

To The Venerable Archdeacon Best.

Rev. and Dear Sir,
When I delivered the substance of the following Address, I had not the most remote idea of publishing it; as at that time I had not committed a single sentence of it to paper. I give it to the World at the request of the Trustees of the College, and that request was made to me in such a handsome manner, that if I had not complied with it, I must have justly been charged with rudeness. It lays claim to no merit as a Literary production, but if it prove the means of stirring up those to whom it was immediately addressed in particular, and the ingenious youth of this country in general, to diligence and assiduity, in their studies and praiseworthy conduct, my object will be gained, and the warmest wishes of my heart gratified.

I am,

Rev. and Dear Sir,

Yours truly,

JAMES SOMERVILLE.

THE ADDRESS OF THE REV. JAMES SOMERVILLE, M.A. TO THE CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS DELIVERED IN THE COLLEGE OF NEW-BRUNSWICK, THE 21ST FEBRUARY 1828.

AS this is the first time that Degrees have been conferred in this College, I think it right both in justice to you and to myself, briefly to recapitulate the course of Study which has been pursued during the four years which the Statutes have rendered it necessary for you to attend, previously to your admission to this first Academical honour; and also to offer you some advice relative to your further improvement in Literature and Science.

That every Collegiate Institution would be essentially defective, in which the Greek and Roman Literature did not form a conspicuous part, and employ a large portion of time and of attention, will not be controverted by any who are at all acquainted with the subject. It is to the Greek and Roman Classics, particularly to the former, that mankind are indebted in a great measure for the blessings of Knowledge, of Humanity, and Civilization. That wonderful People who carried every polite Art to the highest pitch of perfection, and excelled in every species of Composition, have left to Posterity, finished models, in Poetry, History, Philosophy, Criticism, and in pure Mathematics. The introduction of the Greek Language into any Nation has always formed a remarkable epoch in the history of that Nation; as it has generally dispelled Ignorance and Barbarity, and planted in their stead, a desire of Knowledge, just principles of Taste, and a love of those polite Arts which adorn and embellish Society, and add to the sum of human enjoyment. In the study of this noble language, your attention was naturally directed first to the Father of Poetry—Homer; not only the most ancient, but also the best of Poets, and all circumstances considered, must be pronounced to be, the most illustrious Individual that Providence has ever raised up among the human race. Of the Iliad, you read the greatest part, as it always has been my opinion that every Scholar should not only have a competent Knowledge of that Poem, but should have it nearly by heart. Your attention was next turned to the Tragic Poets, viz:—Euripides and Sophocles. Of the former you read four Tragedies, viz:—the Medææ, the Hecuba, the Orestes, and the Phæniæ; and of the latter, the whole. In History, you went over part of Herodotus, and several Books of the Cyropædia of Xenophon. In Oratory, one Oration of Eschines, and four of Demosthenes. In Criticism, part of Aristotelic

Rhetoric, and Longinus' admirable Treatise on the Sublime. In Latin Literature, some time was employed in the study of Virgil's Georgicks—the most perfect specimen, perhaps, of Didactic Poetry to be found in any Language. You also read Horace's Art of Poetry. Of the Historians, you read the whole of Sallust, four Books of Livy, two Books of the Annals of Tacitus, the Agricola, and De Moribus Germanorum of the same Author. I then turned your attention to the Works of Cicero: And in him you went over most of his select Orations, his beautiful Treatises, De Officiis, De Senectute, De Amicitia, and the Somnium Scipionis; and two Books of his elegant Work De Oratore; which together with five Books of the Institutes of Quintilian, completed this part of the Course. In the perusal of these Standard Authors, it was my endeavour to point out to you, those beauties of Sentiment and of Style, which being founded, not upon casual associations, but on permanent principles laid deep in human nature, distinguish every work of real excellence from those performances which owe their celebrity merely to humour, caprice, or the fashion of the day. And the very excellent manner in which the Classics are taught in the Grammar School connected with this Establishment, has enabled me, and will enable any one in the same situation, to proceed with comparative ease, and much pleasure, to execute the Duties more peculiarly appropriate to the Office of a Professor.

In pure Mathematics, you have gone through the first six Books of Euclid, and the Elements of Plane and Spherical Trigonometry. In the capital Work of this excellent Mathematician, you have been initiated into the pure, elegant, and rigid mode of demonstration, which characterizes the ancient Geometry, and which affords to every one conversant in these pursuits, a perpetual source of delight. In Algebra, you proceeded as far as Quadratic Equations. In the study of this branch of Science, it was my aim not only to give you some dexterity in the use of the Calculus, but to point out the principles upon which the Calculus is formed; and to show the excellence of this Art, considered as an Instrument of human thought, and as a happy adaptation of that universal and symbolical Language, which although (as Professor Playfair has remarked) it has been sought for in other Sciences, seems to be destined to Mathematics alone. If you would wish to make further progress in the analytical Art, I would particularly recommend to your notice Euler's Algebra, and Professor M. Lacroix's Fluxions.

In Logic, you have gone over, more than once, the very useful work of Aldrige. This Treatise, although but a Compendium of Logic, contains nevertheless, some excellent observations upon the faculties of the Mind; upon Definition; upon Syllogisms &c. And the last Editor has added some good Remarks upon Evidence and Induction. Upon this Subject, you will do well to read the Analysis of Aristotle's Logic, by the late Professor Reid, of Glasgow; the two Treatises of the same Author on the intellectual and active powers of Man; but above all, the immortal Essay of Mr. Locke on the Human Understanding, particularly the Third Book. You have also received a few Lectures upon the Principles of Universal Grammar; and you have had put into your hands, the Elements of Moral Science, by the late very learned Dr. Beattie, of Marischal College, Aberdeen; and some of these Lectures have been commented on.

