

Fleece of Gold - Five Lessons from the Fable of Jason and the Golden Fleece

Charles Stewart Given

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A Fleece of Gold

Five Lessons from the Fable of Jason and the Golden Fleece

by

Charles Stewart Given

1905

Second Edition Revised

To my sons
Kingsley and Gordon

"Jason and his men seized the favorable moment of the rebound, plied their oars with vigor, and passed through in safety."

Contents

Introduction

- I. The Ruling Element, "Jason and his men."
- II. The Golden Quality, "They passed through."
- III. The Messenger of Fate, "They seized the favourable moment."
- IV. The Active Hand, "They plied their oars with vigor."
- V. Ethics of Activity

Foreword

Among the smaller forces which operate upon the mind and tend toward strengthening and exalting the best ideals, are little books like this. They are especially valuable when so much of the author's own experience forms a thread upon which are suspended jewels of thought and illustration serviceable to those who would see and know the best things.

I have found these characteristics in this small volume, and gladly recommend it to all those who would become more familiar with what our

author calls "the key to that cabinet of character in which nature conceals not only the motive power of every-day life, but those latent talents and energies that, through a knowledge of self, we can bring to bear upon our lives." This book will help many who have small opportunities in the form of time and money to expend in the use of larger volumes.

Charles Stewart Given

Introduction

The fable of Jason and the Golden Fleece is known to old and young the world around. To the latter, perhaps, no other simple narrative in Greek mythology is more fascinating, nor holds a more valuable lesson if they will but seek to learn it. But especially to the boy or young man of thoughtful mind does the glorious adventure appeal and make its lessons obvious. By way of refreshing the memory of those who were once familiar with the myth, but who, in the practical school of experience, have lost the chord of their adventure-loving days; and also for those, perchance, who are not acquainted with the tale, a brief sketch will here serve our purpose.

In Thessaly dwell a king and a queen with their two children, a boy and a girl. The holy alliance between the two royal members of the household becomes disrupted, and Nephele, the good mother, appeals to Mercury, the messenger of the gods, to assist her in secretly placing the children out of reach of their father, the king. Mercury provides a ram with a golden fleece, on which the boy and girl are placed. The shining creature springs into the air, bearing its precious burden across the sea. Unfortunately, the girl falls from the ram's back and is drowned, but the boy is landed safely on the other shore in the kingdom of Colchis. Here he sacrifices the ram to Jupiter and presents the golden fleece to the king, who places it in a consecrated grove under the care of a sleepless dragon.

Now Jason is heir to the throne of Aeson, ruler of another kingdom in Thessaly, from whence the royal children started on their adventurous journey. Years have passed, however, since this remarkable incident, and Jason, being now a young man and having been told the dramatic tale of the Golden Fleece, begins to think what a glorious adventure it would be to go in quest of the royal prize. Forthwith he makes preparations for the expedition, and with a band of other lusty young heroes starts on a sea voyage toward the land of the Colchian king. It is not without difficulty, however, that they accomplish the voyage, for at the entrance of the Euxine Sea they encounter two floating islands, veritable mountains of rock, huge and shaggy, which, in their tossings and heavings, at intervals come together "crushing and grinding to atoms any object that might be caught between them." But "Jason and his men seized the favorable moment of the rebound, plied their oars with vigor and passed through in safety."

Approaching the royal palace Jason makes known his mission, whereupon the king promises to relinquish the valuable possession if Jason will yoke to the plow two fire-breathing bulls and sow the teeth of the dragon. Apprehending that by this means the king seeks to destroy him,

Jason pleads his cause to Medea, the king's daughter, who furnishes him a charm by which he can safely encounter the fiery breath of the beasts and the armed men that will spring up in the furrow where the dragon's teeth are sown.

In his "Age of Fable," Bullfinch gives us a graphic picture of the scene: "At the time appointed the people assembled at the grove of Mars, and the king assumed his royal seat, while the multitude covered the hill-sides. The brazen-footed bulls rushed in, breathing fire from their nostrils that burned up the herbage as they passed. The sound was like the roar of a furnace, and the smoke like that of water upon quick-lime. Jason advanced boldly to meet them. His friends, the chosen heroes of Greece, trembled to behold him. Regardless of the burning breath, he soothed their rage with his voice, patted their necks with fearless hand, and adroitly slipped over them the yoke, and compelled them to drag the plow. The Colchians were amazed; the Greeks shouted for joy. Jason next proceeded to sow the dragon's teeth and plow them in. And soon the crop of armed men sprang up, and, wonderful to relate! no sooner had they reached the surface than they began to brandish their weapons and rush upon Jason. The Greeks trembled for their hero, and even she who had provided him a way of safety and taught him how to use it, Medea herself, grew pale with fear. Jason for a time kept his assailants at bay with his sword and shield, till finding their numbers overwhelming, he resorted to the charm which Medea had taught him, seized a stone and threw it in the midst of his foes. They immediately turned their arms against one another, and soon there was not one of the dragon's brood left alive."

Having complied with all the conditions set forth by the king, the victor now turns with eager step toward the grove of Mars, and seizing the golden prize makes his way back to Thessaly, rejoicing in his glorious success.

I

The Ruling Element

"Jason and His Men."

What constitutes a state?
Not high-raised battlements or labored mound,
Thick wall or moated gate;
Not cities proud with spires and turrets crowned;
Not bays and broad armed ports,
Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride;
Not starred and spangled courts,
Where low-browed baseness wafts perfume to pride.
No! men--high-minded men--
With powers as far above dull brutes endued,
In forest, brake, or den,
As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude.

--Sir William Jones.

The Young Man

Jason has just stepped over the threshold into the glory of a rich young manhood. And he is careful to select for his expedition some of the choicest heroes of Greece--young, brave, and strong. It has ever been thus. Youth has always been synonymous with adventure. It is a condition which seems inherent; nature instilling into the blood of her sons the very spirit of discontent--of longing to push out from the commonplace scenes of childhood into broader domains of experience.

The very books which most fascinate the boy are those which deal in thrilling tales of adventure. The wily and unscrupulous traffickers in cheap literature have ever been awake to this fact, and their highly-colored productions have been flung from the vicious presses like lava from Pelee to pollute the minds of the young. Why is it that "Robinson Crusoe" and stories of this character hold such a charm for young people, lingering in their minds long after books of a profounder type have been forgotten? It is the love of adventure. To what boy at school does not the doleful history lesson assume a more brilliant aspect when the adventures of Columbus are taken up? His interest is awakened, his imagination inspired, and he is delighted, all because again that chord in his nature has been struck--the love of adventure.

Perhaps no other single painting in the art galleries at the World's Fair of 1893 attracted the attention of a greater number of people, nor awakened in so many human breasts a feeling of such intense pathos as Thomas Hovenden's painting on "Breaking Home Ties." Here we have it once more, adventure--Jason setting off on his journey in search for the golden fleece of fame and fortune. The narrow path that so long has led him out into the silent acres--the fields that so many years have responded to his toil--he has forsaken. The dull routine has ceased to inspire, the home circle has become too narrow for his expanding soul. He has caught a glimpse of the glories of a new kingdom, and now he is going out to realize them.

The young man has always been the ruling element in every new departure. He has been the rock upon which the ages have been founded. In the words of another: "When the roll-call which men have written is read, it will be found that the young men have ruled the world. The oldest literatures have this record. The patriarchs unfolded the careers of boys into the conquest of old age. Kingdom and empire rode upon the shoulders of young men, and their voices of enthusiasm and hope have sounded through many a black-breasted midnight and trumpeted the dawn through skies of thickest darkness. To causes that drooped they have come and added the raptures of hope; to enterprises that were sickening and faint they have brought the bounding power of new enthusiasm. To the dead they have brought life. Everything from the foundation of the world has been crying for 'young blood,' and the armies of the advance have gained the day at the arrival of 'recruits,' whose hope and earnestness have never been defeated. Age and experience put themselves upon dying pillows made by young hands; into young palms and upon young ears falls the meaning of all the past; and thus God has written the natural dignity of the young man's life in the eternal statute book of the universe." [Footnote: From "Young Men of History," by Dr. F.W. Gunsaulus.]

