

THE
WORKING-MAN.

BY CHARLES QUILL,

AUTHOR OF "THE AMERICAN MECHANIC."

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P R E F A C E.

IF this little book shall be read with pleasure in the shop of the mechanic, during intervals of labour, or in the evening when work is over, the author's purpose will be in some degree answered. As the title shows, it is an offering to the working-man. The apprentice, the journeyman, and the master-mechanic will here find recreation and perhaps improvement. But it aims not so much at systematic instruction, as to quicken, to cheer, and to amuse.

It is no part of the plan of the work to bring down every thing to the level of the meanest capacity. Were this attempted, it would be lost upon the stupid and ignorant; while to persons of sense and improvement, all that is said will be clear enough, without any such degradation of the style. Even children are offended with the

extreme of forced simplicity; especially as some of them know that if they never hear a hard word, they will never get beyond the easy ones. All our knowledge is gained by mingling things yet unknown with such as are known already. It is thus we learn both to talk and to read. To attempt nothing but what is known, is to shun the water till one has learned to swim. In this persuasion, the author has not scrupled to introduce some things for the special benefit of more advanced readers; as, for example, the short essays on the cultivation of memory. For the same reason, a pretty free use has been made of the stores of English poetry. The working-man, no less than others, has a right to these treasures of his mother tongue, and may enjoy them with the greater freedom, as they require no previous scientific training to make them intelligible.

By some readers it will be seen at once that the following work is a sequel to the American Mechanic; a third edition of which has lately come from the press. The unexpected favour with which that little volume was received, has encouraged the writer to persevere in his endea-

your to afford pleasing instruction to the industrious classes. He has here attempted a book which may equally suit the family and the common school, but with a perpetual reference to such as labour with their hands. To them and to their households it is offered with the best wishes of their friend,

CHARLES QUILL.

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CONCLUSION.

“'Tis the only discipline we are born for;
All studies else are but as circular lines,
And death the centre where they must all meet.”

MASSINGER.

IN the foregoing essays I have touched upon a great variety of subjects, and have passed “from grave to gay,” from entertainment to instruction. There are many matters quite as important which must be left unattempted. But I cannot bring myself to close the volume without a word of counsel upon what is still more momentous than any to which I have alluded. Whatever our calling in life may be, it must come to an end; and however our paths may differ, they will all meet in the same termination. At death we shall be stripped of all our petty distinctions, and despoiled of all our worldly gains.

He must be a very stupid or a very heedless man, who never asks himself what are the probabilities of his condition after death. A prosperous life here does not secure a prosperous life hereafter. The very heathen may rebuke us for our carelessness. Even the deist, if he believes

in the immortality of the soul, must have some solicitude about the nature of that immortality. Some persuade themselves that all men will certainly be happy after death. This is a convenient doctrine for all who wish to enjoy vicious pleasures; but there is too much at stake for any man to adopt it without great consideration, and such arguments as defy all contradiction. It is against our rational feelings of justice, the common judgment of all ages, and the plain meaning of the Bible.

If there is, then, a risk of losing one's soul, can a reasonable man leave the matter unsettled? It has often filled me with astonishment to see men of the greatest foresight and discretion in worldly affairs, so ruinously careless in these. They would not consent to pay a small sum of money without taking a receipt; or to live in a house without insurance; or to lend money without security; knowing that even where neighbours are honest, life is uncertain. But they will hazard their everlasting interests upon the merest chance. No one can predict what a day may bring forth. Death takes most of its victims by surprise. Yet the multitude live from year to year without any attempt at preparation.

The undue value set upon wealth and temporal prosperity, is one great cause of this recklessness. All through life men are in chase of that which perishes as they grasp it. Give them all that their most eager wishes could demand, and you

do not secure them for eternity. But there is a good part which cannot be taken away from them.

No considerate man can reflect on his life, or examine his heart without acknowledging that he is a sinner against God. The whole tenor of the Scriptures speaks the same truth. How am I to escape the punishment due to my sin? This is the great question, on which every one ought to have some settled determination. He is not a wise man, who lies down at night without some satisfactory hope that sudden death would not ruin his happiness.

The great truths of the Christian religion lie within a small compass. There is an agreement among all the conflicting sects of evangelical Christians as to a few cardinal points. They are such as these: that by nature men are children of wrath; that God will punish the impenitent; that we must be born again; that without faith it is impossible to please God; that he who believeth shall be saved, and he who believes not will be condemned. Further, the faith which saves us, regards chiefly the Lord Jesus Christ; that he is the Son of God; that he became man for our salvation; that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree; that he rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven; and that we are justified by faith in him. He who believes thus, and manifests this belief by corresponding works, is a true Christian.

There is reason to think that infidelity is on

the wane in our country. About the time of the French revolution, the impious falsehoods of Voltaire were making havoc among our youth. 'This arch-infidel once predicted that in twenty years the Christian religion would be no more! Those who were deceived by him found nothing but disappointment and wretchedness. Learned, witty, and applauded as he was, he had less real wisdom than the poorest and most ignorant Christian widow.

"She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit;
Receives no praise; but though her lot be such,
Toilsome and indigent, she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
O happy peasant! O unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
He praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half a mile from home:
He, lost in errors, his vain heart prefers,
She, safe in the simplicity of hers."

THE END.