ORISON SWETT MARDEN

Rising in the World

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Preface

The demand for more than a dozen editions of “Pushing to the Front” during its first year and its universally favorable reception, both at home and abroad, have encouraged the author to publish this companion volume of somewhat similar scope and purpose. The two books were prepared simultaneously; and the story of the first, given in its preface, applies equally well to this.

Inspiration to character-building and worthy achievement is the keynote of the present volume; its object, to arouse to honorable exertion youths who are drifting without aim, to awaken dormant ambitions in those who have grown discouraged in the struggle for success, to encourage and stimulate to higher resolve those who are

setting out to make their own way, with perhaps neither friendship nor capital other than a determination to get on in the world.

Nothing is so fascinating to a youth with high purpose, life, and energy throbbing in his young blood as stories of men and women who have brought great things to pass. Though these themes are as old as the human race, yet they are ever new, and more interesting to the young than any fiction. The cry of youth is for life! more life! No didactic or dogmatic teaching, however brilliant, will capture a twentieth-century boy, keyed up to the highest pitch by the pressure of an intense civilization. The romance of achievement under difficulties, of obscure beginnings and triumphant ends; the story of how great men started, their struggles, their long waitings, amid

want and woe, the obstacles overcome, the final triumphs; examples, which explode excuses, of men who have seized common situations and made them great; of those of average capacity who have succeeded by the use of ordinary means, by dint of indomitable will and inflexible purpose — these will most inspire the ambitious youth. The author teaches that there are bread and success for every youth under the American flag who has the grit to seize his chance and work his way to his own loaf; that the barriers are not yet erected which can say to aspiring talent, “Thus far and no farther”; that the most forbidding circumstances cannot repress a longing for knowledge, a yearning for growth; that poverty, humble birth, loss of limbs or even eyesight, have not been able to bar the

progress of men with grit; that poverty has rocked the cradle of the giants who have wrung civilization from barbarism, and have led the world up from savagery to the Gladstones, the Lincolns, and the Grants.

The book shows that it is the man with one unwavering aim who cuts his way through opposition and forges to the front; that in this electric age, where everything is pusher or pushed, he who would succeed must hold his ground and push hard; that what are stumbling-blocks and defeats to the weak and vacillating are but stepping-stones and victories to the strong and determined. The author teaches that every germ of goodness will at last struggle into bloom and fruitage, and that true success follows every right step. He has tried to touch the higher springs of the youth's

aspiration; to lead him to high ideals; to teach him that there is something nobler in an occupation than merely living-getting or money-getting; that a man may make millions and be a failure still; to caution youth not to allow the maxims of a low prudence, dinned daily into his ears in this money-getting age, to repress the longings for a higher life; that the hand can never safely reach higher than does the heart.

The author's aim has been largely through concrete illustrations which have pith, point, and purpose, to be more suggestive than dogmatic, in a style more practical than elegant, more helpful than ornate, more pertinent than novel.

He wishes to acknowledge valuable assistance from Mr. Arthur W. Brown, of West Kingston, R.I.

O. S. M.

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Chapter 1: Wanted — A Man

"Wanted; men:

Not systems fit and wise,

Not faiths with rigid eyes,

Not wealth in mountain piles.

Not power with gracious smiles.

Not even the potent pen:

Wanted; men."

All the world cries. Where is the man who will save us? We want a man! Don't look so far for this man. You have him at hand. This man, — it is you; it is I; it is each one of us! . . . How to constitute oneself a man? Nothing harder, if one knows not how to will it; nothing easier, if one wills it. — Alexandre Dumas.

Diogenes sought with a lantern at noontide in ancient Athens for a perfectly honest man, and sought in vain. In the marketplace he once cried aloud, “Hear me, O men”; and, when a crowd collected around him, he said scornfully: “I called for men, not pygmies.”

Over the door of every profession, every occupation, every calling, the world has a standing advertisement: “Wanted — A Man.”