We have but to turn our gaze back over the centuries to find that it has

always been the young man who has embarked in the world's great enterprises. If we turn the pages of religious history we shall find that he has been potent there. For when the stream of Hebrew destiny was to be turned, a young man, Joseph, who had been sold as a slave into Egypt, was selected to accomplish it. And later young Saul of Kish while roaming through his father's fields was summoned to a throne. It was the young shepherd boy--David--that was chosen "to keep the banner of Israel in the sky while the shadows hung black above the hills of Judah." When the gospel was to be borne to the Gentiles the divine finger fell upon a young tent-maker of Tarsus. Fourteen centuries later a miner's son, Martin Luther, won Germany for the Reformation, and John Wesley "while yet a student in college" started his mighty world-famous movement. At fifteen John de Medici was a cardinal, and Bossuet was known by his eloquence; at sixteen Pascal wrote a great work. Ignatius Loyola before he was thirty began his pilgrimage, and soon afterward wrote his most famous books. At twenty-two Savonarola was rousing the consciences of the Florentines, and at twenty-five John Huss was an enthusiastic champion of truth.

But we see the young man standing before the footlights on the stage of secular history, too. At twelve Remenyi was making his violin tremulous with melody, and Caesar delivered an oration at Rome; at thirteen Henry M. Stanley was a teacher; at fourteen Demosthenes was known as an orator; at fifteen Robert Burns was a great poet, Rossini composed an opera, and Liszt was a wizard in music. At the age of sixteen Victor Hugo was known throughout France; at seventeen Mozart had made a name in Germany, and Michael Angelo was a rising star in Italy. At eighteen Marcus Aurelius was made a consul; at nineteen Byron was the "amazing genius" of his time; at twenty Raphael had finished some of his most famous paintings, Faraday was attracting the attention of his country, and two years later was admitted to the Royal Institution of Great Britain. At twenty-one Alexander the Great conquered the Persians, Beethoven was entrancing the world with his music, and William Wilberforce was in Parliament. At twenty-two William Pitt had entered Parliament, while William of Orange had received from Charles V command of an army. At twenty-three William E. Gladstone had denounced the Reform Bill at Oxford, and two years afterward became First Junior Lord of the Treasury, and Livingstone was exploring the continent. At twenty-four Sir Humphrey Davy was Professor of Chemistry in the Royal Institution, Dante, Ruskin, and Browning had become famous writers. At twenty-five Hume had written his treatise on Human Nature, Galileo was lecturer of science at the University of Pisa, and Mark Antony was the "hero of Rome." At twenty-six Sir Isaac Newton had made his greatest discoveries; at twenty-seven Don John of Austria had won Lepanto, and Napoleon was commander-in-chief of the army of Italy. At twenty-eight Aeschylus was the peer of Greek tragedy, at twenty-nine Maurice of Saxony the greatest statesman of the age, and at thirty Frederick the Great was the most conspicuous character of his day. At the same age Richelieu was Secretary of State, and Cortez little older when he gazed on the "golden Cupolas" of Mexico. These are a few of the splendid names that illumine the pages of history across the sea.

But the young man has been no less potent in the affairs of our own Nation, which has always been conspicuous for its production of truly great men. The story is told that when one of England's great men was visiting Henry Clay, and the two were riding over the country, the distinguished guest inquired of his host, "What do you raise on these hills and in these beautiful valleys?" "Men," was Clay's reply; and the English patriot declared that this was the greatest crop to enrich a country. We boast that we have given the world a full quota of really great young men, some of them like Jason embarking on the sea of adventure

while the dew of extreme youth is still on their brow. If we wend our way back through the grand procession of events of but a single century we will find extreme youth marking out the lines of progress and directing the course of the nation in politics, in literature and religion.

We would see William Prescott, a boy of twelve, diligently at work in the Boston Athenaeum, or Jonathan Edwards at thirteen entering Yale College, and while yet of a tender age shining in the horizon of American literature; while the same age finds H. W. Longfellow writing for the Portland Gazette. At fourteen John Quincy Adams was private secretary to Francis H. Dana, American Minister to Russia; at fifteen Benjamin Franklin was writing for the New England Courant, and at an early age became a noted journalist. Benjamin West at sixteen had painted "The Death of Socrates," at seventeen George Bancroft had won a degree in history, Washington Irving had gained distinction as a writer. At eighteen Alexander Hamilton was famous as an orator, and one year later became a lieutenant-colonel under Washington. At nineteen Washington himself was a major, Nathan Hale had distinguished himself in the Revolution, Bryant had written "Thanatopsis," and Bayard Taylor was engaged in writing his first book, "Views Afoot." At twenty Richard Henry Stoddard had found a place in the leading periodicals of his day, John Jacob Astor was in business in New York, and Jay Gould was president and general manager of a railroad. At twenty-one Edward Everett was professor of Greek Literature at Harvard, and James Russell Lowell had published a whole volume of his poems; at twenty-two Charles Sumner had attracted the attention of some of the famous men of his day, William H. Seward had entered upon a brilliant political career, while Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry D. Thoreau occupied a conspicuous place in literature. At twenty-three James Monroe was a member of the Executive Council, and one year later was elected to Congress; at twenty-four Thomas A. Edison and Richard Jordan Gatling were inventors. At twenty-five John C. Calhoun made the famous speech that gave him a seat in the Legislature, George William Curtis had traversed Italy, Germany, and the Orient and soon after became known by his books of travel. At twenty-six Thomas Jefferson occupied a seat in the House of Burgesses, John Quincy Adams was minister to The Hague; at twenty-seven Patrick Henry was known as the "Orator of Nature," and Robert Y. Hayne was speaker in the Legislature of South Carolina. At twenty-eight Edward Everett Hale had found a place in the hearts and minds of the people, and at twenty-nine John Jay, youngest member of the Continental Congress, was chosen to draw up the address to the British Nation.

These illustrious ones, who before their thirtieth year had written their names on the immortal banner of their country, are only a few which adorn the pages of our early history. Others of like purport might be added indefinitely both from the early and the later life of our country. And there has been no time when the young man played so important a role in human affairs as he does to-day in the dawn of the twentieth century, when the heart and the mind, philanthropy and literature, virtue and truth, science and art, capital and labor are the principal factors in the world's progress. To refer to but a single instance in this period of our national life, there is no greater statesman and patriot than our beloved President, Theodore Roosevelt,--a young man to whom we are proud to point as a true type of American greatness and American manhood. Assuming control of the Nation at such a critical moment in her history, when so many dangerous rocks lay in her course, tremendous, indeed, was the responsibility thrust upon him. But by his inherent principle of rule, his unquenchable patriotism, his indomitable purpose, and the imperiousness of his will, founded on a rich scholarship and a broad policy, he has spelled triumph out of difficulty, and his name will go down in twentieth-century

history an example of illustrious young manhood.

The young man is emphatically the “ruling element” in politics to-day. It is estimated that a sufficient number of young men come of age every four years to control the issue of the Presidential election. Constituting about one-half of the present voting population, they hold far more than the balance of political power. It was Goethe who said that the destiny of any nation at any given time depends on the opinions of the young men who are under twenty-five years of age. And William E. Gladstone affirmed that the sum of the characters of this element constitute the character and strength of any country.

