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THE JILTING OF GEORGIE GERARD; OR A BIT OF CEYLON SOCIETY LIFE.

IN 12 CHAPTERS.

BY C. LEWIS,

Formerly of Ceylon.

(Concluded from page 234.)

CHAPTER XII.

The next day was Sunday, and it passed placidly, but Miss Gerard did not appear till the evening, and came in late for dinner, with such a flush on her cheeks that her sister asked anxiously if she were feverish? No, the young lady had been taking a turn in the garden she said; she found her own room hot, and she was quite well now, thank you.

The sisters started betimes next morning for Nuwara Eliya. All the journey then had to be done by road, stopping one night at Kandy, and again if fatigued before they reached the Pass.

Marmaduke would come upcountry for Easter week, and knowing how well he was in health, and what ample provision she had made for his comfort in her absence, Mrs. Le Marchant felt her cares less as she drove away with the attractive young sister from the dangers of K——. She and her husband had had a serious talk over the young lady the day before, and Carrie was bracing up her mind to give Georgie a lecture on the first opportunity. It was not long in coming. About five miles had been covered, the air was fresh and cool; Mrs. Le Marchant had closed her eyes and was in a semi-doze when she was roused by the carriage stopping. A respectable native, dressed like a domestic servant, ran out of a shed by the road-side and put a large bouquet of flowers into Miss Gerard's hands, saying, "Master sent—for young lady."

Georgie bowed her head in acknowledgment, merely saying "Salaams say." Mrs. Le Marchant was on the alert with surprise.

"Georgie! Isn't that Mr. Crawford's servant?"

"Yes," said the girl demurely.

"You knew he was coming then?"

"Yes," still more demurely.

Her sister looked at her sharply. There was an air of suppressed triumph about her, a conscious look of happiness, as she buried her face in the flowers, after having surveyed them carefully. Yes, there was something less white than the flower petals there; something stiffer than the leaves; in fine, the letter she expected from her lover.

"Georgie," said Mrs. Le Marchant appealingly, "I entreat you to be open with me. I only wish I had spoken before and warned you against losing your heart to Mr. Crawford, for he is not in a position to marry for some years to come. Neither Marmaduke nor I would like you to run the risk of another long engagement."

"Who said I had lost my heart to Mr. Crawford? Who said I thought of being engaged to him? If he has lost his heart to me, that is quite another thing; I can't help being not a frump!"

"Then, Georgie, you are flirting with him, and that is far worse. No man would show attentions to a girl if she did not encourage him to do so!" said Mrs. Le Marchant severely.

"How old-fashioned you are in your ideas. Well, if you must know the truth, Mr. Crawford is in love with me; has proposed to me!"

Mrs. Le Marchant sank back in the carriage, feeling numb and cold.

"When, when did this happen? Of all people in the world I thought Lewis Crawford would not have been so reserved towards me, his oldest friend in the island!"

"Last night before dinner," repeated Mrs. Le Marchant in amaze. "Did you know he would be in the garden?" A helpless feeling came over her; to think her sister could make an assignation was unworthy.

"I thought he might be perhaps." There was such an air of aggrieved candour about Miss Gerard that her sister never suspected a particle of the truth, or how the lovers had quarrelled, and made it up again; how many notes the ayah had carried to and fro before the final interview came about.

"And what do you mean to do now? Throw him over, break his heart, and make shipwreck of his life at the outset?" the older woman spoke bitterly.

"Oh! he is going to tell Marmaduke. I like him very much I know; but I don't like him to be so poor."

"Like him! that is not enough! Dear Georgie, I am your sister and stand in a mother's stead to you: will you listen to a little advice from me?"

"Oh! anything you like!" pouted Georgie.

And for a mile or two of the way Mrs. Le Marchant held forth, to unheeding ears. Her words were affectionate and sensible, but they came too late; although had she spoken earlier nothing would have prevented, or averted the *dénouement*!

The girl all the while, though she simulated attention, was going over the scene in the garden again, "He loves me; he loves me."

"I am sure Marmaduke will be very angry," reflected Mrs. Le Marchant, "but he cannot say I did not warn him. Oh! why did Donald not marry Georgie? She would then have been safe, and this fearful responsibility would have been on a husband's shoulders. But Lewis Crawford? Would he suit her? His fine mind contrasted with her girlishly unformed one. Were their temperaments suited? Mrs. Le Marchant only knew of one taste they had in common, and that was music. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! what a care it was to have a girl to chaperon, and here, at the very outset of her upcountry trip, she was assailed by the very sort of danger from which she thought she had flown! Poor, poor Mrs. Le Marchant.

"I have told Mr. Crawford—Lewis, I mean—that I intend to enjoy myself in Nuwara Eliya!" Miss Gerard gave out later. "It is no good his being jealous. Let him come up and dance with me, if he likes; but anyhow, I will dance!"

And in that spirit she carried out her engagement. It was a harassing time for Mrs. Le Marchant. Marmaduke's ineffectual wrath, Lewis Crawford's passionate pleadings, his confidences, his jealousy, Georgie's inconsiderate ways and exacting affection towards him. The brunt of it all fell on Mrs. Le Marchant's shoulders.

The little world of the "city of light," a sociable little world it was in those days, looked on with the keenest interest.