Wanted, a man who will not lose his individuality in a crowd, a man who has the courage of his convictions, who is not afraid to say “No,” though all the world say “Yes.” Wanted, a man who, though he is dominated by a mighty purpose, will not permit one great faculty to dwarf, cripple, warp, or mutilate his manhood; who will not

allow the over-development of one faculty to stunt or paralyze his other faculties.

Wanted, a man who is larger than his calling, who considers it a low estimate of his occupation to value it merely as a means of getting a living. Wanted, a man who sees self-development, education and culture, discipline and drill, character and manhood, in his occupation.

A thousand pulpits vacant in a single religious denomination, a thousand preachers standing idle in the marketplace, while a thousand church committees scour the land for men to fill those same vacant pulpits, and scour in vain, is a sufficient indication, in one direction at least, of the largeness of the opportunities of the age, and also of the crying need of good men.

Wanted, a man of courage, who is not a Coward in any part of his nature.

Wanted, a man who is well balanced, who is not cursed with some little defect or weakness which cripples his usefulness and neutralizes his powers.

Wanted, a man who is symmetrical, and not one-sided in his development, who has not sent all the energies of his being into one narrow specialty and allowed all the other branches of his life to wither and die. Wanted, a man who is broad, who does not take half views of things; a man who mixes common sense with his theories, who does not let a college education spoil him for practical, every-day life; a man who prefers substance to show, and one who regards his good name as a priceless treasure.

Wanted, a man “who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to heed a strong will, the servant of a tender conscience, who has learned to love all beauty, whether of nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself.”

The world wants a man who is educated all over; whose nerves are brought to their acutest sensibility; whose brain is cultured, keen, incisive, broad; whose hands are deft; whose eyes are alert, sensitive, microscopic; whose heart is tender, magnanimous, true.

The whole world is looking for such a man. Although there are millions out of employment, yet it is almost impossible to find just the right man in almost any

department of life, and yet everywhere we see the advertisement: “Wanted — A Man.”

Rousseau, in his celebrated essay on education, says: “According to the order of nature, men being equal, their common vocation is the profession of humanity; and whoever is well educated to discharge the duty of a man cannot be badly prepared to fill any of those offices that have a relation to him. It matters little to me whether my pupil be designed for the army, the pulpit, or the bar. Nature has destined us to the offices of human life antecedent to our destination concerning society. To live is the profession I would teach him. When I have done with him, it is true he will be neither a soldier, a lawyer, nor a divine. *Let him first be a man*; Fortune may remove him from one rank to another as she

pleases, he will be always found in his place.”

A little, short, doctor of divinity in a large Baptist convention stood on a step and said he thanked God he was a Baptist. The audience could not hear and called “Louder.” “Get up higher,” someone said. “I can’t,” he replied. “To be a Baptist is as high as one can get.” But there is something higher than being a Baptist, and that is being a man.

As Emerson says, Talleyrand’s question is ever the main one; not, is he rich? is he committed? is he well-meaning? has he this or that faculty? is he of the movement? is he of the establishment? but is he anybody? does he stand for something? He must be good of his kind. That is all that

Talleyrand, all that the common sense of mankind asks.

When Garfield as a young boy was asked what he meant to be, he answered: “First of all, I must make myself a man; if I do not succeed in that, I can succeed in nothing.”

Montaigne says our work is not to train a soul by itself alone, nor a body by itself alone, but to train a man.

One great need of the world today is for men and women who are good animals. To endure the strain of our concentrated civilization, the coming man and woman must have good bodies and an excess of animal spirits.

What more glorious than a magnificent manhood, animated with the bounding spirits of overflowing health?

It is a sad sight to see thousands of students graduated every year from our grand institutions whose object is to make stalwart, independent, self-supporting men, turned out into the world saplings instead of stalwart oaks, “memory-glands” instead of brainy men, helpless instead of self-supporting, sickly instead of robust, weak instead of strong, leaning instead of erect. “So many promising youths, and never a finished man!”