And when we consider the young man in his relation to all the aspects of life--civic, commercial, industrial, and social--we must recognize him as the “ruling element”. Like Jason, the young man of to-day is the hero to invade the empire of thought and action in quest of the Fleece of Gold.

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime;
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

II

The Golden Quality

"They Passed Through."

To live content with small means:
To seek elegance rather than luxury, and
Refinement rather than fashion;
To be worthy, not respectable,
Wealthy, not rich;
To study hard, think quietly,
Talk gently, act frankly;
To listen to stars and birds, to
Babes and sages, with open heart;
To bear all cheerfully, do all bravely,
Await occasions, hurry never--
In a word, to let the spiritual,
Unbidden and unconscious,
Grow up through the common--
This is to be my symphony.

--Channing.

Success

In every land and in every age since the curtain first rose on the world's great drama men have been in quest of the Fleece of Gold. The onward progress of the race since our rude forefathers from the leaves of the tree formed their clothes, and in the somber depths of the primeval forest

constructed their habitation, is due to an insatiable desire to possess the coveted prize. Hanging before man's gaze in the consecrated borders of his existence, it has inspired him to greater usefulness. He has built ships and traversed the seas, invented machines, reared cities, and established laws. In science and art and literature he has vied with his fellow-man and given a mighty impulse to civilization, all for the Fleece of Gold--success.

The world worships at the shrine of success. It regards it as man's greatest attribute. And whether we find it in secular affairs, substantiated by material grandeur, or in the mysterious realms of the inner life characterized by the serene consciousness of truth, it must ever be the goal of human aspiration.

It is the thought of some day having their efforts crowned that causes men hotly to pursue the phantom or the reality of their lives. This aspiration keeps the torch of hope ablaze in the midnight darkness, and the spirits buoyed under the noon-day glare, while men forge on to the goal. The surging throngs of a great city, the active hands and brains in the bee-hives of industry and the many places of business, the vast army of seekers after knowledge in the schools and colleges throughout the land, the men of fame in the halls of Congress molding the affairs of the Nation, the countless army tilling the fields under the open sky, the legions in the dark caves of earth searching for treasure--all are seeking to enter the golden gate of success.

Said Mr. A. B. Farquhar in a baccalaureate address to the students of McDonough College: "Success colors everything. It is the essence of all excellencies, the latent power which compels the favor of fortune and subjugates fate. The world worships success regardless of how acquired; makes it a standard for judging men, an indispensable credential for all approval. If a man succeeds he is held to be wise, even though mediocre; if he fails, whatever his learning and intrinsic merit, little regard is paid to him. Success gilds and glorifies a multitude of blunders and littlenesses, and people are thought merely to exist who do not keep themselves on the road leading to it. In view of all this, it is no wonder that we see all humanity looking earnestly toward success and moving with eager step in search of it.

"Success is essentially the accomplishment of one's desires and purposes, the realization of one's ideals. But this definition does not necessarily imply a high state of being. As I sit by my window writing, the hoarse cry of a rag-man and the mournful strains of a hand-organ come to my ears. That able-bodied Greek, who is so lavish with his 'music,' and the rag-man, who is buying what the other is distributing freely, both are in quest of the same thing--'success.'"

Alas! the world too often measures success by false standards--worships the Golden Fleece, forgetting the high purpose it might be made to serve; so dazzled by means that ends become oblivious. The spirit of the age is to pay homage to great riches. The finely attired custodian of a money bag too often is regarded as an exponent of success. On this point we should guard ourselves, first ascertaining if the gorgeous equipage is the "genuine fleece," or only a sham intended to deceive. A mansion on a valuable corner lot does not constitute the "golden quality," nor does a million dollars in bank epitomize its character. Its language is not spoken in the dialect of Wall Street or of wheat pits. Gold, grain, stocks, and bonds and estates too often mean the perversion of those qualities most valuable to human life. Realty is not the prime issue of

life, but reality. If that which a man gets in his pay envelope, however lucrative that may be, constituted his only reward, his effort would be miserably compensated.

The man who has spent his life like a scaraboid beetle rolling up money, without due regard for the common virtues of life, has not left "footprints on the sands of time," but only a zigzag trail along the highway over which he has journeyed. He has not achieved success in that he has accumulated riches without a corresponding accumulation of "wealth." To seek a purely selfish and material success is to defeat the very purpose of one's existence--"life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." In the very conquest for this baser type a man blights his sensibilities, minifies his present enjoyment, and destroys his prospect for a full measure of happiness by and by. With but one interest his happiness is insecure; for when that fails or ceases to satisfy he has nothing on which to rely. Midas craves for gold, and when he gets it his senses become as metallic as the object of his affection. Therefore, if we are of this type, simply seeking the Golden Fleece for what it will net us in dollars and cents, we are not on the road leading to success. For success does not consist in the acquisition of the material, so much as in a mental discipline that seeks objectively to subordinate intrinsic value.

We must confess, however, that the age in which we live is one of brick and mortar; that materialism and not aestheticism reigns over us. The book-keeper's pen has usurped the office of the artist's brush and the carpenter's chisel that of the sculptor. Intrinsic worth and dividend-paying value holds sway, and even the gift-horse is looked in the mouth while the priceless motive that prompted its giving is forgotten.

The commercial spirit which pervades the atmosphere of modern times is disintegrating the sublimer side of human life. The gilded god of materialism is lavishing its blessings in the realm of science and invention and commercial enterprise, at the expense of aestheticism, till to-day there are thousands of artisans to every artist. We have an abundance of stone masons, but few Phidias or Angelos; hundreds of organ grinders, but few Beethovens or Webers or Bachs; a full quota of men engrossed in the cold calculus of business, but a scarcity of Homers or Dantes or Virgils.

Speaking of this material aspect of our epoch and how it is likely to be regarded in the future, when the paradise of ideal living is regained, a modern writer says: "Will not the intense preoccupation of material production, the hurry and strain of our cities, the draining of life into one channel, at the expense of breadth, richness, and beauty, appear as mad as the Crusades, and perhaps of a lower type of madness? Could anything be more indicative of a slight but general insanity than the aspect of the crowd on the streets of Chicago?" Why is it that the poems that have lived for centuries, and the masterpieces of the world's great painters and sculptors are not being equaled in the dawn of the twentieth century? The answer lies in the widespread devotion to realism instead of idealism. The immortals have joined the mortals in search for the Fleece of Gold. And Wordsworth's oft-quoted lines were never more applicable to us than now:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers.

All the capital in the universe does not stand for success unless there is set over against it the wealth of soul which Marcus Aurelius, that great

apostle of plain living and high thinking, ever set forth as an antidote to the treadmill grind of commercial life. Shakespeare struck the keynote of this lofty conception of life, and pronounced a never-dying eulogy upon the supreme dignity of character when he said:

"Who steals my purse steals trash; ...
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

Wealth of soul is incomparably better than all that can be obtained from pomp and luxury. Charlemagne is said to have worn in his crown a nail taken from the cross on which the Savior was crucified. He wore it among the jewels of his diadem as a reminder that there existed a tenderer relation in life than kingdoms and material splendor. Thus in the crown of our success, if we would make it truly great, we must place the sublimer elements of our being. As the ivy softens the roughness of the mountain side and the unsightly ruin, so will the aesthetic mellow and subdue the intense commercialism with which we are surrounded. Without this quality our success becomes like the fabled apples on the brink of the Dead Sea--fair without, but ashes within.