"Would the match come off! Fine girl! Lucky fellow that marries her; handsome couple they will make! He is sure to get on with such interest! 'Family bandy' sort of arrangement, of course! Perhaps she did flirt too much for an engaged young lady, but then, of course, she would give up that, all that, later. She had such high spirits!" So the tongues wagged at "Scandal Corner" and elsewhere, and flirtations, notably with Major Green and a Dr. O'Brien, were matters of local history at the time.

Suffice it to say that they nearly drove Lewis Crawford wild with jealousy, till he bethought him that he too might try the same game. And so he conceived a great admiration for the General's daughter, a fair, quiet little girl, who would have loved him truly had she had the first chance. As it was she escaped with a little heart-ache.

What love alone would not do, jealousy did. And Miss Gerard, in her fear of losing her love, gave up all other amusements to the task of riveting the chains that bound Lewis Crawford to her; and so well did she succeed that after a stormy ten months or so, during which time Mrs. Le Marchant's health began to give way, the marriage took place.

Lewis Crawford's mother gave an unwilling consent to it, and protested at the same time against her son's marrying one of the daughters of Hetb, given up to the vain delights of this world. No blessing would rest on such union.

Caroline hoped and prayed that they would be happy. "Tut, tut! of course they will," said her husband.

And so they triumphantly sailed into the port of matrimony.

There is a view in the island, one of the loveliest I know. It is that which you see from a rest-house not many miles from the sanatorium. After some ups and downs, leaving the fogs and keen winds and cloudiness of the plain behind, you mount by a gentle ascent to the halting place for man and beast.

The English name thereof is tame and inexpressive, but the native name roughly translated signifies "The country beyond," and oh! what a beyond is there, should you but chance to see it as I once did one hour before sunset. There had been heavy showers from the southwest, but these had cleared. A rainbow arched over the near hills, the foreground glowed with a vivid golden green light as in a transformation scene (to compare grand nature with small art). Away towards the right the rolling hill waves lay clearly blue, and yet bluer upon the plain, crowned at last by the purple height of that grand mountain with the unpronounceable-looking name; that mountain which does not yield the palm for lovely grandeur even to Adam's Peak. Somewhere in the horizon glowed a golden streak. It might be merely the lowcountry, or it might be the sea, with its vague possibilities of "the land beyond the sea."

To such a point in their lives had our young couple arrived. There had been storms and showers; there had been foggy weather; tears, doubt and coldness: all these had rolled away. Brightly glowed the landscape painted with love's golden hues. The rainbow of hope was there on the one

hand; on the other, rest and all the glories of the unknown beyond.

And there we will leave them for the present.

LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS CONSIDERED AS AN AID TO SELF-CULTURE.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS TO THE COLOMBO LITERARY ASSOCIATION BY DR. W. G. VAN DORT, PRESIDENT, FEB. 27, 1891.

The subject on which I propose to address a few remarks to you this evening is one which I think the occasion demands. It is at least suggested by the chief purpose for which this Association has been created, namely, the promotion of mental culture. I desire to submit for your consideration the *Right Use and true value of a Literary Association regarded as an agency for the promotion of Culture, and the Right Methods by which we may make it best subserve that end.*

And here I shall assume that the culture we are aiming at is culture of the right sort, if it be not culture in its widest sense. You have, wisely I think, restricted the object of this Society to Mental Culture, to the development I take it of both the intellectual and the moral faculties, which can no more be dissociated from each other than you can separate Philosophy from Literature, or Conduct from Character, but to the exclusion of other forms of culture which, however important, are already provided for otherwise. You do not underrate the importance of Physical Culture, nor ignore the intimate connection which exists between mind and body, but you prefer to leave the cultivation of the physical powers to the special societies already in existence which make that object their special care. In the same way, while admitting the claims of Religion and Science and Æsthetics to your recognition, as aids to culture, you consider them beyond the immediate scope of this Society, and relegate them to the various institutions specially devoted to their interests. In trying to grasp at too many things at once, you may fail to secure any, and so you, modestly and wisely in my humble opinion, content yourselves with limiting the object of this Society to the promoting of mental culture only. And indeed the object is sufficiently extensive, sufficiently important, to demand all your energies, all your time, all your wisdom to compass it. For what is the object of true culture but perfection—the harmonious perfection of all the mental and moral qualities of our nature which each individual has to seek out and bring out for himself?

Now, how far is an Institution like ours calculated to promote this end? To what extent can it aid the self-development of the student towards perfection? Are there any limitations to its usefulness? Any dangers to which we are exposed from its influence? If so, how may we guard against the latter, and how develop the Society so as to secure the fullest advantages from its organization and its special aims?

These are questions of the highest practical importance, and may fitly engage our attention on an occasion like the present; for on the solution we choose to offer them will depend the entire future success or failure (*absit omen!*) of our undertaking.

And here at the very threshold of our inquiry we are brought face to face with two solid facts—facts of an antagonistic and apparently irreconcilable nature—but which we are bound to take into account and reconcile and resolve in some fashion, namely the Association and the Individual Student. On the one hand, we have the Association composed of a number of distinct individuals combined for joint action

towards a common end, and working under the principle of Co-operation, the tendency of which is to subordinate the interests of the individual to those of the Society and to repress individuality. On the other hand, the student, representing in himself the principle of Individuality, and seeking to unfold his nature by means of self-culture, and who by virtue of this principle tends necessarily to react on the society, to disintegrate it into its constituent elements, and to differentiate himself more and more from his environment—his associates.