The character sympathizes with and unconsciously takes on the nature of the body. A peevish, snarling, ailing man cannot develop the vigor and strength of character, which is possible to a healthy, robust, cheerful man. There is an inherent love in the human mind for *wholeness*, a demand that man shall come up to the

highest standard; and there is an inherent protest or contempt for preventable deficiency. Nature, too, demands that man be ever at the top of his condition.

As we stand upon the seashore while the tide is coming in, one wave reaches up the beach far higher than any previous one, then recedes, and for some time none that follows comes up to its mark, but after a while the whole sea is there and beyond it. So now and then there comes a man head and shoulders above his fellow men, showing that Nature has not lost her ideal, and after a while even the average man will overtop the highest wave of manhood yet given to the world.

Apelles hunted over Greece for many years, studying the fairest points of beautiful women, getting here an eye, there

a forehead and there a nose, here a grace and there a turn of beauty, for his famous portrait of a perfect woman which enchanted the world. So the coming man will be a composite, many in one. He will absorb into himself not the weakness, not the follies, but the strength and the virtues of other types of men. He will be a man raised to the highest power. He will be self-centered, equipoised, and ever master of himself. His sensibility will not be deadened or blunted by violation of Nature's laws. His whole character will be impressionable, and will respond to the most delicate touches of Nature.

The first requisite of all education and discipline should be man-timber. Tough timber must come from well grown, sturdy trees. Such wood can be turned into a

mast, can be fashioned into a piano or an exquisite carving. But it must become timber first. Time and patience develop the sapling into the tree. So through discipline, education, experience, the sapling child is developed into hardy mental, moral, physical man-timber.

If the youth should start out with the fixed determination that every statement he makes shall be the exact truth; that every promise he makes shall be redeemed to the letter; that every appointment shall be kept with the strictest faithfulness and with full regard for other men’s time; if he should hold his reputation as a priceless treasure, feel that the eyes of the world are upon him, that he must not deviate a hair’s breadth from the truth and right; if he should take such a stand at the outset, he would, like

George Peabody, come to have almost unlimited credit and the confidence of everybody who knows him.

What are palaces and equipages; what though a man could cover a continent with his title-deeds, or an ocean with his commerce; compared with conscious rectitude, with a face that never turns pale at the accuser’s voice, with a bosom that never throbs with fear of exposure, with a heart that might be turned inside out and disclose no stain of dishonor? To have done no man a wrong; to have put your signature to no paper to which the purest angel in heaven might not have been an attesting witness; to walk and live, unseduced, within arm’s length of what is not your own, with nothing between your

desire and its gratification but the invisible law of rectitude; — *this is to be a man*.

Man is the only great thing in the universe. All the ages have been trying to produce a perfect model. Only one complete man has yet been evolved. The best of us are but prophecies of what is to come.

What constitutes a state?

Not high-raised battlement 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, —

Men who their duties know.

But know their rights, and knowing, dare maintain.

Prevent the long-aimed blow.

And crush the tyrant while they rend the chain. — William Jones.

God give us men. A time like this demands

Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands:

Men whom the lust of office does not kill;

Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;

Men who possess opinions and a will;

Men who have honor — men who will not lie;

Men who can stand before a demagogue

And scorn his treacherous flatteries without winking;

Tall men sun-crowned, who live above the fog

In public duty, and in private thinking. — Anon.

Chapter 2: Dare

The Spartans did not inquire how many the enemy are, but where they are. — Agis II.

What's brave, what's noble, let's do it after the high Roman fashion, and make death proud to take us. — Shakespeare.

Let me die facing the enemy. — Bayard.

Who conquers me, shall find a stubborn foe. — Byron.

No great deed is done by falterers who ask for certainty. — George Eliot.

Fortune befriends the bold. — Dryden.