If the avenue to success lay in one direction only--that of accumulating a fortune, little incentive would be felt by those in the lower walks of life. Moreover, if it were possible for all men to become millionaires, the very organization of human society would become disrupted; for who then would till the soil, run the factories, clean the streets? Nature has been wise in the distribution of her talents. Anticipating the havoc of endowing all mankind with equal powers, she established a wide diversity in the range of human ability. To one she has given the gift of sagacity to achieve success in the world of trade; to another mechanical skill to create the ideals of inventive genius into reality; to another the highly artistic sense, and withholding these higher attributes from still others, she has chosen to endow them with a wealth of muscular force that the physical requirements of organized human effort might be made effective. So that any way we choose to look at this question we must concede that temporal wealth does not constitute the broadest idea of success, nor is capable in itself of producing it.

Even failure may be an element of a glorious success. The volcano that pours its vengeance upon the fair plantation below, leaving wreck and ruin in its path, bestows a wealth of sulphur which plays an important part in the world of commerce. The same frost that kills the harvest of a season also destroys the locust, preserving the harvests of a century. The death of the cocoon is the production of the silk, and the failure of the caterpillar the birth of the butterfly. If the boy Newton had not failed utterly on the farm, he would never have been started in college to become the mighty man of science. The fall of Rome meant the rise of the German Empire. "All men," says Frederick Arnold, "need through errors attain to truth, through struggles to victory, through regrets to that sorrow which is a very source of life. Men must rise in an ever-ascending scale, like the ladder of St. Augustine, by which men, through stepping-stones of their dead selves rise to higher things; or those steps of Alciphron, which crumbled away into nothingness as fast as each foot-fall left them." Thus our very failures we may overrule and convert into stepping-stones to success. Lifted to a loftier sphere, to a nobler experience, we are apt to receive greater benefit than though we escaped disappointment and rejoiced in easy fruition.

Success does not consist in not encountering difficulties, but in overcoming them. If Jason is to have the golden fleece he must pass between the dangerous rocks, he must encounter the dragon, yoke to the plow the fire-breathing bulls, and subdue a regiment of armed men. If Joseph had not been Egypt's prisoner, he would never have been Egypt's governor. If Millet had not passed through the valley of sorrow, he could never have painted the "Angelus." The Restoration in England that gave Charles II a throne, drove Milton into absolute seclusion, and the last twelve years of his life were passed in enforced isolation. But this blind, deserted, broken-hearted, but illustrious scholar and poet, conquered despair, triumphed over every misfortune, and gave to the world those three great poems which have made his name immortal. Even poverty, which has been a hardship to the individual, has proved a boon to himself and to the cause of humanity. Science teaches us that ordinary mud has in it elements which, arranged according to the higher laws of nature, produce the opal, the sapphire, and the diamond. Likewise does history teach us that from the morass of poverty the commonest types of men have passed from stage to stage through the refining processes of experience till they have dazzled the world with their magnificence. Whether it be a slave like AEsop, a beggar like Homer, a peasant like Raphael, or a marble-cutter like Socrates, we see them at last wearing the diadem of a brilliant success.

In fact, the foremost in all nations and in all branches have, as a rule, risen from the ranks of the poor and lowly. Shakespeare held horses for a few pennies a night in front of a London theater, and later did menial service back of the scenes. Disraeli was an office boy, Carlyle a stone-mason's attendant, and Ben Jonson was a bricklayer. Morrison and Carey were shoemakers, Franklin was a printer's apprentice, Burns a country plowman, Stephenson a collier, Faraday a bookbinder, Arkwright a barber, and Sir Humphrey Davy a drug clerk. Demosthenes was the son of a cutler, Verdi the son of a baker, Blackstone the son of a draper, and Luther was the son of a miner. Butler was a farmer, Hugh Miller a stone-cutter, Abraham Lincoln a rail-splitter, and James Garfield was a canal boy. One-half of the Presidents of the United States were left orphans at an early age, left to make their way through the world alone. History reveals clearly that it has been not the sons of the rich, but the sons of poverty that have "compelled the favor of fortune and subjugated fate."

Neither rank nor genius nor any other natural endowment forms the only true basis of success. A right disposition, a desire and determination, founded on the sub-structure of right purpose, to cope with the problems that confront you, constitute the real basis of achievement. In short, the only demands which success makes of you is that you act with the most of yourself, bringing all your faculties to bear upon what you have to do; instilling your best effort into the infinite detail that goes to make up the great finality of your life. To this end, the systematic development of the whole man, body, mind, and soul, in such a manner as to bring you into right relation with things as they are and ought to be, is the paramount question.

In fact, education is the only passport to success. I do not mean that education that is restricted to institutions of learning. These, while possessing a decided advantage, by no means have a monopoly of learning. Genius finds opportunity in the great laboratories of nature. Every man has within himself an educational organization presided over by a full faculty; and nature's wonderful book is ever open to him, if only he will lay hold upon the lessons it would teach him. This type of education which

is the drawing out toward all things the latent forces from within, and the broadening out for greater usefulness, means the acquisition of ability to meet every emergency and the establishment of high ideals.

Moreover, in the race for success, the proper nourishment of the brain is an essential part of self-development. The brain is substantially the great artist that creates our ideals in life. And yet we forget sometimes that it is the master of our destiny; and allow it to sink into that dull apathy so fatal to our hopes and aims. It would almost seem, indeed, as if a kind of fatality clung to some men in the way in which they neglect this supreme faculty of their being. You possess the power to use your brain as you choose; but not the right, morally, for society demands of you a high standard of thinking, since it is the only rational basis for a free government. Thus it is as much your duty properly to nourish your brain as to give proper care to the body.

In the rigid economy of modern life we should use extreme care in the selection of our reading. Our best interests demand more of us than a gormandizing of newspapers or ephemeral reading of any kind. Far be it from me to disparage that great organ of the times--the newspaper, which is a source of keen delight and benefit to us all, and almost the only source of instruction to thousands of the race. But we should be judicious in this, and not allow transitional matter to monopolize our time. "Read not the times, read the eternities," cried Thoreau. The shelves of our home and public libraries are filled with priceless volumes yet unread by us. And he who is not cultivating a taste for good wholesome reading is missing one of the highest enjoyments of life as well as minimizing his chances for success. We should ever be exploring new regions of thought. And in the extreme activity of this electric age we shall be obliged to take snap shots at our reading--on the street car, in the lunch room, anywhere we find it possible to peruse a single page.

If we look into the lives of some of the illustrious ones we shall find that they obtained knowledge under the greatest disadvantages. We see Lincoln reading his favorite volumes by the dim light of a pineknot blaze; or Burritt poring over his books at the forge; or Garfield gazing intently at the pages while riding a mule on the banks of a canal. Wesley likewise diligently searched the Scriptures while riding horseback over the country; William Cobbett learned grammar while a common soldier on the march; and we are told that Alexander the Great, each night on retiring, would place his favorite book, the "Iliad," under his pillow and during his waking moments would peruse its pages.

But the high intellectual plane of present-day civilization demands more of us than the world demanded then, when the avenues to honor and to power lay over fields of conquest, and the passport to favor was the sword. The complex problems of today call for a more thorough cultivation of our mental powers, which, to bring into play upon the multifarious concerns of our life, is the object of broad education. A well cultivated mind makes a man monarch of all that he surveys; and no one can be said to be truly successful who has not invaded the empire of thought in search for the imperishable Fleece of Gold.

Success, then, in the highest sense, is a full realization of the highest wealth of body, mind, and soul. And while it does not disparage material aggrandizement, it makes it subservient, ever looking to an equalization of the greater revenues of life. Like truth it consists in a right proportion of things; and like character, is inherent in the nature of the individual. Success must embrace all the cardinal virtues. It must arise

from the harmonious and fullest use of all the faculties. In its essence, it is the aggregate of those things which we have acquired, and which we are putting to a wise and useful purpose. The way of life is strewn with those who have done fairly well. Excellence is the golden quality to seek. Success, like a commodity, has its price, and he who would have it must be willing to pay. You can not buy it on a bargain counter; it is a staple product and demands full value--the sublimest qualities of your being.