How are these two principles to be reconciled? How shall we unify the divergent aims, how combine the apparently opposite interests of the Association and the student, or at least bring about a harmonious relationship between the two?

Let us consider each of these principles for a while, and briefly survey their respective causes and effects and modes of operation, and we shall be in a better position to answer the question just propounded. It is a question we need to solve; for on the reconciliation of the associative principle with that of individuality, and to the extent to which, and in the manner in which we bring about their reconciliation, depend the right use and the true value of such an Association as ours—the subject I propose we consider today.

There is not perhaps a more striking feature of the age than its faith in the power of Association, or rather in the principle which underlies all Associations—Co-operation. Every day, wherever civilisation extends its beneficial sway, Associations are formed for almost every conceivable object under the sun. To say that Co-operation is co-extensive with Civilisation is not enough. Co-operation, according to advanced Socialists, is Civilisation itself. Association with equality is the Law of Social Progress, according to Mr. Henry George. To business men it would seem to be the philosopher's stone which transmutes all things it touches into gold, so important a part it plays in the extension of commerce and industrial enterprise, so profitable and so fruitful is it in results. Not a single idea is conceived by any man which affords any prospect of material or moral advantage to any section of society, but an Association is at once formed to develop it. Not a single great department of human thought or activity but is represented in every chief centre of civilisation by one or more Associations with countless branches extending to every part of the globe. What is it that has given this immense impulse to Society to divide and sub-divide itself into innumerable organizations—to carry out all its ideas for the improvement of the human race by means of Associations? Not the mere recognition of the value of co-operation as a factor in the development of civilisation. Co-operation is no new idea. It dates from the very infancy of humanity. It was the lever by which society was raised from the level of barbarism, step by step through all the successive stages of civilisation. At all times, in all ages, man has recognised that union is strength, that joint action is more powerful than individual labour, that the division of labour which co-operation secures, and which even the insects who live in communities are quick to appreciate, is in the long run the truest economy of time, of energy, of material. Hence the schools and sects, the priestly and military orders, the religious and social fraternities, the trading companies and guilds we read of in every chapter of history from the earliest times. To what then do we owe the rapid and wonderful multiplication of Associations at the present day? Partly no doubt to the great scientific discoveries of the age, steam and the electric telegraph especially, and the improved means of communication which have followed in their train. Partly also to

the more rapid dissemination of ideas from the extension of education among all classes and the mighty influence of the newspaper press. By means of these and other similar agencies not nations merely are able to unite and act in concert, but even isolated individuals, scattered in remote countries and belonging to various nationalities. Drawn together by mutual sympathy and mutual interest, they find a common platform for the promulgation and interchange of their ideas, and at once combine to form an Association.

We have but to consider for a moment from what humble and obscure origin some of the most powerful and influential societies of the present day have grown and developed, to recognise the enormous power for good or for evil that resides in this principle of Association.

A mere handful of enthusiasts belonging to the working classes, without funds or resources, grows in the space of a few years into the mighty organisation and immense disciplined force of the Salvation Army, reckoning its soldiers by hundreds of thousands, and boasting of headquarters in almost every principal country and town throughout the globe. It is not merely the influence of some great idea which, finding suitable conditions for its growth takes root and develops speedily into a mighty giant of the forest. It is not only the concentrated action of enormous masses of individuals, animated by enthusiasm, and organised under the influence of discipline and drill, which accounts for the power of associations to grow and develop into such a marvellous social phenomenon as the Salvation Army. A new agency, or rather a new series of agencies, springs up under the influence of the moral forces already mentioned: individual thought and individual activity are brought into play, new ideas start into existence, new powers are developed, with new leaders and new reformers to adopt and utilize them. We see this illustrated in the new departure from the Evangelizing Mission of the Salvation Army. The extraordinary success of the religious propaganda initiated by General Booth has encouraged him to enter upon a new enterprise—a brand new social scheme, which religious leaders of all denominations and social reformers of all shades of opinion have welcomed as the solution of the problem of the age. From the saving of the souls of men he has turned his attention, or rather extended his care to the welfare of their bodies, and his social scheme for the reclamation of the submerged tenth of darkest England—a scheme which he himself repudiated when first suggested to him as inconsistent with or foreign to the object of the Army—has been received with the most encouraging sympathy and support from all classes, and what was once a stone of stumbling and rock of offence bids fair to become the headstone of the corner of an organization which is likely to be even more powerful than that which gave it birth. And thus one agency engenders another, new combinations are formed, new forces created, new auxiliaries enlisted—all due to the magic principle of co-operation working by means of mutual sympathy and division of labor.

It would be foreign to the purpose of my address, which I conceive should proceed by way of indication and suggestion rather than of exhaustive analysis or comprehensive synthesis, and I fear, too, a cruel demand on your patience as well, to attempt to follow at any length the application of the co-operative principle to a Literary Association. I need only state the results briefly and summarily.

In common with all other Associations, it enjoys the advantages of

1. Greater efficiency than is possible from individual and isolated efforts, due to the combination

and concentration of all the available forces of the Society, animated by a common aim and directed to a common end.

2. Greater economy of energy, time and resources owing to the careful distribution and division of labor which forms one of the guiding principles of every well-organised Society.

3. Greater power resulting from the creation of new forces, mainly due to the influence of sympathy and social intercourse on the principle we have yet to consider—the principle of individuality.

