And yet the picture moves the inmost mind,
Faithful to gloomier epochs of our life:
Moves it more deeply, painting with such power
A dark and painful hour
Of inward solitude, of mental strife.
O God on high! thy love, thy grace alone
Can cheer that dismal day
Its desperate doubts and torturing thoughts dispel,
The Skeptic's bitter Hell!
He who to tell such inward agony
This frowning picture planned,
Must have possessed a spirit deep and high
Joined to a master's hand.

ALLSTON'S ITALIAN LANDSCAPE.

Look forth, my love, once more
Upon a fairer scene,
Than Greece's heights, than Paestinipo's shore,
Or Vallambrosa's shadows thick and green.
See that half-hidden castle sleeping
Mid leafy, bowery groves,
A soft effulgence all around it creeping,
Like that which glances from the wings of doves
In light, uncertain motion.
And on the blue horizon stretching far,
Amid the wide spread ocean,
Rises a mountain pure and pale as evening's earliest star.

Rough with no frowning storm:
This tranquil hand which so rude shapes deform,
From all harsh contrasts free:
This grace, this peace, this calm unchanging life
Belong not to our world of sin and strife.

No! not to outward earth
Belongs such peace as this:
Yet to the heart of man, an inward birth
Given equal bliss.
When childhood's happy day
Of faith and hope is over,
And those sharp pangs have passed away,
When the cold ray
Of knowledge undermines the heart round which fair visions hover,
Then, then may come a calmer, better hour,
A deeper Peace descend,
Which lifts our spirit to the loftiest Power
And makes our God our friend.

Then Nature sings again a hymn of joy,
And, like a merry boy,
Laughs out each hill, each valley, rock, and tree,
Laughters out the mighty sea,
Broad Earth and hollow Heaven partake the
Spirit's ecstasy.
O, happy artist! whose God-guided hand
This second Eden planned,
Happy to execute this scene thou art,
Happier to find its image in thy heart.

LIFE is an art.
When we consider what life may be to
all, and what it is to most, we shall see how little this art is
yet understood.
What life may be to all is shown us in
the lives of the honored few, whom we have learned to
distinguish from the rest of mankind, and to worship as
the heroes and saints of the world.
What life is to most is seen wherever we turn our eyes.
To all, life may be freedom,
progress, success.
To most men it is bondage, failure, defeat.
Some have declared all life to be a tragedy.
The life of most men is rightly termed.
What can be more tragical, than after long years of weary watching and
ceaseless toil, in which all the joy and strength of our days
have been wasted in pursuit of some distant good, to find,
at last, that the good thus sought was a shadow, a sham,
that the sum total of our endeavor, with no positive in-
crease has left us minus our youth, our faculty, our hope,
and that the three score years have been a livelong illusion.
This is the great ground-tragedy, in which all other trag-
edies and sorrows and defeatsof man's life are comprised.
Such is the actual condition of mankind.
Look at our educated men.
Of the hundreds, whom every year sends
forth to wander in the various paths of active life, how
many are there who find or even seek the bread that alone
can satisfy the hungering, dreaming heart of man? How
many sell their strength and waste their days and "file
their minds" for some paltry clerkship or judgeship or
The Art of Life.

The Art of Life.

176 senatorship; or some phantom which they term a competence; or at the best some dream of Fame — "ingens gloria cupidio quo etiam sapientibus novissima exuitur" — and find, when the race is done and the heat is won, that they are no nearer than before the true end of their being, and that the great work of life is still to do.

The work of life, so far as the individual is concerned, and that to which the scholar is particularly called, is self-culture,—the perfect unfolding of our individual nature. To this end above all others the art, of which I speak, directs our attention and points our endeavor. There is no man, it is presumed, to whom this object is wholly indifferent,—who would not willingly possess this too, along with other prizes, provided the attainment of it were compatible with personal ease and worldly good. But the business of self-culture admits of no compromise. Either it must be made a distinct aim or wholly abandoned.

"I respect the man," says Goethe, "who knows distinctly what he wishes. The greater part of all the mischief in the world arises from the fact, that men do not sufficiently understand their own aims. They have undertaken to build a tower, and spend no more labor on the foundation than would be necessary to erect a hut." Is not this an exact description of most men's strivings?

Every man undertakes to build his tower, and spend no more labor on the foundation than would be necessary to erect a hut. In all things the times are marked by a want of steady aim and patient industry. There is scheming and plotting in abundance, but no considerate, persevering effort.