"In the lexicon of youth, which fate reserves for a bright manhood, there is no such words as--fail."

III

The Messenger of Fate

"They Seized the Favorable Moment."

Take all reasonable advantage of that which the present may offer you.... It is the only time which is ours. Yesterday is buried forever, and to-morrow we may never see.

--Victor Hugo.

Master of human destinies am I;
Fame, love, and fortune on my footsteps wait,
Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate
Deserts and seas remote, and passing by
Hovel and mart and palace, soon or late
I knock unbidden once at every gate;
If sleeping wake; if feasting, rise before
I turn away. It is the hour of fate,
And they who follow me reach every state
Mortals desire and conquer every foe
Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate,
Condemned to failure, penury, and woe,
Seek me in vain and uselessly implore;
I answer not and I return no more.

--John J. Ingalls.

Opportunity

The famous statue, "Take Time by the Forelock," was a masterpiece of Greek sculpture. A noted Athenian orator, Callistratus, has given us a picture of the work of art: "Opportunity was a boy in the flower of his youth, handsome in mien, his hair fluttering at the caprice of the wind, leaving his locks disheveled. Like Dionysius, his forehead shone with grace, and his cheeks glowed with splendor. With winged feet to indicate swiftness, he stood upon a sphere, resting upon the tips of his toes as if ready for flight. His hair fell in thick curls from his brow, easy to

take hold upon. But upon the back of his head there were only the beginnings of hairy growths, and, when he had once passed, it was not possible to seize him."

An ancient legend gives us a more vivid idea of the significance of the statue:

"Who art thou?"

"Time, the all-subduer."

"Why standest thou on tiptoe?"

"I speed ever."

"Why hast thou double wings on each foot?"

"I fly with the wind."

"But why is thy hair over thine eye?"

"To be grasped by him who meets me."

"The back of thy head, why is it bald?"

"When once I have rushed by, with winged feet, one can never grasp me from behind."

In its literal significance, however, opportunity means something either "in front of the door" or "outside of the harbor." For when the word first crept into common speech it created two pictures,--that of a ship with sails unfurled, riding at anchor, ready to start upon her unknown voyage, with just a moment to spare to catch her before the sails are bent; or the picture of a veiled figure standing for an instant at the door of one's life, knocking with sharp, swift strokes and then, if no answer comes, passing away into the darkness, refusing to be recalled.

In all the vocabulary of human speech no other word rings with truer eloquence, or speaks with greater triumph, than that one word,--opportunity. Born in the primeval forest of man's first dwelling-place, it has marked the central path of civilization and hewn its way to the front with unerring stroke. The finger of destiny ever points back to this factor in human life as the primal element in all achievement, the forerunner of all success. Without it human genius would die, man's talent and skill waste away, and the hope of the race would vanish.

Opportunity is the good angel that reveals the true issues of life, unfolding the bud of possibility into the full-blown flower of progress. It is the remorseless foe of sleepy monotony, awakening the passions in the soul, rousing our powers to action. At the door of your life and mine comes this silent, veiled figure, its hands laden with wealth, knocking for admission. But, alas! it has been too often with us as George Eliot with such tragic pathos has put it: "The golden moments in the stream of life rush past us and we see nothing but sand. The angels come to visit us and we know them only when they are gone."

There has been no period of time since God whirled out of chaos this universe of wonders whose every moment did not hold for some one,

somewhere, some kind of opportunity. Man is the only creature under heaven that has been privileged to walk with his face skyward to gaze upon the stars, to behold the opportunities of life as they surge along his pathway. In her wisdom, nature has given our eyes the power of both the telescope and the microscope, that we may see our opportunities afar and rightly discern them when they come within our reach.

Do not regard your opportunities as mere visages floating in the horizon of your life, or autumn leaves driven by the winds of chance across your path. Every opportunity far from being a thing of chance, is a product of definite causes. Opportunity is unrealized possibility supplemented by conditions favorable for the execution of a purpose. And the power lies within you to create circumstances. That skillful artist, the human brain, draws a mental picture--an idea, the judgment approves, the will renders a decision to create that idea into actual being; in other words, gives it a soul, and then we have opportunity made real by the process of a creative force.

We are apt to regard this quality in our existence as a somewhat superhuman term, an abstraction beyond the realm of common life, or at most an asset within the reach of a favored few; whereas it is a common attribute playing a potential part in our every-day activities. In its very nature opportunity is democratic and goes, like a wayfarer, knocking at the gates of every man's life.

This messenger of fate, however, will not knock at the door of that man who is unable to meet the demands it would make upon him. It ever recognizes the eternal fitness of things, since it looks to its own promotion as well as the promotion of him who seeks to embrace it. Opportunity, then, is not opportunity at all if a man is not equal to it. When the steam engine lay in its elementary state in the great laboratory of nature, it was an opportunity for James Watt; and by his accepting it, opportunity realized its own fulfillment, became its own blessing and a blessing to all mankind. The unskilled laborer who dug out the ore could not claim this opportunity because he was not equal to its requirements.

Moreover, every man is himself an opportunity of infinite greatness. And he who depends upon the world alone to furnish him opportunities is destined to meet with failure. Self-reliance is the passport to success. The man who is continually bemoaning a lack of opportunity acknowledges his own lack of resources--is wanting in creative force. Every golden moment is an opportunity for him to step out from the shadows into the sunshine. Optimism sees opportunity in the ordinary jog-trot of daily duty.

One of the most valuable assets which we can possess is the ability to mold from the adverse circumstances about us our opportunities. And "a wise man," says Bacon, "will make more opportunities than he finds." When Michael Angelo takes the castaway rock which he finds in his path and carves from it "The Young David;" when Herschel at the midnight hour, after playing his violin for a living, goes out and studies the star-lit skies, the field of his immortal conquest; when Elihu Burritt, working at the forge, grapples with mathematics, and masters several languages; when obstacles are overcome, and adversity yields to the invincible wills of men, then has opportunity by this self-made principle been hewn out of the very stumbling blocks which were in the way.

Every man is a treasury of untold wealth. He is not great merely for what he is, but for the greatness of his possibility--that undreamed grandeur

which opportunity is ever seeking to reveal. True greatness does not emanate from the power of genius so much as it does from the wise discrimination which we exercise in the choice of our opportunities, and the intelligence with which we lay hold upon them. It is a fine art in life to know just the thing to do, and the opportune moment for doing it. Eternal vigilance is the price we must pay, and the constant whetting of our faculties.

Our life is a succession of opportunities. Yet however numerous they may be, or however bright, they are not availing until placed into the crucible of experience. Gold, silver, rubies, sapphires, and diamonds--all the precious jewels imbedded in the treasure-house of nature, become valuable to us only when we dig them out, polish and shape them for our use. Likewise our opportunities enrich us only as we reach out after them and make them an abiding element in our life.

But to know one's opportunity when he sees it, is the secret of life's great problem. "Know thy opportunity," is the motto of Pittacus of Mitylene, one of the seven wise men. It is inscribed in the temple of Apollo at Delphi. And each day, in the temple of our memory, we should write it anew. For the practical question is not whether we are making the most of our opportunities, but whether we are conscious of them at all.

Moreover, to know them _instantly_ as well as to know them instinctively is essential to our well-being. When Victor Hugo charges us to take all reasonable advantage of that which the present offers, he reveals the true character of opportunity. It lives only in the present tense, it knows no to-morrows, and makes a record of the yesterdays only when it has found lodgment in our lives.