To stand with a smile upon your face against a stake from which you cannot get away — that, no doubt, is heroic. But the true glory is resignation to the inevitable. To stand unchained, with perfect liberty to go

away, held only by the higher claims of duty, and let the fire creep up to the heart, — this is heroism. — F. W. Robertson.

“Steady, men! Every man must die where he stands!” said Colin Campbell to the Ninety-third Highlanders at Balaklava, as an overwhelming force of Russian cavalry came sweeping down. “Ay, ay, Sir Colin! we’ll do that!” was the response from men, many of whom had to keep their word by thus obeying.

“Bring back the colors,” shouted a captain at the battle of the Alma, when an ensign maintained his ground in front, although the men were retreating. “No,” cried the ensign, “bring up the men to the colors.”

“To dare, and again to dare, and without end to dare,” was Danton’s noble defiance

to the enemies of France. “The Commons of France have resolved to deliberate,” said Mirabeau to De Breze, who brought an order from the king for them to disperse, June 23, 1789. “We have heard the intentions that have been attributed to the king; and you, sir, who cannot be recognized as his organ in the National Assembly, — you, who have neither place, voice, nor right to speak, — you are not the person to bring to us a message of his. Go, say to those who sent you that we are here by the power of the people, and that we will not be driven hence, save by the power of the bayonet.”

When the assembled senate of Rome begged Regulus not to return to Carthage to fulfil an illegal promise, he calmly replied: “Have you resolved to dishonor me?

Torture and death are awaiting me, but what are these to the shame of an infamous act, or the wounds of a guilty mind? Slave as I am to Carthage, I still have the spirit of a Roman. I have sworn to return. It is my duty. Let the gods take care of the rest.”

The courage which Cranmer had shown since the accession of Mary gave way the moment his final doom was announced. The moral cowardice which had displayed itself in his miserable compliance with the lust and despotism of Henry VIII. displayed itself again in six successive recantations by which he hoped to purchase pardon. But pardon was impossible; and Cranmer’s strangely mingled nature found a power in its very weakness when he was brought into the church of St. Mary at Oxford on the

21st of March, to repeat his recantation on the way to the stake. “Now,” ended his address to the hushed congregation before him, — “now I come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience more than any other thing that ever I said or did in my life, and that is the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth; which here I now renounce and refuse as things written by a hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, to save my life, if it might be. And, forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand therefore shall be the first punished; for if I come to the fire, it shall be the first burned.” “This was the hand that wrote it,” he again exclaimed at the stake, “therefore it shall suffer first punishment”;

and holding it steadily in the flame, “he never stirred nor cried till life was gone.”

A woman’s piercing shriek suddenly startled a party of surveyors at dinner in a forest of northern Virginia on a calm, sunny day in 1750. The cries were repeated in quick succession, and the men sprang through the undergrowth to learn their cause. “Oh, sir,” exclaimed the woman as she caught sight of a youth of eighteen, but a man in stature and bearing; “you will surely do something for me! Make these friends release me. My boy, — my poor boy is drowning, and they will not let me go!” “It would be madness; she will jump into the river,” said one of the men who was holding her; “and the rapids would dash her to pieces in a moment!” Throwing off his coat, the youth sprang to the edge of the bank,

scanned for a moment the rocks and whirling currents, and then, at sight of part of the boy's dress, plunged into the roaring rapids. "Thank God, he will save my child!" cried the mother, and all rushed to the brink of the precipice; "there he is! Oh, my boy, my darling boy! How could I leave you?"

But all eyes were bent upon the youth struggling with strong heart and hope amid the dizzy sweep of the whirling currents far below. Now it seemed as if he would be dashed against a projecting rock, over which the water flew in foam, and anon a whirlpool would drag him in, from whose grasp escape would seem impossible. Twice the boy went out of sight, but he had reappeared the second time, although terribly near the most dangerous part of the river. The rush of waters here was

tremendous, and no one had ever dared to approach it, even in a canoe, lest he should be dashed to pieces. The youth redoubled his exertions. Three times he was about to grasp the child, when some stronger eddy would toss it from him. One final effort he makes; the child is held aloft by his strong right arm; but a cry of horror bursts from the lips of every spectator as boy and man shoot over the falls and vanish in the seething waters below.

