

The Orphans' Friend.

VOLUME II.

OXFORD, N. C., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1876.

NUMBER 3.

CASH AND CHARACTER.

BY REV. WILLIAM ORMISTON, D. D.

Recent events among us have not only pointed many a moral, but have given pathos to many a tale of loss and privation, of personal suffering and domestic distress.

On the one hand, by a sudden financial panic, not a few have been unexpectedly thrown from competence or affluence into straitened circumstances or comparative poverty, and many into real want. On the other, by the firm though tardy administration of justice, some who had long triumphed in a course of iniquity and fraud, have been removed from palaces of plunder to public prisons and penitentiaries; the boasting financiers and arrogant millionaires of yesterday are the branded felons and doomed convicts of to-day.

These concurrent events constrain consideration, and force upon the mind the conviction that to build up a manly character is a wiser and a nobler aim than to accumulate a massive fortune; that a simple manhood crowned with all the virtues of a blameless morality, and adorned with the graces of a living Christianity, is in itself a grander achievement, and a richer as well as a more permanent possession, than a palatial residence, a gorgeous equipage and large investments in stocks. Such a character can neither be imperilled by panics nor dishonored by failures; they can only test its worth and enhance its value. Financial disaster is a searching test and a severe discipline of character. It brings out the latent strength and sterling virtues of the soul, and gives full scope to the exercise of the Christian graces of the heart. Some minerals must be submerged in water ere they become transparent, and exhibit the brilliancy of their hues. So the intrinsic worth and beauty of some characters are only manifested when they are overwhelmed with fortune. Difficulties develop their energies and suffering sanctifies their soul. Thus, while some, crushed by calamity, sink into discouragement or cover themselves with dishonor, many a man on 'Change, and many a woman in the home, have nobly stood the test, and are braver men and better women than before. They have come forth from the trial purer and more powerful for good, with firmer faith in God and larger charity for man. Such losses are gains; and such gains cannot be lost. Cash, the product of anxiety and toil, can be accumulated by few, and guaranteed to none; character, the fruit of experience is equally within the reach of all, and may be preserved in any circumstances as a joyous possession and a mighty power. At the end of the year when stock is taken, accounts settled, and banks balanced, doubtless many find investments unsafe or greatly depreciated, and a sad deficit in the cash account; results which are to be deplored and deprecated, because they imply painful changes in social enjoyments and home comforts,

and restricted means of doing good.

But how stands the account with reference to character, the nobler treasure and more momentous investment? Our real gain or losses for the year can be ascertained only when the question is answered.

In properly estimating the results of any transaction or the returns of any investment of time, or effort, or means, we must, as rational and loyal beings, take into calculation its influence on our character. Has it nurtured in us a purer and larger manhood, fostered a wider and more genial charity, and cherished a loftier and more practical piety? Are we stronger to serve and braver to suffer? Are our sympathies more tender, our devotions more constant and joyous?

All business transactions, trifling or extensive, affect our moral as well as our monetary interests. They should add to our goodness rather than to our gains; and elevate our character as well as increase our credit. The principle of veracity and justice should never be lowered or accommodated to corrupt customs, present policy or "tricks of trade."

Nor can they be so perverted with impunity. Dishonesty, even when seemingly successful, will ever be avenged by deadened sensibilities, a burdened conscience and a feeling of self-condemnation. Business in all its forms, in its regular processes of production and exchange, or in its periodical panics and frequent convulsions which affect the interests of multitudes, and involve in utter ruin the good name and fortune of many, by the excitement and anxieties it creates, by the wild expectations it awakens and the bitter disappointments it brings, is the voice of God in his providence summoning us to the exercise of every noble faculty, of truth and love, of moderation and unworldliness. Happy is he who calmly listens to the voice and learns the lesson well. To all in pursuit of wealth, the experience of the past says, let fear mingle with hope, and let prudence restrain the eager desire of making haste to be rich.

Among the vicissitudes of life, many must expect to record small gains, if not large and ruinous losses in money; and some alas! have made sad shipwreck of manhood; and, bankrupt in character, seek in voluntary exile to escape the legal consequences of their misconduct, or in the solitude of a prison cell find time to bewail their misguided and criminal course; others find themselves richer in moral strength and in purified Christian character, with better disciplined powers, and with larger resources, ready to enter upon the future, both to be and to do more than in the past.

A CITY OF SHELLS.

A city made of shells, do you mean? Yes, and not a small city, but a great capital of Europe, no other, in fact, than Paris, in the eyes of Frenchmen, the centre of the universe.

But I have been in Paris, and I did not see any shells there,—

not even shells of houses such as we have in our American cities! The buildings are very substantially put up,—most of them of limestone.

Stop there; it is the limestone that makes Paris a city of shells. For nummulitic limestone, the kind used in Paris, is composed entirely of the shells of mollusks. These mollusks lived, of course, many myriads, if not millions of years ago, and were not individually visible then, even if there had been men on the earth to behold them.

They were denizens of the sea, and were so minute that they could only have been seen through a microscope. Most of them belonged to the genus of animalcules called *Cerithium*. One hundred and thirty-seven species of *Cerithia* are found in the Paris basin,—that is, the low land surrounding the French capital. The species that are now living, inhabit the sea near the mouths of rivers, where the waters are brackish, so the conclusion is that the Paris basin once had salty water in it.

Not only Paris, but the Pyramids and the Sphinx, in Egypt, are composed of innumerable little houses, which, when their occupants died, became massed into stone at the bottom of the sea.