Suppose DeWitt Clinton, denounced and ridiculed, had been led into the belief that his idea was a mere phantom, a mystic nightmare, the Erie Canal would not be a reality. Suppose Robert Fulton had accepted the issuing vapor of the tea-kettle as a mere phenomenon without seeking in it the opportunity for a mighty purpose; suppose that Cyrus W. Field or Marconi, or Edison or Ericsson, or the hundreds of others who by their inventive genius have been a blessing to mankind, had been contented with simply dreaming of the stupendous undertakings which they achieved!

It is the man who knows his opportunities when he sees them, who grips them as they pass, who stands at the door of his activities ready to welcome and turn to good account each new opportunity that comes, that is the typically successful man. Many young men have had noble ideas, backed by strong convictions, but failing to "strike while the iron was hot," have let their convictions die, the mental picture of their ideals vanish, and to their sorrow have seen them wrought by another into reality.

And below this class of men we will find a lower type--the man who is always waiting for something to turn up, and always missing it when it does. This is the man whom Dickens has immortalized in fiction in the familiar figure of Micawber. This class, however, is unmistakably diminishing in our day, but still there are many who seem to come just short of the prizes of life. They are always just too late for the opportunity that should have brought them fame and fortune.

Shakespeare has aptly portrayed that supreme moment in life which we call opportunity:

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

And the annals of human experience are filled and overflowing with achievements--examples of opportunities that were laid hold upon at just the critical moment of the tide.

When the armies of Saul and Goliath were encamped in the valley of Elah, an opportunity was given to every soldier in Israel to meet the Philistine giant, but the youthful shepherd, David, alone accepted it, and his name has been praised for thirty centuries.

An unlettered girl, a peasant in France, saw an opportunity to save the glory of her country, and with a courage that baffles human understanding Joan of Arc went forth to conquer.

When George III of England ascended the throne and began to oppress the Colonists, an opportunity was created for the American people to act. With sublime patriotism they arose to the occasion in defense of their rights, and historians allude to the inspiring event as the opening scene in the Revolution.

And when, by a stroke of diplomacy, Thomas Jefferson purchased from Napoleon Bonaparte the Louisiana Territory, one million square miles, or over six hundred millions of acres, for two cents and a half an acre, an opportunity was seized whose benefit to the American Nation no one can estimate.

But if you would know a grand hero in whose life opportunity shone like Mars, read the life of Ulysses S. Grant--the man out of whose very failures evolved a most brilliant success. When, standing with leaden heart in the little store at Galena, the opportunity for a military life came knocking at the door, he welcomed it. For when morning broke on the 12th of April, 1861, and the first guns of the Civil War roared upon Sumter, Grant marched to the front, and soon became a brigadier-general "The spur of disappointed hopes, the fire of his ambition, and the iron will that lay back of many of his failures--all the qualities latent in the man of coming greatness, sprang into mighty being."

A gigantic opportunity next confronted him, for yonder on the banks of the Cumberland frowned the massive walls of Fort Donelson. Behind them Buckner's gray legions stood ready for action. It was the hour of fate. Grant pressed on, the Confederates surrendered the stronghold, and the first Union victory was won. Shiloh and Vicksburg, Cold Harbor and Petersburg, Richmond and Appomattox, and many other glorious victories tell the story of opportunities masterfully grasped.

Our country is the land of "the golden fleece," and wherever you may be in its vast domain, you are the one who must answer for yourself the stupendous question--"To what height shall I attain?" You are like the man in the "Arabian Nights" dropped into a valley filled with diamonds. It is within your power to select that which is most valuable for your enrichment. There are splendid opportunities on every hand, and whether you shall grasp them or let them go, remains alone for you to determine.

The door of opportunity for the highest development of every individual, in every phase of life, is ever open. Every golden moment holds something of value for the earnest seeker, just as every flower holds in its bosom a

treasure for the thrifty bee. No one of us may ever have such splendid opportunities as did the illustrious ones to whom we owe our present inheritance. But at the threshold of our lives will ever come the veiled figure with its gifts, and, however modest may be the treasures which it brings, if we accept them and turn to good account all that they hold of value to us, our reward will be truly great.

"Pull many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

IV

The Active Hand

"They Plied Their Oars With Vigor"

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

"Count that day lost whose low descending sun
Views from thy hand no worthy action done."

The Individual Problem

With steady, even, and vigorous stroke the young heroes from Hellas ply their oars, and the blue waters of the Euxine are flecked with foam. Here is an ideal picture. A band of enterprising young men, alert, active, ambitions--a scene typical of the highest conception of life. It has ever been scenes like this that have challenged the admiration of the world. And the plaudits of men and of angels attend the young man today who has a worthy object in view, who believes in himself, and bends to the oars with might and main.

An "active hand" symbolizes usefulness and thrift. Has it ever occurred to you what a wonderful piece of mechanism is that hand with which Nature has equipped you for seizing the oars of life's activities? Galen, the famous anatomist, after a prolonged study of the human hand, conceiving it to be the proximate instrument of the soul, was forced to renounce atheism, to acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being. Scientists regard the human hand as being the most remarkable organ, not vital, in the whole animal kingdom.

It is conceded to be, also, the most pronounced physical characteristic differentiating man from the lower animals. The chimpanzee and the gorilla, closely allied to the human species in many respects, are noticeably deficient in the use of their modified hands; being able to grasp things only in a cumbersome way. The squirrel handles a nut with agility, the beaver builds his dam, and likewise do many other animals accomplish much with certain deftness. But the grace, suppleness, and precision, so characteristic of the human hand, are lacking. Only in man does the organ attain perfection. He alone enjoys the distinction of being

able to manipulate thumb and forefinger in combination, enabling him to attain a high degree of skill.

The hand is the organ of the fifth and last sense, and the only one of the five which is active. When the other organs of sense fail it comes to their rescue--the blind man reads with his hand and the dumb man speaks with it. Being an active organ it gives expression to man's capabilities: Put a sword into it and it will fight, a plow and it will till, a harp and it will play, a brush and it will paint.

The invention of every machine conceives its first principles in the structure of the human hand; and every working part of that machine bears a relation in its function to a corresponding part in the mechanism of the hand. In fact, physics teaches us that the hand is a combination of the six mechanical powers--the lever, the wedge, the wheel and axle, the pulley, the screw, and the inclined plane. But the mechanical effect is always depreciated. In manufacture hand-made goods excel those made by machine. In art the exquisite hand-painting surpasses the lithograph. No mechanical device, however efficacious, can produce symphonies or pictures or works of any kind with the high degree of excellence of which the hand is capable.

But aside from its mechanical functions, this wonderful organ is a revelation of the secrets of human nature. Graphology enables us to read the character of a person in the hand-writing which he produces. Ages and ages ago the Hindus read the hand itself as the physical expression of the inner man; they read character by the science of palmistry as we read it by that of physiognomy; and some profess to translate the delicate tracery today into language that speaks clearly of both past and future. The hand is the expression of dishonesty when it steals, of charity when it gives, of anger when it smites, of love when it caresses. And one has called it the key to that cabinet of character in which Nature conceals, not only the motive power of every-day life, but those latent talents and energies that, by the knowledge of self, we can bring to bear upon our lives.

So that this member of our physical organization holds an office of supreme dignity and importance in the issues of our lives. It is this marvel of mechanism, overruled and directed by the higher power of intellect, which elevates man to his high position. And, whether it be the hand of the galley slave, or the hand that sways the scepter over an empire, the supreme purpose is revealed--they are alike designed to be the instruments of usefulness and power.

