most wonderful, the most unselfish, loving person in the whole world? Of course she is, and you would be blind indeed did you not see that: you would be a fool did you not believe it. There is no one on earth to equal your Mother! You may have money, you may have friends, and all that you think any boy could need—but what are any of these things compared with that priceless possession, your Mother?

If you will, you can make her one of the great safeguards of your very being. If you can make a firm resolve—and keep it, too; holding on to it like grim death—that, come what may, you will never do anything which you would be ashamed for her to see or to know, then you will, not once but many times, be saved in your hours of danger.

You love your parents: you must love them; there can be no two questions about that. Then let that love for them be some sort of a curb on you and your wishes during holiday time. What is the use of love if it is the kind which exists only in words and not in deeds? Word-love and deed-love are

vastly different things, as different from each other as brag from real courage; anyone can talk and talk and talk, but "do" is the testing word, and many talkers are shown up in their true colours when that word is mentioned. Words do not cut much ice in this world.

Holidays are a great chance for you to try to return a little part of your parents' great love for you; though no greater a chance, of course, than term-time. Next holidays—

1. Think of other people besides yourself. You are by no means all-important, and home was not made expressly for you to the exclusion of the comfort of your parents, your brothers and sisters (if you have any), and servants. Try to give as little trouble and to make as little work as possible. Consult your parents' wishes about the little things of your life at home as well as about the big ones. Be cheerful and willing to do little things which you do not like doing. You have no idea, until you try, what a tremendous difference this makes, and what an effect it has on the happiness of your home life. This cheerful and unselfish outlook will give your parents unspeakable joy, and you yourself will get all the more enjoyment out of the holidays.

And mind your manners. Good manners

have a charm all their own and are of priceless value. "Manners makyth man,"* and it is sometimes very evident when a man has been made by his manners or unmade by his want of them.

I do not mean table manners only, though to eat in a respectable manner and to behave yourself decently at meals must be included in any code of manners. (You may get out of the way of table-manners at school; do not forget them at home, anyhow.) But you must treat the womenfolk of your household as you would any others you meet outside it: as a gentleman should. Above all, be chivalrous to all women. I have known boys who, just because the women belonged to them (so to speak), treated them rottenly, shamefully, in a way they would never have dreamed of doing or dared to do with others outside their family circle. I have itched to kick them hard, as I almost *felt* the agony of mind caused by their beastly treatment. Do not be one of them. Chivalry is part of the essential equipment of every gentleman, for he realises not only the vital importance of women to this world, but also all that is due to them and to their amazing character and nature. He is full of admiration for women as a class, full of

* William of Wykeham.

sympathy with them, full of loyalty to them, full of reverence and respect for them. "The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink together."*

2. Give your parents your full confidence. Tell them all about the things which concern you; about the things which matter to you, not gossip and irresponsible twaddle. The habit of keeping everything to yourself, of making a mystery and a secret of it, is a most dangerous one. No one is more interested in all which concerns you than they; no one is better able to give you really helpful advice and help and sympathy about the thousand difficulties and troubles which are always cropping up. No one is better able to share in your triumphs, your successes, your happinesses than they, and no one is more eager to do so. Give them the chance. Make friends of them. You will never regret it, but rather the memory of home will be all the sweeter in the years to come when those who are making a home for you have passed on.

* Tennyson, *The Princess*.

XIV

CHAPEL

IF you have read as far as this I can well imagine your look of disgust as you see the heading of this chapter! I nearly gave it some other name in order to be sure that you would read it; but then I decided that it would be better not to disguise the subject, for I thought that if you had read as much of the book as this you would, perhaps, just finish it. You might as well do so, you know!