The young man launches into life with no definite course in view. If he goes into trade he has perhaps a general desire to be rich, but he has at the same time an equally strong desire for present gratification and luxurious living. He is unwilling to pay the price of his ambition. He endeavors to secure the present, and let go the future. He turns seed-time into harvest, eats the corn which he ought to plant. If he goes into professional life, he sets out with a general desire to be eminent, but without considering in what particular he wishes to excel, and what is the price of that excellence. So he divides his time and talents among a great variety of pursuits; endeavoring to be all things, he becomes superficial in proportion as he is universal, and having acquired a brief reputation as worthless as it is short-lived, sinks down into hopeless insignificance.

1840.] The Art of Life.

Everything that man desires may be had for a price. The world is true to us than we are to ourselves. In the great bargain of life no one is duped but by his own miscalculations, or baffled but by his own unstable will. If any man fail in the thing which he desires, it is because he is not true to himself, he has no sufficient inclination to the object in question. He is unwilling to pay the price which it costs.

Of self-culture, as of all other things worth seeking, the price is a single devotion to that object,—a devotion which shall exclude all aims and ends, that do not directly or indirectly tend to promote it. In this service let no man flatter himself with the hope of light work and ready wages. The work is hard and the wages are slow. Better pay in money or in fame may be found in any other path than in this. The only motive to engage in this work is its own inherent worth, and the sure satisfaction which accompanies the consciousness of progress, in the true direction towards the stature of a perfect man. Let him who would build this tower consider well the cost, whether in energy and endurance he have sufficient to finish it. Much, that he has been accustomed to consider as most desirable, he will have to renounce. Much, that other men esteem as highest and follow after as the grand reality, he will have to forego. No emoluments must seduce him from the rigor of his devotion. No engagements beyond the merest necessities of life must interfere with his pursuit. A meagre economy must be his income. "Spare fast that with gods doth diet" must be his fare. The rusty coat must be his badge. Obscurity must be his distinction. He must consent to see younger and smaller men take their places above him in Church and State. He must become a living sacrifice, and dare to lose his life in order that he may find it.

The scholar of these days has no encouragement from without. A cold and timid policy everywhere rebukes his aspirations. Everywhere "advice with scrupulous head" seeks to debar and deter. Society has no rewards for him. Society rewards none but those who will do its work, which if the scholar undertake, he must straightforward neglect his own. The business of society is not the advancement of the mind, but the cure of the body. It is not the highest culture, but the greatest comfort. Accordingly, an endless multiplication of physical conveniences—an infinite
The Art of Life.

The economy has become the cult, the worship of the age. Religion itself has been forced to minister in this service. No longer a divine life—an end in itself, it has become a mere instrument and condition of comfortable living, either in this earth or in some transmundane state. A more refined species of sensual enjoyment is the uttermost it holds out.

On all hands man's existence is converted into a preparation for existence. We do not properly live in these days, but everywhere, with patent inventions and complex arrangements, are getting ready to live; like that King of Epirus, who was all his lifetime preparing to take his ease, but must first conquer the world. The end is lost in the means. Life is lost in appliances. We cannot get to ourselves, there are so many external comforts to wade through. Consciousness stops halfway. Reflection is dissipated in the circumstances of our environment. Goodness is exhausted in aids to goodness, and all the vigor and health of the soul is expended in quack contrivances to build it up. O! for some moral Alaric, one is tempted to exclaim, who should sweep away, with one fellswoop, all that has been in this kind— all the manuals and false pretensions of modern culture, and place men once more on the eternal basis of original Nature.

We are paying dearer than we imagine for our boasted improvements. The highest life,—the highest enjoyment, the point at which, after all our wanderings, we mean to land, is the life of the mind—the enjoyment of thought. Between this life and any point of outward existence, there is never but one step, and that step is an act of the will, which no aids from without can supercede or even facilitate. We travel round and round in a circle of facilities, and come at last to the point from which we set out. The mortal leap remains still to be made.

With these objects and tendencies the business of self-culture has nothing to do. Its objects are immediate and ultimate. Its aim is to live now, to live in the present, to live in the highest. The process here is one with the end. With such opposite views the scholar must expect nothing from Society, but may deem himself happy, if for the day labor, which necessity imposes, Society will give him his hire, and beyond that leave him free to follow his proper calling, which he must either pursue with exclusive devotion, or wholly abandon. The more needful is it that he bring to the conflict the Prometheus spirit of endurance, which belongs of old to his work and line.

