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Biography, "Aphorisms, Epigrams, Witticisms VIII (pp 265-276)" WARE MC14

"It seems wicked not to do as well as one knows how. If one has only one idea, that is the more reason for putting it out at usury and seeing what it will bring".

✕

"On the whole, I think a stroke of luck is more satisfactory than an approving conscience".

✕

(To F.D.S.1900)

"All these things I should like to talk about with you, to find out what you think and also to find out what I think myself, which is the main purpose of conversation".

✕

"Nothing is so pleasant as to find one's private pets turn out public favorites".

✕

"A fault [of design or construction] you can't see without hunting for it is easily overlooked".

✕

"There is something in the mistakes of these we admire that does not altogether displease us".

✕

"I believe the only way [for a traveller] to ^{get} any leisure -of-mind- is to take the opportunity of the first hours in a new place, before its occupations and distractions have been found out".

✕

(Of the Forum and certain other Antiquities)

"And though works of art always assert themselves and excite a real interest, ugly antiquities are merely curious, and like all mere curiosities are simply tedious unless you happen to be in a gushing mood to-them-wards. You do get a new impression, which is worth all it costs; but in general it may be said that you get more satisfaction from having seen them than from seeing them".

✕

"Enjoying things is so much a matter of momentary temper, that it really doesn't make much matter, perhaps, whether you have a good time as you go along or not. It is the after-taste that tells, the cud of sweet and bitter meditation".

✕

(To E.D.S)

"Doing nothing is pleasant enough, but doesn't suffice for a career".

✕

(F.D.S)

"Self-sacrifice per se is no virtue, and is often a vicious form of moral self-indulgence".

✕

(To F.D.S '87)

X "Another thing is to swear off from outside interests and engagements. They not only take time, but what is more, being temporaries and momentary they are peremptory and exacting. I for one shall have to turn over a new leaf".

✕

"If you get so tired that you can't do things in vacation, it spoils the year, for a good part of our work, and what needs the most force of mind, has to be done in the summer".

✕

(To F.D.S)

"One of the big products of making visits is the advantage of reading other peoples' books. Every house seems to have a new set.



(To F.D.S '86)

"Stevenson's screed recalled a phrase of Chauncey Wright's that has long lain in my memory: 'The fragrance and flavor of fruits and flowers are the product of a delicate decay'. This is just the idea. All the charm and beauty of the world is an exhalation from this rotting earth".



(To F.D.S.)

"A good many valuable ideas would occur to you en route. More valuable ideas are what you want, to use every day, and the only way to get them -- for no one knows where they come from -- is to put one's self in the way of them by doing suggestive work".



"There is certainly nothing so charming as a good doctor, ^{and} he never ^{appear} appears in a more amiable light than when he prescribes nothing at all".



(To F.D.S)

"It seems to me more and more that Sickness is the King of Terrors, not Death. The last I can stand for myself or my friends, but sickness is intolerable and almost as bad for other people as for the sick man. To risk health in the performance of one's daily tasks is to put the less important and temporary duty before the all-important one. Sickness that can be prevented is unpardonable. Yet many people seem to think that they are performing a first-class piece of self-denial in getting themselves sick. Don't you do it".

(To F.D.S. Jan. 28, '87)

"Every man is a genius, if he will only be himself, Originality in^s the natural estate. It is constraint, and embarrassment, and distrust of one's self th^{at} lead to imitation and artificialty, and second-hand and second-rate performance".

✕

(To E.H.G. March 24, 1883)

"What you say about one's old life all of a sudden dropping away is, I think, rather a common phenomenon of the flight of time. It is as it is with a train in motion; it seems to diminish iⁿs size not gradually but by spasms. One wakes up from time to time and discovers that, somehow, everything has changed. If this happens at a period of low tide, the effect is rather depressing. But next time it happens that one finds things a good deal better than used to be, old wounds healed, and new vitality set in, and that sets one off again'.

✕

(To E.H.G. July 14, 1886)

"I think of you often, as beginning a new cycle, very much as I did at your age after my year abroad (1866). But do not follow my error in sacrificing your life to the work in hand. It is not the way to save, but to starve it. To work within one's strength, whatever it is, is the only happiness and the only success. Slaves and drudges are trodden under foot of men. They may be the salt of the earth, by nature, but that life takes the savor out of them. Look around and see if it isn't so. Regarde dedans".

(To

✕

(To F.D.S)

"I think my feeling about spelling is that nothing should be done that will attract attention from the matter to the mere form, nothing to interrupt the thought and bring the reader to a sense of the mechanism of

orthography. In this point of view everything unusual is ugly and offensive, and as between two usages I think one is less offended by a suspicion of old fashion than by neologisms, which are always ugly. Literature needs to be treated in an artistic spirit, from the decorative point of view, and scientific consistency is irrelevant and likely to seem impertinent!"