With the above advantages secured for it by co-operation and division of labour, a Literary Association such as ours, created for a special purpose, the promotion of culture, should not fail to be

(1.) A stimulant to literary activity. By giving encouragement to every form of creative energy; by inciting the members to literary labours of all kinds, especially to such as involve original research and intellectual study of a high order; by inviting contributions embodying the results of these labours, whether they take the form of essays, lectures, criticism or reviews. Our standard of literary excellence should be high, whether we succeed in reaching it or not.

If the influence exercised by the Society on its members be of the right kind, every individual member should be stirred up by it to engage in some definite, solid form of intellectual labour, according to his individual capacity, and it should be the business of the Society to provide every member with such work according to the mental power and special talents of each individual. I shall indicate at a later stage some forms of productive labour which I believe are not beyond the reach of the most diffident student.

(2.) An Association of this character should constitute itself into a sort of Intellectual Laboratory, wherein each member may find the means and the materials for testing his mental powers and faculties, for purifying his mind from errors, for weighing himself against others, for enlarging his judgment, analysing his natural gifts, and estimating his true value.

From such a course of observation and study, during which he will be brought into constant recognition of the fact that to each man is assigned his share of the gifts of nature, and that these gifts themselves may vary with each individual, the student may, if he be humble and teachable, learn the first great lesson of wisdom, the *gnothi seauton* of ancient philosophy, the self-knowledge which formed the basis of Hellenic culture, which forms the foundation of all true culture. Nay more, such a course of discipline, while opening his eyes to his own imperfections and weaknesses, will teach him at the same time some of the highest lessons of morality, of consideration for the feelings of others, of humility, of toleration, of charity.

(3.) A Literary Association, conducted under proper principles, can hardly fail to be an Instrument of Moral Culture. It cannot fail to be such even when it restricts itself to mental culture in its most limited sense, as we have just seen. But there are all the influences of mutual sympathy and refined social intercourse to be considered, and all the pure delights of an intellectual life, and the chastening effects of mental discipline—but on this subject I dare not enlarge as it is far-reaching and pregnant with ideas, and will need a lecture all to itself to do it justice.

I pass on now to the consideration of the principle of Individuality. Apparently opposed to co-operation, it is really the originator and founder of all co-operative societies, is involved in all associated works, and is essential to its success. If Co-operation gives strength and stability to an institution, it is Individuality that gives it life and vigor and movement.

Individuality! It seems such an ordinary commonplace quality. Only the stamp of character by which one man is distinguished from another. Nothing more, nothing less. And yet it is the key to the secret of man's intellectual and moral development, to the secret of all human greatness. It is the magic wand by which man has conquered nature, and emerged from barbarism to civilisation. Not any race or nation, but the individual who invented the arts and sciences, laid the foundation of political and social institutions, created philosophy and learning. Even our highest virtues, it has been truly said, are but animal instincts transformed by the individual, so that from such brutal instincts as self-love, ferocity and terror, the creative energy of the soul has evoked all the virtues of obedience and courage and prudence, the domestic affections and chivalry and religion. "The difference between one man and another is the proportion in which the animal instincts of his nature have been transformed into moral and intellectual forces." The modifications are infinite. Each individual is a special work, the joint creation of nature and the soul, of the Universe and the Divine spark within him. But no man has a right to the title of individual unless he possesses, unless he be conscious that he possesses, something, be it ever so little, of this divine nature. An individual is the highest production of nature—the finest type of humanity. In the measure and to the extent with which he is filled with the divine principle, the soul, he represents a force, or rather a centre of force through which nature acts, a medium by which she carries out her mysterious purposes, "every quality and pith" of his character

"Surcharged and sultry with a power
That works its will on age and hour."

Individuality may be best understood as character, but it is character with a distinct stamp on it, as its derivation implies—*χαρᾶσσειν*, to engrave—not the vague ensemble of good and bad qualities to which the word is usually applied. Now, character varies, as we know, with each individual in quality, in intensity, in degree. It is both inherited and acquired. It is found "in hearts as well as in heads." It may be rudimentary. It may be even absent, and then we have the characterless personality who is but the semblance of a man. For each man according to his individuality nature provides his proper place and his special duties. "Each man," says Emerson, "has his own vocation. The talent is his call. There is one direction in which all space is open to him. He has faculties silently inviting him thither to endless exertion. This talent and this call depend on his organisation. He inclines to do something which is easy to him, and good when it is done; but which no other man can do. He has no rival. For the more truly he consults his own powers, the more difference will his work exhibit from the work of any other. His ambition is exactly proportioned to his powers. Every man has this call of the power to do somewhat unique, and no man has any other call. By doing his own work he makes the need felt which he can supply, and creates the work by which he is enjoyed. By doing his own work he unfolds himself. The common experience is that the man fits himself as well as he can to the customary details of that work or trade he falls into, and tends it as a dog turns a spit. Then is he a part of the machine he moves: the man is lost. Until he can manage to communicate himself to others in his full stature and proportion, he does not yet find his vocation. He must find in that an outlet for his character, so that he may

justify his work to their eyes. If the labour is mean, let him by his thinking and character make it liberal. Whatever he knows and thinks, whatever in his apprehension is worth doing, that let him communicate, or men will never know and honour him aright.