Besides this voluntary abstinence from temporal advantages and public affairs, the business of self-culture requires a renunciation of present notoriety, and a seclusion more or less rigorous from the public eye. The world is too much with us. We live out of doors. An all-present publicity attends our steps. Our life is in print. At every turn we are gazetted and shown up to ourselves. Society has become a chamber of mirrors, where our slightest movement is brought home to us with thousandfold reflections. The consequence is a morbid consciousness, a habit of living for effect, utterly incompatible with wholesome effort and an earnest mind. No heroic character, no depth of feeling, or clearness of insight can ever come of such a life. All that is best in human attainments springs from retirement. Whoso has conceived within himself any sublime and fruitful thought, or proposed to himself any great work or life, has been guided thereto by solitary musing. In the ruins of the capitol, Gibbon conceived his immortal "Rome." In a cavern on the banks of the Saale, Klopstock meditated his "Messiah." In the privacy of Woolsthorpe, Newton surmised the law which pervades the All. In the solitude of Erfurt, Luther received into his soul the new evangile of faith and freedom.

"And if we would say true
Much to the man is due
Who from his private gardens, where
He lived reserved and austere
As if his highest plot
To plant the bergamot
Could by industrious valor climb
To ruin the great work of time
And cast the Kingdoms old
Into another mould."
living much among men we come to ape their views and
faiths, and order our principles, our lives, as we do our coats,
by the fashion of the times. Let him who aspires to pop-
ular favor and the suffrage of his contemporaries court the
public eye. But whose would perfect himself and bless the
world with any great work or example, must hide his young
days in "some reclusive and religious life out of all eyes,
tongues, minds, and injuries."

Whatever selfishness there may seem to be in such a dis-
cipline as this, exists only in appearance. The influence it
would have upon Society would, in fact, be hardly less ben-
eficial than its influence on the individual himself. In self-
culture lies the ground and condition of all culture. Not
those, who seem most earnest in promoting the culture of
Society, do most effectually promote it. We have reform-
ers in abundance, but few who, in the end, will be found to
have aided essentially the cause of human improvement;
either because they have failed to illustrate in them-
selves the benefits they wished to confer, and the lesson they
wished to inculcate, or because there is a tendency in man-
kind to resist overt efforts to guide and control them. The
silent influence of example, where no influence is intended,
is the true reformer. The only efficient power, in the mor-
al world, is attraction. Society is more benefitted by one
sincere life, by seeing how one man has helped himself,
than by all the projects that human policy has devised for
their salvation. The Christian church — the mightiest in-
fluence the world has known — was the product of a great
example.

Every period has its own wants, and different epochs re-
quire a different discipline. There are times when man-
kind is served by conformity; and there are times when
a stern discipline is required to revive the heroic spirit in
a puny and servile age. When the Athenian mind, emas-
culated by the luxury which succeeded the Persian wars,
and corrupted by the mischievous doctrines of the Sophists,
had lost its fine sense of justice and truth; then arose, with
austere front and wholesome defiance, the Cynics and the
Stoics, whose fan was in their hands, and whose lives went
deeper than Plato's words. That the present is a period
when examples like these would not be unprofitable, no one,
I think, can doubt, who has considered well its characteris-
tic tendencies and wants — the want of courage, the want
of faith, the hollowness of Church and State, the shallow-
ess of teachers,

"Whose lean and flashy songs
Grate on their screeched pipes of wretched straw."

the hunger of the taught, who "look up and are not fed."
and the frequent protest, which he who listens may hear
from all the better spirits in the land. The time has come
when good words are no longer of any avail. Book-teaching
has become effete. No man teaches with authority. All
are eager to speak, none are willing to hear. What the age
requires is not books, but example, high, heroic example;
not words but deeds; not societies but men, — men who
shall have their root in themselves, and attract and convert
the world by the beauty of their fruits. All truth must be liv-
ed before it can be adequately known or taught. Men are
anterio to systems. Great doctrines are not the origin but
the product, of great lives. The Cynic practice must pre-
cede the Stoic philosophy, and out of Diogenes's tub came
forth in the end the wisdom of Epictetus, the eloquence of
Seneca, and the piety of Antonine.