“There they are!” shouted the mother a moment later, in a delirium of joy. “See! they are safe! Great God, I thank Thee!” And sure enough, they emerged unharmed from the boiling vortex, and in a few minutes reached a low place in the bank and were drawn up by their friends, the boy senseless, but still alive, and the youth

almost exhausted. “God will give you a reward,” solemnly spoke the grateful woman. “He will do great things for you in return for this day’s work, and the blessings of thousands besides mine will attend you.”

The youth was George Washington.

“Your Grace has not the organ of animal courage largely developed,” said a phrenologist, who was examining Wellington’s head. “You are right,” replied the Iron Duke, “and but for my sense of duty I should have retreated in my first fight.” That first fight, on an Indian field, was one of the most terrible on record.

When General Jackson was a judge and was holding court in a small settlement, a border ruffian, a murderer and desperado, came into the court-room with brutal

violence and interrupted the court. The judge ordered him to be arrested. The officer did not dare to approach him. “Call a posse,” said the judge, “and arrest him.” But they also shrank in fear from the ruffian. “Call me, then,” said Jackson; “this court is adjourned for five minutes.” He left the bench, walked straight up to the man, and with his eagle eye actually cowed the ruffian, who dropped his weapons, afterwards saying, “There was something in his eye I could not resist.”

One of the last official acts of President Carnot, of France, was the sending of a medal of the French Legion of Honor to a little American girl who lives in Indiana. While a train on the Pan Handle Railroad, having on board several distinguished Frenchmen, was bound to Chicago and the

World’s Fair, Jennie Carey, who was then ten years old, discovered that a trestle was on fire, and that if the train, which was nearly due, entered it a dreadful wreck would take place. Thereupon she ran out upon the track to a place where she could be seen from some little distance. Then she took off her red flannel skirt and, when the train came in view, waved it back and forth across the track. It was seen, and the train stopped. On board of it were seven hundred people, many of whom must have suffered death but for Jennie’s courage and presence of mind. When they returned to France, the Frenchmen brought the occurrence to the notice of President Carnot, and the result was the sending of the medal of this famous French society, the purpose of which is the honoring of

bravery and merit, wherever they may be found.

It was the heroic devotion of an Indian girl that saved the life of Captain John Smith, when the powerful King Powhatan had decreed his death. Ill could the struggling colony spare him at that time.

On May 10, 1796, Napoleon carried the bridge at Lodi, in the face of the Austrian batteries. Fourteen cannons — some accounts say thirty — were trained upon the French end of the structure. Behind them were six thousand troops. Napoleon massed four thousand grenadiers at the head of the bridge, with a battalion of three hundred carbineers in front. At the tap of the drum the foremost assailants wheeled from the cover of the street wall under a terrible hail of grape and canister, and

attempted to pass the gateway to the bridge. The front ranks went down like stalks of grain before a reaper; the column staggered and reeled backward, and the valiant grenadiers were appalled by the task before them. Without a word or a look of reproach, Napoleon placed himself at their head, and his aides and generals rushed to his side. Forward again, this time over heaps of dead that choked the passage, and a quick run, counted by seconds only, carried the column across two hundred yards of clear space, scarcely a shot from the Austrians taking effect beyond the point where the platoons wheeled for the first leap. So sudden and so miraculous was it all that the Austrian artillerists abandoned their guns instantly, and instead of rushing to the front and

meeting the French onslaught, their supports fled in a panic. This Napoleon had counted on in making the bold attack. The contrast between Napoleon's slight figure and the massive grenadiers suggested the nickname "Little Corporal."

When Stephen of Colonna fell into the hands of base assailants, they asked him in derision, "Where is now your fortress?" "Here," was his bold reply, placing his hand upon his heart.

