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WILLIAM C. ALEXANDER.

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PRINCETON IN 1801.

In the spring of 1801 I passed through Princeton, on my way to New England, where I spent the summer. One object of my visit was to become acquainted with the flourishing colleges of the northern and eastern States; as many of the commencements as possible were therefore embraced in the tour. The failure of a horse in some degree frustrated the plan.

At Harvard, I had the pleasure of being introduced to President Willard, Professors Tappan, Pearson, and others. I was also able to attend the commencement at Dartmouth College. In passing from Massachusetts over the mountains of New Hampshire, I lodged within a few rods of the house of a farmer, the father of the Honourable Daniel Webster. The old gentleman came over to the tavern in the morning, and chatted for half an hour. Among other things he said that he had a son at Dartmouth, who was about to take his bachelor's degree. The father was large in frame, high-breasted and broad-shouldered, and, like his son, had heavy eyebrows. He was an affable man, of sound sense and considerable information, and expressed a wish that I might be

I find an enemy within
 Who dares to talk to me of sin,
 And whispers, even in my dreams,
 That my disorganizing schemes
 Can never conjure black to white,
 Or clearly prove that wrong is right,
 A nuisance that can never cease
 Till conscience learns to hold its peace,
 And men no longer can be awed
 By apprehensions of a God—
 Ah! these are griefs for which I see
 No solace even in the re-
 construction of society,
 Construction of society.

EDUCATION AMONG MERCHANTS.

Ours is a country in which the merchants are princes, as truly as in ancient Tyre. The little boy who is sweeping out the store, or carrying the parcel from the post, or marking the case of goods, may be mayor of a great city; or he may be a minister plenipotentiary; or he may command armies; or he may be president of the United States. Even if none of these things happen, great merchants, who become great capitalists, have more reason to be warned against pride, than stirred up to a sense of their importance. There is no social rank in America which is not reached and adorned by mercantile men.

Wealth does not necessarily bring refinement. A millionaire, who lives in a palace, and has thirty thousand dollars laid out by his agents for copies of paintings in Rome, Florence and the Louvre; who keeps several carriages, has a princely villa, ponies for his boys, whiskered Pandours for

his girls, libraries and champagne for his company, a pew in the most brilliant church and a box at the opera, may nevertheless be an ignoramus. An ignoramus he assuredly is, if he has bestowed his whole time on merchandize, to the neglect of science and letters; and this is the very tendency of things among the mercantile class. Leaving all moral considerations out of view, the current of feeling and practice sets strongly towards mere success in business, and rapid fortunes, without regard to mental cultivation; in Philadelphia, New York, New Orleans, Boston and Cincinnati. Many a man comes to deplore this when it is too late. His accomplished daughter, his graduated and travelled sons deplore it; but a handful of bonds and mortgages cannot buy refinement. The evil is enormous, and arises from want of foresight. He meant to be rich and to be fashionable, but he never foresaw that his new position would bring demands for mental acquisition. The brilliant instances of exception, in the case of some distinguished scholars among merchants, only throw the mass into deeper shade.

The chief cause of this evil is obvious: it is the absorption of mind in the ways and means of wealth. Is there any hurry on earth more feverish and constant than that of merchants? It increases with their prosperity. Vary as it may in different branches of business, it reigns in all. Great merchants tell us, as they tell their wives, that it is neck or nothing. The business of a leading house cannot be carried on moderately. If the concern is not pressed to its utmost, trade will flow into other channels. *Festina lente* might do for Augustus, but not for the rising merchant. What can such a man devote to letters? Half the year, half our citymen do not dine at home. In certain directions, their minds are wonderfully trained, to exquisite sharpness; in all that concerns trade, exchange, currency, customs, and such parts of politics as mingle with these. But their education is from the ledger, the newspaper, the bank, and the exchange. The fact is patent, that a man may become mighty in wealth,

while his thoughts have been conducted for half a century in a very narrow channel.