(To F.D.S. July 23, '91)

"We go through the world invisible to ourselves and, for the most part, hear as little as we ^{see} can. But in point of fact we are extremely conspicuous, often very much in the way, and people all the time are making personal comments about us, as indeed we are about them. People who don't like us amuse themselves with what they find amusing, and those who are ever sensitive to our short-comings, lament our limitations, even the necessary limitations of youth and inexperience, and wonder why, being so nice, we don't take pains to be a little nicer. They regret, and we give them too much cause to regret that what they are kind enough to regard as our real selves should so often lie hidden by what seems to them extraneous and 'out of character', though half the time it is really our goodness that is put on and what they object to is the natural man. These regrets, that for the most part they keep to themselves, sometimes, when they care very much, they confide to each other. If by chance one overhears what is said it seems unfriendly. But it isn't, and the criticism, and all the more easily if it is a mistaken one, is to be forgiven, as you have forgiven this in view of the friendly solicitude that prompted it. It requires a little magnanimity; but magnanimity is a fine trait, and we do not often get a chance to exercise it".



"Besides, there is no place where tradition and atmosphere are so easily created as in a school, for there is no place where the generations succeed each other so rapidly, or where each impresses itself more ineffaceably on its successor".



"I think dressing for dinner an excellent institution, tending to put people on their good behavior and best company-manners. I am sure it makes the members of the same family much more agreeable and entertaining to each other than they are in their 'duds'. It is certainly a great relief to visitors, like all forms between strangers."

X

"Talk of the climate of Italy! Italy has a clear air and hot sun, which seem miracles to English folk, and some occasional effects of light and color really surprising. But the air is enervating and depressing to such a degree that I really think there must have been a secular change since the time of the Romans. It is impossible that such an energetic race should have grown in such an air. I enjoyed everything else in Italy very much."

X

One interesting fact was to be observed in connection with the many obituary notices published in the public prints following his death: almost without exception the writers of these notices ascribed to him that rather rare faculty, the possession of a pretty wit, as the older writers, phrase it. It takes a James Russell Lowell to draw the ^{line} acceptably between wit and humor, yet as these notices were generally signed, and as the writer happens to know each of these several witnesses and their real discriminating powers, he has little doubt that the quality ^{they} referred to really was wit and not its more coarsely-bred brother humor. Professor ^{Ware} did possess wit and liked on proper occasion to exercise it. When such occasion presented itself -- he never sought to manufacture one so that he might "get off" some bit of cleverness -- the witticism had birth with entire spontaneity, ^a put to the occasion, clever, neat, polished, witty in short. And it was a gentle and philosophical wit that he cultivated, never caustic, rarely satirical, it had an elusive finish that seemed to make it impossible to recall later just what it was he had said that was so pleasing, so elegantly trivial was it, so evanescently elegant.

He did not disdain altogether the humble pun or the frivolous lim^{er}ick; but even in these there was always a point and polish of expression that ranked them above the average of their class. His enjoyment of wit in others was keen and frankly expressed; no one better appreciated the unexpected topsy-turviness of Lewis Carroll's humor when "Alice in Wonderland" first appeared, to the delight of more fathers than children, for ^{on} when it was

written, and no one more rejoiced over the inconsequentialities of the Peterkin Family, the creation of his friend Miss Lucretia Hale.

Perhaps diligent search amongst letters and enquiring amongst friends might bring to light enough of these jeux d'esprit of his to fill a page or two, but to do so would be to bring them into inevitable comparison with the lucubrations of the professional literary humorist, whose outgivings form one of the most sodden and depressing chapters in the literature of any country. A few samples will serve to show how in play-time his fancy liked to disport itself.

X

"Did I tell you that at Perugia I was joined by the Footes and visited with them the Etruscan tombs? Foote Pere was a little afraid of a chill and found one sufficient, so that in the second I had the experience, so to speak, of going about with one foot in the grave".

X

"I intended to have remarked that I had found the Footes quite hand-in-glove with the Bootts".

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"Mantua is par excellence a fortress, and the railroad is not permitted to approach it,----- The town is almost as desolate as Ravenna, and very unhealthy by reason of the well-known marshes round about. It is irregular in shape and the approaches very crooked, for the same reason, I imagine. You see, the Mantua-makers had to cut their coat according to the cloth".

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"Though all the waiters at the "Adler" [Heidelberg] spoke English and all the other guests were just such, I refused to speak or hear a single word of the kind. I trust I have too much proper spirit to use my own language in a foreign country".

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"Pearce and I spent five hours in the Sistine Chapel, saw the Pope and heard the choir. The name Sistine is derived, I discover, from Sisto 'to stand much'; ~~we were~~ nearly dead before the music began!"