This limestone is called nummulitic, from the Latin word *nummus*, a coin, because the fossils of which it is composed bear some resemblance to coins, being round and flat. They are also, in size and shape, exactly like lentils, a plant of which the seed is used for food in Egypt. Quantities of the nummulites lie in heaps at the foot of the pyramids, and in the time of Strabo it was actually believed that those were petrified lentils, the refuse of the food of the Israelites when they were engaged in building these gigantic monuments.—*Youth's Companion*.

THE USE OF A LONG NOSE.

The following good story is told of Mozart at the time when he was a pupil of Haydn: Haydn had challenged Mozart to complete a piece of music which he could not play at first sight. Mozart accepted the banter, and champagne supper was to be the forfeit. Everything being arranged between the two composers, took his pen and a sheet of paper, and in five minutes dashed off a piece of music, and much to the surprise of Haydn, handed it to him, saying: "There is a piece of music which you can't play, and I can; you are to give the first trial." Haydn smiled contemptuously at the visionary presumption of his pupil, and placing the notes before him, struck the keys of the instrument. Surprised at its simplicity, he dashed away till he reached the middle of the piece when, stopping all at once he exclaimed: "How's this, Mozart? how's this? Here my hands are stretched out to both ends of the piano, yet here is a middle key to be touched. Nobody can play such music,—not even the composer himself." Mozart smiled at the half-excited indignation and perplexity of the great master; and, taking the seat he had quitted, struck the

instrument with such an air of self-assurance that Haydn began to think himself duped. Running along the simple passages, he came to that part which his teacher had pronounced impossible to be played. Mozart, it must be remarked, was favored, or at least endowed, with an extremely long nose. Reaching the difficult passage, he stretched both hands to the extreme long ends of the piano, and leaning forward, bobbed his nose against the middle key, which nobody could play. Haydn burst into an immoderate fit of laughter; acknowledging he was beaten, he declared that Nature had endowed Mozart with a capacity of music which he had never before discovered.

VALUE OF SLEEP.

It must be remembered that sleep repairs not the vital functions only, but simultaneously those functions which we distinctively describe as mental attributes, and of which the brain is, to our limited comprehension, the organic instrument. The intellectual part of our nature, taking the phrase in its largest sense, is exhausted by its continued exercise, in like manner as the bodily organs, and requires the intermittent periods of repose and repair. If other proof were needed of the great function which sleep fulfills in the economy of life, it may at once be found in the effects which follow the privation of this repair. A single sleepless night tells its tale, even to the most careless observer. A long series of such nights resulting, as often happens, from an over-taxed and anxious brain, may often warrant serious apprehension, as an index of mischief already existing, or the cause of evil at hand. Instances of this kind, we believe, are familiar to the experience of every physician. But here, as in so many other cases, the evil of deficiency has its counterpart in the evil of excess. Sleep protracted beyond the need of repair, and encroaching habitually upon the hours of waking action, impairs more or less the functions of the brain, and with them all the vital powers. This observation is as old as the days of Hippocrates and Artaeus, who severally and strongly comment upon it. The sleep of infancy, however, and that of old age, do not come under this category of excess. These are natural conditions appertaining to the respective periods of life, and to be dealt with as such. In illness, moreover, all ordinary rule and measure of sleep must be put aside. Distinguishing it from coma, there are very few cases in which it is not an unequivocal good, and even in the comatose state the brain, we believe, gains more from repose than from any artificial attempts to rouse it into action.—*Edinburg Review*.

Occupation.

What a glorious thing it is for the human heart! Those who work hard seldom yield to fancied or real sorrow. When grief sits down, folds its hands, and mournfully feeds upon its own tears, weaving the dim shadows

that a little exertion might sweep away into a funeral pall, the strong spirit is shorn of its might, and sorrow becomes our master. When trouble flows upon you dark and heavy, toil not with the waves, and wrestle not with the torrent; rather seek, by occupation, to divert the dark waters that threaten to overwhelm you with a thousand channels, which the duties of life always present. Before you dream of it, those waters will fertilize the present and give birth to fresh flowers, that will become pure and holy in the sunshine which penetrates to the path of duty in spite of every obstacle. Grief, after all, is but a selfish feeling, and most selfish is the man who yields himself to the indulgence of any passion which brings no joy to his fellowmen.—*Ex.*

Better Than Gold.

We often hear little boys telling of the wonders they will do when they grow to be men. They are looking and longing for the time when they shall be large enough to carry a cane and wear a tall hat; and not one of them will say that he expects to be a poor man, but every one intends to be rich.

Now, money is very good in its place; but let me tell you, my little boys, what is a great deal better than money, and what you may be earning all the time you are waiting to be a tradesman or a merchant. The Bible says that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." "A good name" does not mean a name for being the richest man in the town, or for owning the largest house. A good name is a name for doing good deeds; a name for wearing a pleasant face and carrying a cheerful heart; for always doing right, no matter where you may be.

Frightening Children.

Nothing can be worse for a child than to be frightened. The effect of the scare it is slow to recover from; it remains sometimes until maturity, as is shown by many instances of morbid sensitiveness and excessive nervousness. Not unfrequently fear is employed as a means of discipline. Children are controlled by being made to believe that something terrible will happen to them, and are punished by being shut up in dark rooms, or by being put in places they stand in dread of. Children, as far as possible, should be trained not to know the sense of fear which above everything else, is to be avoided in their education, both early and late.—*Ex.*

THE CROOKED TREE.—Have you noticed that tree in the corner of the yard? When very young it was bent down to the earth and imbedded there. It then shot up again, but it is now deformed. The sun may shine, the dew and the rain may fall, but the tree will never be straight. So bad habits once fixed are hard things to root out.