Even the brain cannot ignore the relative importance of the hand. It cannot say to the hand: "I have no need of thee." The captain cannot man his ship without the aid of subordinates. Neither can the brain pilot us through the activities of life without the aid of hands. A brilliant mind is a priceless possession; but all the mental acumen of the universe is not availing unless supplemented by those inferior officers--the hands. The clothes which you wear once were on the back of a sheep grazing on some distant hillside. The chair in which you sit once swayed in the forest midst the sighing winds. The pen with which I am writing once was imbedded deep in some far-away mountain range. But that occult genius--the human brain, conceived the idea of creating that wool, and wood, and ore into a higher state of usefulness, and at this juncture was compelled to acknowledge the infinite necessity of a co-worker; hence, the brain employs the hand as an external agent to put into force the impressions which it--the brain--receives from the phenomena of nature.

Moreover, the law of your growth is contingent upon the exercise of these faculties. The brain is the judicial function and the hand the executive. Together these two powers qualify you for the master-workman. If you allow them to exist in the passive sense, you become an apathetic segment in the midst of a great world pulsing with life around you. You merely add one to the population, instead of counting for a potential and energizing influence. If you lift the weight of a clock the smallest fraction of an inch, the mechanism will cease to operate. And the relaxation of your will from the great obligation of life will cause your powers to atrophy and improperly to perform their work. With Browning, "Man was made to grow, not stop."

Activity and not atrophy is the law of life. Action is the expression of that vital force called energy, and energy moves the world. The keynote of the natural world is action: the earth revolves, the river moves in its course, the tempest rages, the mountain acts from volcanic phenomena, vegetation grows, etc. In every tiny seed lies concealed this mysterious force--only a spark of life which, encouraged by nature, springs into a waving harvest.

This very quality is synonymous with the reality of life. The human mind ostensibly has an aversion to lifelessness. We turn instinctively from the dead and withered branch to the blossoming flower; from the stagnant pool to the dashing cataract, and every healthy mind finds delight in such terms as vim, vigor, energy, and activity, which are the chief natural characteristics of the human hand. Demosthenes on being asked what is the first element in oratory, replied, "Action:" when asked to state the second element, he replied "Action," and when questioned as to the third, he made the same reply. Action, first, last, and all the time, is the great principle of life and progress. Without it the most perfect engine, gigantic in proportions and costly in equipment, is a dead thing, valueless as the formless mass of ore it once was. But that marvelous product of man's hand and brain, plus steam, becomes a veritable giant of power.

Now this same law applies in relation to our bodies in general. Action is an essential as seen in the beating heart, the throbbing pulse, the coursing blood, and various other functions. In fact, the body is the engine that runs the machinery of our lives. Generating energy and storing it up, it gives impetus to all that we achieve. With all its mysteries, beauty, and strength, this human organism is worthless, a burden to society unless vitalized with that majestic force that makes man industrious.

In the words of a great man, "Nature fits all her children with something to do." The first man on earth was a gardener. Milton hears Adam conversing with Eve thus:

"Man hath his daily work of body or mind
Appointed, which declares his dignity,
And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;
While other animals inactive range,
And of their doings God takes no account.
To-morrow ere fresh morning streaks the east
With first approach of light, we must be ris'n
And at our pleasant labor, to reform
Yon flowery arbors, yonder alleys green."

Work is the great law of life. "No man," says Lowell, "is born into the

world whose work is not born with him. There is always work and tools to work withal, for those who will; and blessed are the horny hands of toil." True work, the judicious employment of our powers for the accomplishment of the noblest object in life, is the only thing that will satisfy the waiting capacity of men and women. Neither gold nor scholarship nor any other acquisition can meet the requirement like the application of one's self to some kind of work. Work is a tonic which exuberates mentally, morally, and physically the man who wisely adjusts himself to it. And he who is able to work and refuses is out of harmony with nature.

The cardinal question of life is that of achievement. In every human being there is the desire to rise to something great. The most thoughtless boy on the street looks serious as the Presidential carriage rolls past. In the deep recesses of his nature there is kindled by the spectacle a momentary yearning for fame--he would like to be President some day. Likewise does every man, when he seriously views the pageantry of life's ideals and purposes, have aspiration, for such is the natural state of man.

The allurements of a passive life are known to them only who have no knowledge of the charms of an active life. Leisure is found only in the dictionary of the slothful. Dionysius is asked if he is at leisure, and rebukes the question, saying, "God forbid that it should ever befall me." The indulgence in the activities of life comprises not only ultimate accomplishment, but is productive of present enjoyment as well. And not infrequently does the pursuit of an object give more pleasure than the possession of it. Expectation often outshines experience. Therefore, all should cultivate a taste for work, which, through the alchemy of influence, transmutes duty into privilege.

Moreover, it is fundamental in the law of success that one's pursuit must be congenial if he is to excel. On the contrary, however, lassitude can not be condoned if we find ourselves engaged in uncongenial employment. No kind of work, to the man who possesses dominion over his feelings and his faculties, is painful but proceeds with pleasure when once the habit of industry is acquired.

Our efforts should not be casual, but causal. He who does most and does it well, becomes most. Horatius received as much land as he could plow around in a day. And you and I get each day just as much as, by putting our hand to the plow of activity, we are able to encompass by faithful plodding. Hard work is the price of all that is valuable. All the great strides in the world's achievements were made possible only by forced activity and prolonged effort. Spontaneity is a foreign element in the process of healthy and rugged development. The spider spins its web and the morning bespangles it with dew, creating a thing of beauty, but valueless. It would require the entire existence of several hundred silkworms to produce an equal amount of silk fabric. The mushroom grows up in a night, and dies in the glare of the morning sun; while the oak, struggling through the years, battling with the elements, lives a perpetual blessing to man.

It is the intense struggle with the problems of life that produces in men the sturdy qualities. The short cuts to fame are few and not abiding. Success is not reached by a thornless path, but is attained by the path of plain, hard work. All things come to him who waits. Such is the very essence of an idle doctrine! All things come to him who works. Walter Scott working tirelessly in the attic while his companions below carouse the night away; Thoreau banishing himself into the lonely forest that he might prepare for larger usefulness; Dryden, "thinking

on for a fortnight in a perfect frenzy;" Heyne, the German scholar, allowing himself "no more than two nights of weekly rest" for six months, that he might finish a course in Greek; Reynolds, the greatest portrait painter of England, applying his brush for thirty-six hours without stopping; Balzac, determined to be a king in literature, fighting his way with eternal diligence; William Pitt spurning difficulty and "trampling upon impossibility;" Elihu Burritt grappling with mathematics at the forge; or Isaac Newton turning his back upon a life of ease and setting off to college, where "the midnight wind swept over his papers the ashes of his long extinguished fire." These examples and thousands of others remind us that

"Heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."

They had brains and hands too active, ambitions too aggressive, aspirations too lofty for a quiet existence, and they pressed their way onward and upward till they stood near the summit of a lofty ideal.

When Xerxes, that great Persian monarch, seated upon a throne of ivory and gold, viewed for the last time the magnificent array of his armies and his fleets, we read that he buried his face in his hands and wept, because he had reached the zenith of his glory; his ambition had been spent, his work had come to an end. And more desolate should be the man to-day who does not feel the passion of an earnest life, who does not yearn for some noble activity. He who sits with folded arms in the craft of civilization to be borne idly along while others ply the oars, must soon part company with the brave, loyal sons of activity to launch his idle bark in the dead waters of life, where the currents never come and the winds of energy are never felt.

"At the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
On its sounding anvil shaped,
Each burning deed and thought."

V

Ethics of Activity

"The busy world shoves angrily aside
The man who stands with arms akimbo set,
Till the occasion tells him what to do;
And he who waits to have his task marked out.
Shall die and leave his errand unfulfilled."