But, "Here's this fellow," you say; "he's been jamming in no end of pi-jaw all the time, and now he's starting in on chapel. As if we didn't have enough of chapel as it is without this piling on." Yes. I can understand your feelings about "pi-jaw," as you call it, and as I, too, called it not many years ago. But you will notice that I make no apologies. Go where you will, you cannot, even if you wanted to, get away from God. And a good thing, too; for without God this world and man in it would be like a ship without a helm, driven by the storm to a terrific crash on the

rocks. God has "cropped up" in these talks of mine because God must always "crop up" wherever you go, whatever you do. Right and God are inseparable. All the beauty of this world and the fine things are God in various forms; He is behind them and in them and part of their very nature.

How you hate the very mention of the word "pi"! And why? Because it is associated in your mind with long faces, stiff collars, long sermons, wailing hymns, and a very stern code of laws which seem, sometimes, to leave you no scope for pleasure of any sort! A person who is "pi" has an uncomfortable habit of saying exactly what he means, and of doing things because they are the right things to do, whether others do them or no; and, perhaps, of letting you know that he disapproves of your "pet" pleasures, unless he is afraid to do so, in which case he is one of those whom Christ called hypocrites. So religious people have been catalogued by you in the class of people who go to church a lot, and who read revoltingly dry books with ghastly titles, and who are always intensely solemn and rarely see a joke. You have looked on chapel as one of the necessary nuisances of school life in company with prep. and P.T. (physical training or gym., if you do not know it as P.T.).

Perhaps, occasionally, a chapel service occurred during school hours ; then it was not so bad, but “ pretty putrid ” at the best of times.

It is one of the saddest things on this earth, this view of all things connected with religion. It is a spirit which is doing much to influence young people towards the worst things, to make them as they were never intended to be. Religion as it really is, and must be, can be described in nine words: *God is your Father and men are your brothers.* That is all there is to it. There is no “ soft-soapishness ” about it at all. If you can be religious it merely means that you treat God as a father and men as your brothers, and that you will be one of the finest men living just because you do so. Religion will be no longer a tedious thing confined to Sundays and Saints’ Days, but it will continue through Monday and Tuesday and all the rest of the week. There will be no putting it off and on with your best suit and stiff collar.

Try to get hold of that meaning of religion as a live thing and not a deadly dull one ; try to realise that it is as necessary to your life and its happiness as good food and warm clothing, and you will discover a revolution in your ideas of God and your chapel. He will no longer be the vague, mysterious Being Who is

spoken of by some with bated breath, by others with obviously affected reverence, and by others still with a singular disregard of any reverence or decency whatsoever. He will come very near to you indeed, so near that you will feel the thrill of being able to get into close touch with Him through your prayers, and perhaps the unspeakable gift of the answer of His Holy Spirit within you will come into your heart as you talk to your Father.

Do not allow the meaningless phrases which some people are accustomed to use when they talk about anything connected with God to hide the real meaning of religion from your eyes. They do not always understand those phrases themselves. Boiled down and made clear, they all mean merely that God is in you and all round you. I once heard a school padre talking to his boys (as a matter of fact, I was one of them) about "Divine Immanence," and a very puzzled look appeared on all our faces! We all thought, probably (I did, anyhow), that "Immanence" meant something awful, whereas it just means that God lives within you and is part of you. How simple that is!

You must remember that you consist of three things: body, mind, and soul. Each of these has its effect on the other two, according to the

way in which it is treated. If you ill-treat or misuse your body your mind will suffer, and your soul will become tarnished. Abuse your mind by putting it to uses for which it was never meant, and you will hurt your body and taint your soul. Shut out your soul from God's Presence in it, and your mind and body will become worthless and useless. You *must* realise this. I have tried to impress it upon you all through these talks because it is the keynote of life as it should be lived and as it must be lived.

You must remember, too, that your soul is the noblest, the most important part of you. It is your internal power, the Divine power which has been given to you, and which is given to every man when he is born into the world. It is the only part of you which will not perish ; your body, and the mind or brain which it holds, will die and rot and become as dust, but your soul will live on through all Eternity. Can you realise what eternity means ? For ever and ever ! What you make of your soul in this life will go on for ever and ever ! It is an appallingly serious thought, that ; and it is of no use to shirk the issues.