I deem it but bare justice to myself, and to you, to say, that much has been done; but at the same time, candour obliges me to add, that

much has been left undone, necessary to complete a Collegiate Education. For to assert, that one Man, although his abilities and acquirements were greatly superior to mine, when thrown nearly upon his own solitary resources, could perform what in similar Institutions, is the business of five or six, having the advantage of the united Science of Europe, and of daily intercourse with one another; would savour more of the vain boastings and empty pretence of an Empirick, than the modesty and diffidence which ought ever to characterize a Scholar. I can confidently say I have done what I could. And I have long been of opinion, that the great Desideratum in Education, is not so much the quantum of Knowledge which the pupil may acquire, as the spirit which may have been excited. Thus, if you put a Traveller into the right Road, and give him Directions in what way he may best prosecute his journey, his progress must then depend, in a great measure, on his own resolution and activity. So it is with Knowledge. If the Student be put upon the right Track of Investigation, if the Faculties be gradually expanded, and the Curiosity roused, the natural impulse of the human mind, except it be checked by Indolence or Timidity, is to go forward; and the Scholar may make almost what proficiency he pleases.

As to your moral conduct, it has been uniformly good. You have both been Pupils of mine from a very early age, and therefore I can bear this Testimony with confidence, as I do it with pleasure. Since you have come under my Tuition in the College, it has been my uniform aim to act towards you like a gentleman, always tempering the authority of the Master with the affection of the Friend, and using every means in my power to promote your improvement. And your deportment towards me, has been respectful and obedient; and this has been shown, not only by attending to the directions which I have from time to time given relative to your Studies, but by numberless marks of attention, too minute to be mentioned here, but which convinced me that the outward tokens of deference and esteem proceeded from the sincere homage of the heart. You have often heard me say, that such as is the Boy, such is generally the Youth; and such as is the Youth, such is generally the Man. If this be true, as (with many, very many exceptions) it undoubtedly is; I entertain sanguine hopes, that in future life you will conduct yourselves in such a manner, as to be a comfort to your Parents and Relations, a credit to yourselves, and an Ornament to your Country.

I shall now proceed to give you some directions for the further prosecution of your studies.

As you are both destined for public Speakers, I would earnestly recommend to you, a repeated and attentive perusal of Aristotle's Three Books of Rhetoric; Cicero De Oratore; and Quintilian's Institutes. With the latter every Scholar should be intimately acquainted, as it is perhaps the most perfect Treatise of its kind extant. Read with care the whole Twelve Books, but more especially, from the Eighth Book to the end. If you do this, you will gradually find your Taste to become more correct, and your Style more neat, pure, and harmonious. You may also derive much benefit from the Work of Dr. Blair on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres; and from the Second Volume of Dr. Beattie's Elements of Moral Science: although there are scarcely any observations in these two respectable Writers but what may be traced to the great Antients before mentioned. And you will always find a singular

pleasure in drawing from the pure spring, and Fountain-Head of Knowledge, before the Streams have been contaminated in their course, and mixed with adventitious matter.

As to the Study of Law, the most dignified (next to that of Theology) upon Earth, which one of you have chosen, I can offer no particular directions. In this respect I am confident that you are in far better hands than in mine. I shall only recommend to you two Works which in my opinion are of very superior merit. The first is Grotius De Jure Belli et Pacis. You have already seen from the Work of the same Author, De Veritate Christianæ Religionis, that Grotius's Learning was most extensive and profound. And in this Work, De Jure Belli, &c. the principles of International Law, and the Duties which Citizens owe to the Community to which they belong, are clearly unfolded, and the observance of them strongly enforced. The Latinity of Grotius is generally good, and his style perspicuous; and there is in all his Works an abundance of Classical quotations, which renders them always grateful to a Scholar. The other is Hullah's History of Europe, during the Middle, or what are commonly called, the Dark Ages. This excellent Work contains the best Account I have ever seen, of the Feudal System; the Ecclesiastical State; and the English Constitution during that period. And it must be an object of great interest to every well educated British Subject, and particularly to a Lawyer, to trace this Constitution from the Woods and Wilds of Germany; for it originated there, (See the masterly Work of Tacitus De Moribus Germanorum,) by the help of the Researches of this Author and the excellent Work of Sir William Blackstone, to its present state of perfection, when it may justly be pronounced to be the best form of Government ever known upon Earth, and the noblest Work of Man's Device.

As the other of you is destined to the Service of the Church, I can offer you advice with more confidence. I have already made to you many Remarks upon this Subject, and I shall afterwards give you in writing, the best mode, in my opinion, of prosecuting Theological Studies. This Subject may be divided in general into the Evidences of Christianity, the Doctrines of Christianity, the Principles of Biblical Criticism, Church History, and the Practical Duties of the Christian Life—a wide outline! and which must employ much of your after time to fill up. Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed in his Lectures, that the Studies of a Painter must only end with his life. If this be true, in an Art, which, although an exquisite one, is but only ornamental; how much more strongly does it hold in the pursuits appropriate to a Clergyman, who has committed to his care, the best Interests of mankind? Cultivate in the first place the study of the Languages, in which the Old and New Testaments were originally composed; as it is by this, and this alone, that you can thoroughly understand the sense of the Sacred Authors. I would warn you particularly against a practice, which though common among young Divines, I have long thought to be a very pernicious one; viz., the indiscriminate reading of Commentators. Almost every Commentator has some favourite notions of his own, which warp his Judgment; and it has been observed by an acute Critick, that but too frequently, it is the Gospel according to such and such a Commentator, instead of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, St. Mark, &c. Before you consult any of them (and no doubt they have their uses) make yourself perfectly master of the style