Individuality, then, is the power which every true man possesses by virtue of a gift from Nature by which he makes good his *raison d'être*, the necessity for his existence, the absolute necessity for his being what he is and where he is, as an agent and instrument in the divine order of the government of the world. Its essence lies not in his outer form, his physical attributes, his relationship to humanity. These constitute his personality only. Individuality has a deeper root, it is related to man's inner consciousness, to the consciousness which every true man possesses of his mental independence, his moral freedom, his spiritual dignity.

It is born with each individual as a vital principle essential to the unfolding of his nature. But it grows and develops in correspondence with the great law of evolution which regulates all growth and all development. This law may be briefly defined as a change from the simple to the complex through successive differentiations and assimilations. Watch the process of development in any organism—a vegetable cell for instance. It begins as a relatively simple structure. Soon this structure divides and subdivides. It takes on more and more distinction and speciality of parts. Next there is a clear differentiation of organ and tissue. Side by side with this differentiation we notice a connection and relationship between these parts and the organism, and between the organism and its environment. In the same way, individuality grows by virtue of its own nature and derives sustenance from all the social and educational influences which surround it. By unfolding its nature under Culture, it differentiates itself more and more from its environment. But just as in animated nature every variation which is not in the direction of greater fitness to the environment is either crushed out in the struggle for existence, or lingers in solitary forlornness as a sterile monstrosity, until its natural term expires, so the individual who cultivates his nature in solitude may acquire independence and originality, but at the expense of his character as a moral being. His independence takes the form of egotism and selfishness. His originality becomes eccentricity, or even perhaps insanity. Hence the need for assimilation to his kind, for entering into various social relationships, for more and more intimate connection with the environment. His individuality now receives a check from society, while he, in turn, according to his proper place among his fellows, according to the degree of mental power he can exercise, reacts on society. And now occurs the critical stage both for the Association and the Individual. Each influences the other, but whether for good or for evil will depend on the principles which underlie the Association on the one hand, on the character and moral force of the individual on the other. To the extent that the Society favours the moral freedom and independent energy of each of its members, in the measure in which it assists the individual to act on himself and develop his powers and faculties, it is an agency for good, it performs the function for which it has been created, it ensures its own safety and stability. But the moment it represses or even discourages individuality, the moment it endeavours to secure slavish conformity to its collective opinion (practically the opinion of a small but influential minority) it undergoes a retrograde movement, it tends to dissolve and disappear. To the individual himself

who passively assumes the yoke the society may impose on him, who surrenders his right of private judgment, his conscience, his freedom of thought to its keeping, who has no rule for his guidance but conventional usage, the opinion of the public, or the authority of some acknowledged social leader, who is quite content to live in slavish conformity to the opinion of the majority—the abnegation of self-responsibility is fatal to his mental culture, his moral freedom. With faculties and powers repressed or disused, with his intellect degraded, his judgment enslaved, his conscience in fetters, he soon sinks into a state of mental atrophy or moral paralysis. He becomes reduced to the condition of a semi-conscious automaton.

On the other hand, the Society is in danger from the exuberant growth of the individuality of its prominent members, a few of whom always take the lead of its affairs. In every Society there must necessarily be some individuals who, by their force of character or superior talents will occupy a more prominent position than the rest, and exercise a corresponding influence over them. But unless this influence is exercised with a due regard for the equal rights of all, and solely for the benefit of the common interests of all, all kinds of conflicts, disputes, jealousies, and misunderstandings will arise fatal to the success, nay to the very existence, of the institution. Even where this influence is not of a directly harmful character, even where it aims at securing important and worthy ends, it should not be exercised to the prejudice of the mental freedom and moral responsibility of the individual members. No knowledge is of any avail—not the highest which the best teacher can impart—which is passively received, which the mind does not actively assimilate and convert into intellectual energy, and reproduce in some form of thought or action. Even virtue, it has been well remarked, ceases to be virtue if it be acquired only by imitation or by blind obedience to ethical rules. It must spring from within, in correspondence with the law which each individual finds within his own breast; it must be self-developed and in harmony with all his other powers.

Here, then, we have the limitations to the two principles we have just considered—the law of association and the law of individuality. So long as they observe a due relation to each other, so long as co-operation and social intercourse foster the development of the individual, favour the evolution of his mental power and moral freedom; and the individual in his turn, while unfolding his nature, respects the equal rights of all who compose the society, and yields willing obedience to the central authority which he himself has been instrumental in creating in order to guard and maintain those rights, they will work in harmony: the Society is bound to flourish, the individual to attain his end. But if, on the other hand, the Society attempts with a strong hand to repress individuality, or while freeing mental power allows it to rest unchecked, to ignore equality of rights, to tyrannize over the other members, there is an end to all progress, the framework of the Society becomes disorganized, and it hastens to its final dissolution.

To descend now from theory to practice, from generalities to details. How shall we apply the principles we have just considered to the Association we inaugurate today so as to secure stability to its foundation, prosperity to its cause, success to its aim?

To begin with, let the work of this Society be carried on under the auspices of the three great virtues—Faith, Humility, and Disinterestedness.

Let us clearly recognise the importance of this institution as an educational agency. It has been created to promote mental culture. Let us begin by believing in its value as an aid to culture. Let

Faith be the corner-stone of the edifice we erect today, faith in its usefulness, faith in its efficacy as a means of promoting culture, faith in the manifold benefits of co-operative work, faith in the saving grace of individuality. But let it be a living faith, an unceasing source of inspiration, of energy, of earnestness and enthusiasm, of persevering and industrious labour, not the faith without works which, according to the highest authority, is a dead faith.