You do school-work and read decent books in order to exercise and keep fit your mind ; you do gym. or P.T., play games, and run in order

The nature of electricity is not known, but it is used in many ways. It is not necessary to know what it is in order to use it. A car is entirely dependent on it to explode the petrol gas in its cylinders, and there would be no running without it. In the same way, you have no power at all of yourself. Try to realise that. Your source of power is something outside you which acts with what is inside you. That Source of Power is every bit as mysterious as the electric spark and yet just as real and essential. That Source of Power is the Holy Spirit of God.

Life is not just a struggle to avoid running back. It is a harnessing of the Power to go forward. Most of the commandments and the laws of men (both written and unwritten) say, "You must not do this and that"; but those laws are negative things. Something more is needed for Life in its fullest sense, something *positive*, and that is the Power of the Spirit of God operating within you. It is all a much simpler matter than many people would have you believe. It is just this: You cannot move of yourself; you must have help; that help is at your service; it is God's Holy Spirit.

The Sacrament of Baptism is the first switching on of the Power, and you start in bottom gear along the Road. So you progress, and

your change into the next gear comes with Confirmation. Finally, you change into top gear, and this normal straight driving is your life as a Communicant after Confirmation.

But remember this: just as your life can make no progress towards its Goal without the Power of the Holy Spirit, so can that Power do nothing for you while your gear lever is in neutral. To expect the Divine Power to do everything without making any movement yourself, and while you merely sit still and hope for the best, is simply racing your engine and harming your car.

Do not fall into the error that so many people are making today and made yesterday too. They think that a healthy body and a good brain make a man, and that those are the things by which a man should be judged. They continue to believe it, even when events give them the lie. Even as I write, in one of our convict prisons a man is lying under sentence of death. He was so strong that he could lift a car without a jack; he was so clever that he had invented a system of keys which could open every ordinary lock and three-quarters of all the safe-locks in England. But with all his colossal strength of body, with all his ingenuity of brain, he was capable of one of the foulest murders in the history of crime.

“Mens sana in corpore sano” is a good motto, and you have doubtless had it dinned into your ears a good deal, chiefly by men who come down to give away prizes on Founder’s Day or Speech Day. But “Mens sana in animo sano” is a better one, and if you stick to that throughout your life you will be a real Christian.

If you have not yet been confirmed, look forward to it as one of the greatest blessings that it is possible for man to receive. Make it a turning-point in your life. Say to yourself, “God is going to give me His greatest gift—His Holy Spirit. I must give Him myself, my body and my soul, to be His for ever and ever. It is a poor gift, but it is all I have.” And keep to it. And remember that Confirmation is not an end of things, but an upward change to a newer and more glorious life in which you will have His Divine Power to help you to drive *straight*.

If you have been confirmed and have, perhaps, not realised this, do realise it *now*. Make the day of reading this a day to be remembered, a day on which you resolved, God helping you, to begin again.

Confirmed or unconfirmed, there are sure to be rough passages on your Road. That is the way of this life, and the best of people look back sometimes. The car does fail sometimes

and need repairs. There must be breakdowns on the Road.

But to say it is the way of the world is no excuse. You have no one but yourself to blame.

That is the wonderful blessing of Holy Communion. With the Power which it renews in you the repairs can be effected. But you must first know the faults in running, and make up your mind that they must be eradicated. Unless you know them, and are resolved to mend the damage, you will have no Power to drive on. No one else can do the repairs for you but yourself. Nothing can enable even you to do them but God's Holy Spirit, guiding you and helping you, so long as you help yourself.

Let your way along Life's Road be guided by His mighty hand, and take no step without Him.

I know not where the white Road runs, nor what the
blue hills are,
But a man can have the Sun for friend, and for his
guide a Star.

Yes, the white Road is running toward the vast Unknown, and what lies at the end of it depends upon yourself. In the Light of God and His Holy Spirit, and with your eyes upon the Star of Truth, walk valiantly and fearlessly along it.

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