--James Russell Lowell.

A Man's Relation to Society

This question of activity is a twofold problem. In the preceding chapter

we viewed it from the standpoint of the individual--as if he were the sole occupant of the boat, rowing toward a purely selfish end; going, as it were, in quest of the prize of life for purely personal aggrandizement. Whereas, strictly speaking, no man exists in a purely individualistic sense. He can not regard himself as separable from a social whole. Every individual is a vital element of an organized force working toward a mutual end. You are an integral factor, so to speak, of the social problem, but your value is determined by your relation to other quantifies in the complex system with which you are identified. As a segregated unit, you diminish in value.

A combination of diverse and multi-form contributions assimilated from a complex human life, your being looks to many sources for its development; from the lowest phase of experience to the highest. These influences you must acknowledge as emanating from a social system--influences which you are totally powerless, alone, to exert upon yourself. For instance, a man can not be his own educator in all that the term implies--he can not make his own books, print his own newspapers; if he could he would have to look outside of himself for the data necessary for his use. In other words, no man lives to himself alone. He can no more be separated from the social order of things and retain character value, than any one of a hundred square inches of canvas in an oil painting, separated from the rest, would constitute a picture. A single note in a musical composition, however exquisite the piece may be, has comparatively little value taken by itself; only when it assumes relationship with other notes and becomes governed by the law of harmony, does it fulfill its mission and become a valuable factor.

Then, as units of a social whole, we have obligations other than those affecting "individual" problems. Society has a rightful claim upon every one of its members. "You are not your own, you are bought with a price," is true in a larger sense than a merely Scriptural one. For what one becomes is really, as already stated, but the effect of combined influences brought to bear upon one's life by the forces of human society. Therefore, society expects us to reciprocate, and is just in its claim; just as parents are entitled to the high esteem and reciprocation of their offspring. It demands of each one of us all that we are capable of producing, exacting the highest order of service as well. The paying of taxes does not placate the demands which society makes upon you. It demands yourself--body, mind, and soul--not in a passive sense, but in active relationship to your environment. And every man is morally bound to respect the claims thus made upon him.

The highest socialistic conception is not that which contemplates an equitable distribution of property and labor. But assuming a more rational ground, it believes in equal rights to all; is based upon a right proportion of motives rather than upon the equalization of property considerations. It is both humanitarian and utilitarian. It seeks its own principally, yet is generous in the ulterior aim. This is the ideal relation between the individual and the social order. The greatest duty confronting each one in the world, and the one which all should earnestly embrace, is the duty of making the most of one's self with the ulterior view of contributing the largest measure of usefulness to his fellow-men.

On the other hand, to employ an extreme example--and yet it is shown by statistics that there are one hundred thousand tramps and vagrants in this country--the man who folds his arms and defiantly proclaims that the world owes him a living, mutinies against the sacred order of things--"fouls his own nest," as it were. To that man society replies: "If

any man is not willing to work, neither let him eat." And this is the dominant note of the twentieth century as truly as it was in the first when spoken by the Roman philosopher. To harbor the doctrine that the world owes every man a living, not only discounts the character value of the individual, but has a reflex action on the entire social organism. Just as one wheel out of play in the mechanism of a watch throws the entire works out of order, or one team in a procession halting the whole train behind it, the individual failing to do his part affects the equilibrium of the whole. Napoleon lost the Battle of Waterloo and died in exile, a prisoner at St. Helena, because one of his marshals, failing to comply with orders, arrived too late with re-enforcements. Remember that you have an important part to perform, that, as in mathematics, you are a quantity so connected with another quantity that if any alteration be made in the former there will be a consequent alteration in the latter.

In the busy hive of twentieth-century civilization scant space has been provided for drones. The drone is a minus quantity in the problem of life; instead of adding to the common weal, he is ever subtracting from it. Like an owl he sits in the gloom of indolence hooting at the caravan of events. The eye of the world is quick to observe the man who is resting on his oars. A more graphic picture of the man who is ever magnifying the world's duty to him, and minimizing his duty to the world, could not be painted than that one which James Russell Lowell has penned:

"The busy world shoves angrily aside
The man who stands with arms akimbo set."

The world has but one duty to this man, namely, to dispel the cloud from his vision and arouse him to worthy action.

To contend that the world owes every man a living would be as preposterous as to assert that the government owes every citizen under the flag a pension. The world owes no man anything except that for which he pays a just equivalent. Every man is indebted to the world; he owes it all his best possessions--his talent, time, and effort. And the individual who attempts to throw off this yoke of duty is violating one of nature's great laws. Even the lower forms of life afford example of this supreme law. Solomon startles the sluggard with his sharp admonition to betake himself to the ant. And Sir John Lubbock points men to the insect world to learn real diligence and thrift.

Individual stagnation means public pollution. The man who arms himself with a "rake," ever reaching out after something without giving an equivalent, instead of championing the "hoe," determined to exercise his faculties in the interests of humanity, becomes hostile to the noblest sentiment and the highest aims of society; as in the case of the tramps mentioned above who are a national menace, Idleness breeds vice. Industry enhances the virtues. When a man ceases to work he retrogrades; he becomes a stranger to lofty ideals and wholesome activities. The man with an ambition ever finds himself in the ascendancy; while he who deplores the exercise of his powers, avoiding work as he would a powder magazine or a pest, is in the descendancy toward a state of groveling and low ideals. And the difference between these two men marks the difference between success and failure.

We are ever obligated to a great duty, namely, to reach the maximum of our possibilities. Our greatest prerogative in the economy of life is the wise husbanding of resources, and the skillful marshaling of our forces on the field of common duty. The great duty of leading a useful life confronts us

always. We can by no stratagem, whatsoever, escape its presence. We ever hear its voice calling after us, and can no more flee from it than we can flee from the voice of conscience. Like Poe's raven, it sets up a never ceasing appeal at the door of our lives. Prudence forbids that we turn our back on this duty of self-devotion. For as Michael Angelo saw in the block of marble the hidden angel, a wise man sees in duty an infinite opportunity.

Galileo was so absorbed in his pursuit that he forgot personal comfort and even personal safety, and lost his eyesight in quest of the mountains in the moon, the rings around Saturn and the "star-heaps" in the sky. And when that distinguished man of science, Professor Agassiz, was invited to lecture at a great price, his reply was, "I have no time to make money." Likewise did the great Spurgeon, when offered almost fabulous prices to cross the Atlantic and lecture, refuse because of a zealous devotion to the purpose of his life. And every one should learn that the thorough and faithful performance of duty is the first essential of a worthy life.

Every human soul was made with some design, invested with the possibility of a useful life, a noble destiny. Whether it be the mercenary Greek vending his wares on the street corner, or the roaming Italian with his harp strapped over his shoulder, or the dissolute man behind prison bars paying the penalty of misspent days--all are invested with latent power and talent to fill a loftier place in the world. But, unfortunately, while most men have the desire, not all have the determination to rise above the ordinary and the common state in which they find themselves. This is a deplorable condition, seriously detracting from the sum of human greatness.

Every man has been called for dominion. Each, in the divine plan, is to be a ruler in the universe, not a "mollusk with aimless revery;" he is to be a man with vitality, not "dead matter known only as *avoirdupois*." By this measure a man is not worth so much as a sheep which furnishes two substantial commodities--food and clothing. Minus the attributes which qualify him for a high rank, man is a being with a buried talent, only a unit in the great world around him. Plus these attributes, no system of mathematics can compute his worth.

"Let me but do my work from day to day,
In field or forest, at the desk or loom,
In roaring market place, or tranquil room;
Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,
'This is my work; my blessing not my doom;
Of all who live I am the one by whom
This work can best be done in the right way.'"

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