Let Faith be associated with Humility. By Humility I do not mean that slavish, abject spirit which never aspires to anything great, which is never conscious of one's moral worth and dignity, and which is only another name for cowardice and effeminacy of soul; but that modest, simple estimate of ourselves which springs from true self-knowledge. Let us, while recognising the importance and usefulness of this Association, remember that it is but still in an infantile state, exposed to all the perils and mishaps incidental to that condition. Let not parental fondness for our offspring blind our judgment to the folly of parading it before the public as an infant phenomenon, and exhibiting all its little prattlings and earliest efforts at self-development as wonderful signs of a precocious intelligence. Let us not pose for effect, whether as individuals or as an Association. The bane of our community is its hankering after public admiration, public approval, public applause. Our most ordinary utterances have a hollow ring because they are not true to our convictions—because they are intended for a wider audience than we address, whose opinions we fear to offend. Let us away with this bugbear of public opinion. Let us be true to ourselves, and live in conformity with the divine laws which each living soul has to interpret for himself, and we shall have no need to constantly consult the shifting weathercock of public opinion.

With true Humility is naturally associated the virtue of Obedience, its legitimate offspring. The object of all intellectual discipline, whether individual or collective, is the establishment of a central authority. It is this authority which regulates and controls all the available forces by which a proper distribution of all labour is effected, and harmony and unity secured in its results. Nor is this idea of a central authority inconsistent with the principle of self-development already laid down. On the contrary, every sound mind has to create for itself such a central authority within itself as the first step in the process of self-discipline. Such an authority is needed to strengthen one faculty or to repress another, to resist the temptations of indolence or to overcome the prejudices of habit, to co-ordinate the various mental powers and moral faculties as well as to harmonise the individual with his environment. Nor does the individual abnegate his right to the highest prerogatives of humanity by subordinating his individual responsibility to that of the central authority which he himself creates in any society of which he is a member, so far as it is necessary for the interests of the society. "When we consider," says Conway, "the sovereignty of the subject, we find that though greater it is not unlike that which symbolizes it in a throne. It is not absolute, and it cannot be. It is said that when some demagogue was loudly proclaiming the greatest good of the greatest number, somebody asked him what was the greatest number, and he replied 'Number One.' No amount of democracy escapes the truth in that frank reply. But Number One long ago made the discovery that apart from the other numerals, he relapses into a cipher. As the proverb says, 'One man is no man.' Therefore, the human unit in seeking its greatest good must needs add itself to

the other figures that make the sum of social security and advantage. In other words, man seeks freedom as he seeks money, that he may spend it. He seeks sovereignty that he may limit it. And it is a mistake to say that the member of a community concedes something of his liberty, or surrenders some of his rights for the community. His so-called concession is an investment of a little wilfulness to realize a large amount of sovereignty. No man will grudge a tax that returns itself four-fold in comfort or resources. The more pennies he parts with the better, if each brings him a pound."

Of all the three virtues I have named, however, that which is most conducive to intellectual discipline, and therefore to an Association which is pledged to promote such discipline, is Disinterestedness. Not merely that virtue which is allied to charity and is opposed to selfishness, but that freedom from prejudice, that absence of bias, which is essential to mental independence; that sincere desire to seek the truth and embrace it at any cost, at any sacrifice, even when the truth is unfavourable to our immediate interests, even if the price we have to pay for it is the forfeiture of the good opinion of all whom we reverence and hold in honour, of the good will and affection of all we hold most dear. What such disinterestedness implies in literary culture may be understood from Matthew Arnold's definition of it in his famous Essay on Criticism which, as I need hardly remind you, is but one aspect of culture. "It is of the last importance," he says, "that English criticism should clearly discern what rule for its course it ought to take. The rule may be summed up in one word—disinterestedness. And how is criticism to show disinterestedness? By keeping aloof from what is called the 'practical view of things,' by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches. By steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior political practical considerations about ideas which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with."

Another great critic—Philip Hamerton—lays it down emphatically that "there cannot be a doubt that the most essential virtue to the intellectual life is disinterestedness"—using the word in the same sense that Arnold does.

I pass on now to consider the instruments of culture, the means by which this Association can best aid in the development of self-culture and the right method of applying those means.

The usual functions of a Literary Association are first, the reading of Lectures, Essays and other like contributions calculated to develop a literary taste as well as to excite literary activity and original research on the part of those who engage in such work—necessarily confined only to a limited number of members. Next, the critical discussion of those papers by the members generally with a view to study each question thus brought forward under every possible aspect, as well as to afford every member an opportunity to exercise his mental powers by engaging in its solution,—but seldom taken advantage of by more than a few leading men. An occasional variation in the programme is perhaps a formal debate on some set topic, in which again a few take a leading part, not always to their mutual advantage, while the rest are content to play the part of mute listeners, or at most rouse themselves towards the end of the debate to record a feeble vote. To judge from the constitution of this Association, that is about the kind of *menu* you mean to adopt for your literary banquets. And I have no doubt