These undeniable propositions show the advantage of going to school awhile in one's boyhood, and of getting a taste for books. We say a taste for books, because many a man, who sits of a Sunday evening in a regal fauteuil, under a resplendent gas-light, with the heaviest gold eye-glass, reading the most gloriously gilded volume, does not know whether his book is not upside down, while his lips are muttering, "Deduct half the interest at seven per cent,—eight thousand and fifty-five dollars and one cent." What stupidity to say that a boy need not go to college because he is to be a merchant! It is the reason of reasons why he should go forthwith, and why he should have a double allowance of all a college can give. As well might you say, I will give my horse no oats this morning, because I mean to ride all day without drawing bridle. We are willing to put this to the vote of all those eminent merchants who came to the desk with a liberal education: they know full well that the mathematics, physics, political economy, chemistry, and classical reading have in no degree damaged their finance. Next to these, we should like to have the voice of that increasing class, who without the formalities of academic learning or degrees have wisely managed to keep up a constant familiarity with the best authors. We rejoice to number such among our choicest friends. For a companion commend us to an intelligent and accomplished man of business. In such a one we have the temper of the blade without the rust of closets. It is not a fine library, nor even multifarious reading, which insures this sort of accomplishment. The well-bestowed evenings of busy days suffice for immense accumulation; much more for all the graces of letters. Who has not observed, at horticultural shows, that the prizes for luscious pears and sunny apricots are half the time carried, not by the gardener, but by some eccentric tailor or clergyman who trains a single tree beside his window? So it is with learn-

ing, the ripest fruits often fall into the lap of those who cherish books as their diversion. But accomplishment in commercial cities is difficult; requiring self command, reserve, long-sighted providence, love of home, freedom from the toy-yoke of fashion, and above all quiet of mind. Go on, if you choose, full speed after the highest gains; sit up over orders and invoices; let your children see you only at breakfast and on Sundays; keep it up your fifteen, your twenty years; and then retire to your elegant country residence: *nota bene*, you will find yourself destitute of the capacity to enjoy that retreat. No man can safely predict that at a certain day he will retire. That which was his task-master has become a fatal and indispensable necessity. Thousands realize the truth of Coleridge's story about the wealthy London soap-boiler who retired from that savoury business: after trying elegant leisure for a year, he begged his late partners, that he might be allowed "to look in on boiling days." Ah! it is Esop's fable of the cat turned fine lady: she would be mousing. Habits are habits; and the retiring merchant should have learned that the secret is to retire every day. Neither religion nor quiet can be bought; neither religion nor quiet can be taken, after a prescribed term of years, in the lump. Salt is an agreeable condiment, but a hogshead of it all at once at the end of one's career would be *un peu fort*: yet this is what business men plan for. By the time the hurried man reaches that period of retirement, his blessed wife has grown grey, and the children with whom he might have chatted of books and mighty deeds, every day for twenty years, have escaped from the home which in his zeal for money he visited more as a guest than a father. We say again, men of business who would enjoy literary retirement must begin betimes; they must retire every day. You reply, it is impossible, in the present state of mercantile life. Very well; then the state is a wrong, a wretched and a perilous one, intellectually and morally. You may help to keep it up, and make yourselves as rich,

apoplectic and miserable as you please. Our hope is that your children will read this homily, and do better.

A.B.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH.

However jealous we may be of this prerogative in politics and social life, there is one department in which we are far from enjoying its perfection. I refer to composition and the use of language for rhetorical or literary purposes. That so few of our educated young men become eminent as writers, may be owing to this very restriction. Knowing something by experience, as well as observation, of its sad effects, I may perhaps do some one a kind office by a simple statement of my case, leaving others to derive from it such precepts and examples as may seem to be afforded by the narrative.

I was taught when young that in order to write well I must be careful to use words in their established and familiar meanings, and that in order to do this, I must know precisely what I meant, as well as how to say it. Upon these fundamental rules I practised many years, and am purposely adhering to them in these prefatory observations, for the purpose of showing their necessary tendency to produce a dry and rigid style. Another rule of the same kind is the one requiring some coherence in the thoughts, if not a close logical connection. By adhering to this antiquated method for some years I was at last convinced, that I could never accomplish any thing by means of it, and under this conviction was about to abandon the whole effort in despair, when it was happily suggested to my mind, that these rules of composition were tyrannical restrictions imposed by arbitrary power on the human mind, and therefore gross violations of that precious and inalienable birth-right, Freedom of Speech.