On this ground I am disposed to rejoice in those radical
movements, which are everywhere springing up in the discon-
tented spirits and misguided efforts of modern reform. Per-
fectionism, Grahamism, Nonresistance, and all the forms of
ulterior, blind and headlong as they seem, have yet a meaning
which, if it cannot command assent, must at least preclude
contempt. They are the gropings of men who have waked
too soon, while the rest of mankind are yet wrapt in sleep,
and the new day still tarries in the East. The philosopher
sees through these efforts, and knows that they are not the
light that is to come; but he feels that they are sent to
bear witness of the light, and hails them as the welcome to-
kens of approaching day. However our reason may disal-
low, however our taste may reject them, the thoughtful
mind will perceive there the symptoms of a vitality which ap-
pears nowhere else. They are the life, however spasmodic, of
this generation. There, or nowhere, beats the heart of the
century. Thus the new in Church and State is always pre-
ceded by a cynical, radical spirit, which wages war with the
old. Every genuine reform has its preacher in the wilder-
ness. First the Cynic John with hair cloth and fasts, then
the God-man Jesus with the bread of life.

Meanwhile the scholar has his function, too, in this baptism
of repentance. For him, too, the age has its problem
and its task. What other reformers are to the moral culture,
he must be to the mind of his age. By taste averse, by
calling exempt, from the practical movements around him, to
him is committed the movement of thought. He must be
a radical in speculation, an ascetic in devotion, a Cynic in
independence, an anchorite in his habits, a perfectionist in
discipline. Secluded from without, and nourished from
within, self-sustained and self-sufficing, careless of praise or
blame, intent always on the highest, he must resist the
superficial attachments, the hollow pretenses, the feeble ef-
forts, and trivial productions, of his contemporaries, with
the thoroughness of his acquisitions, the reach of his views,
the grandeur of his aims, the earnestness of his endeavor.

It is to such efforts and to such men that we must look for
the long expected literature of this nation. Hitherto our literature
has been but an echo of other voices and climes. Generally,
in the history of nations, song has preceded science, and the
feeling of a people has been sooner developed than its un-
derstanding. With us this order has been reversed. The
national understanding is fully ripe, but the feeling,
the imagination of the people, has found as yet no adequate
expression. We have our men of science, our Franklins,
our Bowditches, our Cleavelands; we have our orators,
our statesmen; but the American poet, the American thinker
is yet to come. A deeper culture must lay the foundation
for him, who shall worthily represent the genius and utter
the life of this continent. A severer discipline must pre-
pare the way for our Dantes, our Shakspeares, our Millers.

"He who would write an epic," said one of these, "must
make his life an epic." This touches our infirmity. We
have no practical poets,—no epic lives. Let us but have
sincere lives, earnest, whole-hearted, heroic men, and we
shall not want for writers and for literary fame. Then
shall we see springing up, in every part of these Republics,
a literature, such as the ages have not known,—a literature,
commensurate with our idea, vast as our destiny and varied
as our clime.

LETTER TO A THEOLOGICAL STUDENT.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was somewhat surprised at the information, that you
had commenced the study of theology; but not sorry, I
assure you. I supposed that you had looked at all the at-
tractions which the study holds out, and had found that
you were made for something else. On that account, I
always avoided saying anything which might look like
tempting you to engage in it; being persuaded that a
taste for our profession must be born in the heart, and not
awakened by any external persuasion or influence. But
now that you have made up your mind to devote yourself
to its duties, I cannot but rejoice with you in your deter-
mination, and wish you the blessing of God on your pros-
spects. You enter on the study with the advantages of an
ardent temperament, a vigorous will, no slight experience
of the world, and, I trust, with a pure purpose of yielding
to the inspirations of your higher nature. With a spirit of
earnest and glowing piety, with a true sympathy with Christ
and with your fellow-men, and with a rational zeal for the
progress of Humanity, the promotion of light, truth, and
joy in the world, (and all these qualities will be more and
more developed, as you go on, if true to yourself,) you can-
not fail of being happy in your studies and in your pro-
fession, should it please God to spare your life to enter it.

I need not tell how sincerely my best wishes are given to
you at this moment, how earnestly I pray that you may be
a faithful student and a happy pastor.

Let me guard you against one almost fatal error, into
which I have observed our young men are too apt to fall,
and that is, the habit of studying in order to find sup-
ports, wherewith to maintain prevailing opinions, rather than
to attain to a clear and living system of truth, which shall be
to the soul what the blood is to the body,—a flowing
fountain of inward strength, and giving beauty, activity,
and the glow of health to every outward manifestation.
You may think the day is past for any fear of this error.
You may suppose that our age and our community are
too free and independent, to present any temptations to
such a course. But I am compelled to believe, that this is