if the dishes served be as excellently cooked as the materials deserve—the rich materials you will select from the boundless stores of learning and philosophy—no better fare could be desired for the keenest intellectual appetite. But I am sure I am guilty of no solecism, I offend the feelings of none in this room, if I say that we are all but amateur cooks, with plenty of zeal no doubt, and any amount of eagerness to improve under instruction, and, for all I know, it may be with any amount of literary talent or even original genius lying latent, and only waiting for opportunity for development; but without any skill or practice in these matters derived from past experience,—without any previous training; and unless we proceed to work cautiously, we may make sad hotch potch of the business. I certainly think we should encourage literary talent and original research by every means in our power, and as far as possible invite original contributions on any and every subject which is likely to aid in general culture or individual self development. Let the Association constitute itself for the purpose into a sort of Miscellaneous Literature Publishing Company, Limited, or rather, since the question of publication is somewhat problematical just now owing to the state of our exchequer which our worthy Treasurer tells me is at this moment not merely limited, but absolutely empty, let me say a Literary Warehouse for the reception of all sorts of Articles, Essays, Sketches, Poetry, &c., in which literary amateurs are wont to indulge. We shall deal with them less severely than the editors of our local papers usually do—we shall spare the feelings of our contributors by not publishing them—not at least before they have passed the ordeal of severe criticism—not unless they are literary gems of the purest water. But the gift of literary productiveness, it should be remembered, is not a widely distributed one. What the proportion of creative minds may be to minds of receptive character, to minds of ordinary calibre, I would not venture to say; but I think you will agree with me that the former class do not preponderate in any society. And even assuming that our society is exceptional in this respect, and that there are a great many among us possessed of considerable literary ability, it cannot be denied that the majority of us here are but tyros in literature who have yet to form intellectual habits, to acquire that self-confidence which only results from a long course of training in mental discipline, to obtain that experience of oneself, that knowledge of the range of one's powers, that consciousness of "the defects of our quality," by which alone we can hope to steer successfully between the Scylla of over-vaulting ambition and the Charybdis of intellectual dilettantism. Beginners in literary work are usually shy, timid, distrustful of their natural talents, dissatisfied with their best efforts; and it is these beginners chiefly that the Society should encourage and bring forward. Now, if we depend mainly on lectures and essays from a few of the leading members to provide materials for our intellectual sustenance and refreshment, it will not be long, I fear, before we reach a period of dearth and mental stagnation. By all means let us encourage literary contributions of that description—the more of them the better. But is it necessary, is it desirable, that every student who is eager to lead an intellectual life should undertake literary composition? Should he not rather follow the bent of his own mind, estimate his own powers, and take to such modes of culture as will suit his nature best? There is no greater mistake than to suppose that unproductive minds are failures, or that an intellectual life is the privilege of literary writers only. Mark Pattison in his *Memoirs* decries "the vulgar fallacy that a literary life means a life

devoted to the making of books," and places the life of study for its own sake far above the life of literary composition. "The scholar," he says, "is greater than his books. The result of his labours is not so many thousand pages in folio, but himself. . . . True learning does not consist in the possession of a stock of facts—the merit of a dictionary—but in the discerning spirit, a power of appreciation—*judicium* as it was called in the sixteenth century—which is the result of the possession of a stock of facts."

Now, although it is not given to all men to discover new ideas, or to combine ideas which are already current and present them in the most attractive form—the work of the genuine literary artist—the "discerning spirit" and "the power of appreciation" which results from the acquisition of knowledge—these are within the reach of every student, whether his mind be creative or acquisitive only.

On this point, Mathew Arnold's judgment is clear and decisive. "It is undeniable," he says, "that the exercise of a creative power, that a free creative activity, is the highest function in man: it is proved to be so by man's finding in it his true happiness. But it is undeniable also that men have the sense of exercising this free creative activity in other ways than in producing great works of literature or art; if it were not so, all but a very few men would be shut out from the true happiness of all men. *They may have it in well-doing, they may have it in learning, they may have it even in criticising*" Have we not a hint here which we might utilise with advantage for the furtherance of our literary labours? Instead of devoting most of our time to literary composition which may not always be worth the trouble bestowed on it, except perhaps to the writer; instead of vainly spending labour in attempting to reach heights far beyond our powers, might we not use it with "more fruit" in preparing for such literary feats, in rendering such feats possible, by cultivating the critical faculty in which, according to the writers I have just quoted, true learning consists? And I know of no better medium for the exercise of the critical *judicium* than a well-selected course of reading. Reading, as we all know, serves a variety of purposes: "comfort and consolation, refreshment and happiness" society in solitude, friendship in misfortune—but I refer to it here only as an instrument of culture, as a means of exercising our mental powers, our critical faculty especially. Now, reading is by no means the trivial accomplishment which every schoolboy possesses who has spelt through his primer, though most men—even educated men—hardly get through this stage I fear, when they are content to dissipate their mental energies on what is called light literature. "Most men," says Thoreau, "have learned to read to serve a paltry convenience, as they have learned to cipher in order to keep accounts, and not to be cheated in trade; but of reading as a noble intellectual exercise, they know little or nothing; yet this only is reading in a high sense, not that which lulls us as a luxury and suffers the nobler faculties to sleep the while, but what we have to stand on tip-toe to read and devote our most alert and wakeful hours to." It is reading in this high sense that will serve us as a means of culture, not the desultory skimming of the pages of a novel or a magazine to while away a tedious hour. It must be a course of regular habitual study, based on some definite, well-regulated system; study that will tax all our powers, study at once liberal, comprehensive, thorough. Such reading will aim to get "at the heart of an author's meaning and purpose" and see how far he has succeeded in realizing his purpose. It will "subject his arguments to the clog-

est scrutiny, examine his facts, weigh his reasons, detect his fallacies." Such reading will further extract, digest and assimilate all that tends to nourish the student's intellectual nature, to invigorate his soul.

