Communications.

The Sabbath and our Work.

Mr. Editor: — One of New England's great men said, a few days since: "Show me the man whose aspirations do not reach far beyond what he is or ever will be able to do, and I will show you a man who aspires to do little, and who will do less." The days are full of work; and for every duty done, and for every task accomplished, we find two to demand our time and thought, until there are a hundred fields where we long to labor, and from which we are forced to turn away. We have certainly work enough, and that the question of overwork, so lately raised at Amherst, might with advantage be ventilated at the Institute, is altogether probable. But this question is beyond the scope of the present article, in which we wish very briefly to notice a few points bearing on the relation of our work to the Sabbath.

We must not, amid this pressure for time and world of work, do injustice to ourselves, or dishonor an institution which we should respect, by denying ourselves the privileges of the Sabbath, or bringing into it duties which are not its own. Let us for a moment consider this, our twofold relation to the day, leaving aside as far as possible the theology of the subject and looking at the question in its most practical bearings.

First. The Sabbath is an institution which should command our respect, because of the authority with which it comes to us, and its intimate and inseparable connection with the strongest influences for good in the world. Not only does the idea of a Sabbath, as symbolic of rest, present and to come, run like a golden thread through the whole superstructure of Christianity, but has been through the centuries one of the bulwarks of the church.

Second. We will respect it for its history, we will honor it for its friends. Men who held the Sabbath sacred gave liberty to England under Cromwell; warred against tyranny in France under Coligny; planted republican freedom among the Alps; and laid the foundations of our free institutions.

Third. It is an honored heirloom of our ancestors, hallowed and made more sacred by time. For, in the terse, strong words of Schiller, —

"There is a consecrating power in time;
And what is gray with years, to man is Godlike."

"The Sabbath was made for man," and man feels its necessity, in his threefold nature.

First. It is a physical necessity. This has been proven by well-attested experiments all over the world. As the rest of the night is necessary that we may endure the continual tax upon us, so is this seventh day of rest; and a neglect of the Sabbath rest will bring its evil, not less surely, because more slowly, than the other. It has been proved beyond cavil that a man can not only do more, but better work, when resting one day in seven. When in the madness and anarchy of the French revolution, the Commune annulled the Sabbath, they were compelled to establish another day in its stead.

Second. Mentally the rest is needed. We as students scarcely need to be assured of this; for every man who knows the mental strain of six days' close application, must feel its necessity. But of this fact we may be reminded: there is an actual gain in taking the needed rest, and as surely a loss if it be neglected. Our mental constitution is such that we cannot do more than a given amount of work with less than a given amount of rest; and the attempt to force ourselves, by whip and spur, beyond a certain point, is attended by very serious consequences. The secret of success, in cases we might cite, was taking needed rest; thus stopping to grind the scythe, and always working with sharp tools. As a bow which is never unstrung loses its elasticity, so does the mind lose its power under a continual pressure and unbroken toil.

Third. Morally, man feels its necessity. A member of the Faculty said, in some remarks made to students a few days since, "We want symmetrical men"; not men who have developed merely, mentally, manly what ever a man, but the grain has not and we ambition.