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"I amused myself a week ago with reading a dozen pages of easy Latin poetry, 'Prudentius'. It is very interesting. IV century, early Christian and all that. It is surprising to come across 'Noah', 'Ruth', etc., in Virgilian hexameters! One wonders how a Pagan-born could have learned so much Old Testament".

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"Speculating on the attitude of mind maintained by the faithful, I evolved this, which strikes me as both witty and true and as a fine example of the sort of logical snarl which the Greeks called 'Crocodile'. [The Greeks said; I won't eat you, if you will tell me truly whether I shall or not.] It is this:- 'A good God would never allow his worshippers to believe ^{him} them to be good unless he really was so'. I think this is a perfectly fair paraphrase".

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"It is mere vanity to glorify the impromptu. Besides, the wit of the moment is likely as not a reminiscence of the contemplations of a previous, happier, hour. How foolish is the disparagement of Trollope because he carried the habits of a man of business into his novel-writing; and wasn't Mr. Emerson just as methodical, walking and talking to himself so many

hours a day, and writing it down when he got home, so many other hours?

"Yet repartee is amusing. But so is any wit.

"For example, in the search for an inscription for the new Emerson Hall at Cambridge, some lady suggested: 'Ein Münsterberg ist unser Gott'. She probably thought of it while having her hair done".

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"My own contribution to the gaiety of nations is only this conundrum: How do you tell a locust from a fire-fly? Ans.-- Locust, a non lucendo".

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"So, pray let me know just how things strike you, and remember that I have no feelings, 'Only chambermaids have feelings,' as a friend of mine said to her daughter".

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But his "Fables" are quite another matter, those whimsical products of mental ingenuity which he had a habit of concocting at times when he was convalescing from an illness, times when he began to feel the need of coaxing his mental functions once more to undertake the burden of their normal load. Of these moralities it seems more allowable to introduce a few here.

Treasure Island.

"The stories of galleons founded ^{er} in the Spanish Main could not be verified, and the slender-witted ^e people, who, beguiled by these fancies, have fitted out ships and sailed for ports of which they knew neither the Latitude nor the Longitude, plainly deserve no consideration.

The circumstance that they have come back with cargoes of Gold and Silver does not redeem their folly.

Moral. This Fable teaches that the Cypher Writings which some people attribute to Lord Bacon are not worth reading".

In like manner, as showing a cleverness that was entirely characteristic, there is added the following riddles-

The Oracle.

As nothing was known, all the people had different opinions. But as nobody liked to be unreasonable, or without countenance in his views, they consulted the Oracle.

Then everybody was satisfied.

For, though they could not understand what the Oracle said, everybody was sure that it meant just what he had himself been thinking, and, now that the Oracle was on his side, he didn't care whether anybody agreed with him or not.

MORAL.-- This fable teaches that in religion there is no certitude apart from revelation.

The Impenitent Thief.

"It is true," said the Thief, "as you say, that these things do not belong to me, and that, according to the precepts of a conventional morality, I ought to return them to their owners. But I think you should look at the matter in a larger way. You don't seem to consider how valuable they are, and how much I want them."

MORAL.-- This fable teaches what it is to have an open mind.

The Benevolent Executioner.

"Will you be hanged," said the Executioner, "or burned?"

"Thank you," said the Prisoner, "I should very much prefer to be hanged."

"I'm so glad," replied the Executioner. "I was afraid you wouldn't like it. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

MORAL.-- This fable teaches that the least of two evils is the greatest of blessings.

The Judge.

He thought he should come closer to the hearts and minds of the jury if he laid aside his panoply and met them upon a common footing. Nothing has greater dignity than the simple truth.

But, when he came in without his gown or wig, they hardly recognized him, and he got no more consideration than anybody else.

MORAL.-- This fable teaches what it is to translate the Scriptures into modern English.

The Conservative Uncle.

"Girls", he said, "should not seek the occupations of men. They should stay at home."

"Whose home?" said the niece, "Yours or the home for the homeless?"

MORAL.-- This fable teaches where charity sometimes begins,--sometimes not.

The Fastidious Boy.

"I have tried them both," he said, "Sometimes I have been good, and sometimes I have been bad. On the whole I think I like being good the best. But I don't like it very much."

MORAL.-- This fable teaches that virtue is its own reward.

sons et onces, as he puts it, of the two
schools at Boston and New York,

in detailed reference to the École des
arts, is made in the letter of counsel and
which, at the ^{instance} suggestion of Professor Warren
of the School at Cambridge, he in 1909
sent to Professor Sabine, then Dean of the
Scientific School to which it was
sent. This letter is of such general interest
it is quoted at length.

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