"All this may be very true," you will say, "as far as a student's self-culture is concerned, and may be carried out in the solitude of one's chamber with no extraneous resources beyond those a good library affords; but what has it to do with the Association, and what part can the Association take in such a work in its associative quality?" This at least—they can each render the other mutual service. To develop this idea. I propose that we make a select course of Reading a necessary and daily part of the work of the Association, and of every member of it without exception, leaving the higher intellectual flights of essay writing, composition of lectures, &c., &c., to such of the members as have tested their wings and can soar to empyrean heights.

I propose that we select a few of the best books in English Literature which are accessible to all of us, and study them both individually and collectively. And, first, it is all-important that the books comprised in such a course of reading are worthy of study, that they are the best books of the best writers of all ages. Fortunately for our propose, we have guides enough to indicate to us the very best to choose from, or we should be puzzled in our selection from among the 20,000 volumes published recently under the title of the "Best Reading." Sir John Lubbock's List of the Hundred Best Books, in its original or amended form, as corrected by the leading writers of the present day, will supply us with material enough for ever so prolonged a course of study. Now, I propose that we take up one or more of the books on the list and prepare the whole or a portion of any one book by private study for criticism, comment, discussion or analysis at each of our evening meetings; that the results of such study be embodied by each member in a short paper to be submitted fortnightly to the Association, to be read at the ensuing meeting whether the member himself be present or not. To ensure such regular and thorough co-operative work, let us fix upon the direst penalty we can think of for infraction of the rule.

Another form of literary exercise which is well worthy of our attention, and which is also within the capabilities of the most diffident student, is the review of books. I do not mean the review of recent literature (though I see no reason why even that kind of work should not be attempted by any of the members who may consider themselves qualified to engage in a task demanding critical faculties and literary talent of no mean order), but the Review of Books of a long past and forgotten period, a retrospective review, if I may so term it, of a particular class of books which should possess for us more than ordinary literary interest. I refer to the books relating to this island, of which a large number exists, but only on the shelves of a few book collectors who treasure them as a miser does his gold, and in one or two of our public libraries besides; books that are extremely scarce from being out of print, and therefore inaccessible to ordinary readers, but which are always available for reference and study in at least one library which Ceylon can boast of—the Library of the Colombo Museum—thanks to its admirable management by, I am proud to say, one of the members of our Association. I invite your attention to this almost unexplored field of literature, rich in resources for the student who is content to dig and delve for the sake of rescuing from oblivion many an important fact which will throw light on the history

and archæology of our native country; many a curious custom or social usage peculiar to the various races which are represented among us; many a valuable tradition or interesting piece of folk-lore; many a literary gem of purest ray serene hidden in the pages of magazines once prized, but now forgotten. In the large collection of books which treat of this Island's history, or describe the condition of the country and its people, by writers and travellers of various nationalities, in the old almanacs, gazetteers, magazines, Blue Books, pamphlets and tracts, &c., there is a wealth of literary treasures which will surely repay, and amply repay the labours of as many students as choose to engage in this work of resuscitation—a work which demands no special literary ability, but only judgment and literary taste in the discrimination of valuable ore from the dross with which it is sometimes mixed up. A lively summary of the contents of any one book with interesting extracts will always serve to provide us with a delectable treat for an evening's recreation, and who is it who cannot attempt such a task which only needs perseverance and industry, and an average amount of literary taste and skill?

I have been tempted, I fear, to wander farther from my course than I originally contemplated, chiefly at the instance of some of the younger members of this Society for whom mainly this address is intended. Whether the ideas I have put forward are worthy of your attention or not; whether they are crude, impracticable crotchets or suggestions which are deserving of some consideration, I must leave it to you to judge.

However this may be, let me hope that the chief points I have laboured to place before you this evening, at such an unmerciful tax on your patience, have made some impression, however slight, on some of you, and that they may do some of you at least some little good. I have tried to show you the importance and usefulness of associated work. I have tried to impress on you the still greater importance and value of self-culture. If this Association has been created with a clear recognition of its necessity, in response to an urgent cry for mental food, for living water to quench your soul's thirst, and not from mere imitation of other institutions of a similar kind, nor from any feelings of vanity, self-conceit or desire for public admiration and public applause; if you are really sincere and in earnest, and firmly resolved to make this institution a success, I see no reason why it should not grow and flourish, why it should not enter upon a career of brilliant prosperity. But the issue rests with you. Your strength lies in union—in unity of purpose, unity of obedience, unity of action. If the boat in which you have launched yourselves today is to make headway through the opposing currents and threatening breakers which will presently mar your passage out to the open sea, it will depend not on the amount of power you choose to exercise anyhow, but on the exercise of the propelling force in one direction, and in that direction only. Lessen this force by rowing in different directions, by not keeping time with stroke, by laying by on your oars some of you, by wrangling as to precedence, or style, or proper form, and the craft will soon be submerged. It is not much skill or wisdom that is needed from the pilot you have chosen to steer her at this juncture—only the usual direction, the familiar cheering cry as he takes the tiller lines in his hands:—

"Now, my men, pull with a will, pull all, and pull all together."