After the Mexican War General McClellan was employed as a topographical engineer in surveying the Pacific coast. From his headquarters at Vancouver he had gone on an exploring expedition with two companions, a soldier and a servant, when one evening he received word that the chiefs of the Columbia River tribes desired

to confer with him. From the messenger's manner he suspected that the Indians meant mischief, and so he warned his companions that they must be ready to leave camp at a moment's notice.

Mounting his horse, he rode boldly into the Indian village. About thirty chiefs were holding council. McClellan was led into the circle, and placed at the right hand of Saltese. He was familiar with the Chinook jargon, and could understand every word spoken in the council. Saltese made known the grievance of the tribes. Two Indians had been captured by a party of white pioneers and hanged for theft. Retaliation for this outrage seemed imperative. The chiefs pondered long, but had little to say. McClellan had been on friendly terms with them, and was not responsible for the

forest executions, but still, he was a white man, and the chiefs had vowed vengeance against the race. The council was prolonged for hours before sentence was passed, and then Saltese, in the name of the head men of the tribes, decreed that McClellan should immediately be put to death.

McClellan said nothing. He had known that argument and pleas for justice or mercy would be of no avail. He sat motionless, apparently indifferent to his fate. By his listlessness he had thrown his captors off their guard. When the sentence was passed, he acted like a flash. Flinging his left arm around the neck of Saltese, he whipped out his revolver and held it close to the chief's temple. "Revoke that sentence, or I shall kill you this instant!" he

cried, with his fingers clicking the trigger. “I revoke it!” exclaimed Saltese, fairly livid from fear. “I must have your word that I can leave this council in safety.” “You have the word of Saltese,” was the quick response.

McClellan knew how sacred was the pledge which he had received. The revolver was lowered. Saltese was released from the embrace of the strong arm. McClellan strode out of the tent with his revolver in his hand. 'Not a hand was raised against him. He mounted his horse and rode to his camp, where his two followers were ready to spring into the saddle and to escape from the villages. He owed his life to his quickness of perception, his courage, and to his accurate knowledge of Indian character.

In 1856, Rufus Choate spoke to an audience of nearly five thousand in Lowell, Mass., in favor of the candidacy of James Buchanan for the presidency. The floor of the great hall began to sink, settling more and more as he proceeded with his address, until a sound of cracking timber below would have precipitated a stampede with fatal results but for the coolness of B. F. Butler, who presided. Telling the people to remain quiet, he said that he would see if there were any cause for alarm. He found the supports of the floor in so bad a condition that the slightest applause would be likely to bury the audience in the ruins of the building. Returning rather leisurely to the platform, he whispered to Choate as he passed, “We shall all be in in five minutes”; then he told the crowd that there was no

immediate danger if they would slowly disperse. The post of danger, he added, was on the platform, which was most weakly supported, therefore he and those with him would be the last to leave. No doubt many lives were saved by his coolness.

Many distinguished foreign and American statesmen were present at a fashionable dinner party where wine was freely poured, but Schuyler Colfax, then vice-president of the United States, declined to drink from a proffered cup. “Colfax dares not drink,” sneered a Senator who had already taken too much. “You are right,” said the Vice-President, “I dare not.”

When Grant was in Houston many years ago, he was given a rousing reception. Naturally hospitable, and naturally inclined

to like a man of Grant's make-up, the Houstonites determined to go beyond any other Southern city in the way of a banquet and other manifestations of their good-will and hospitality. They made lavish preparations for the dinner, the committee taking great pains to have the finest wines that could be procured for the table that night. When the time came to serve the wine, the head-waiter went first to Grant. Without a word the general quietly turned down all the glasses at his plate. This movement was a great surprise to the Texans, but they were equal to the occasion. Without a single word being spoken, every man along the line of the long tables turned his glasses down, and there was not a drop of wine taken that night.

Two French officers at Waterloo were advancing to charge a greatly superior force. One, observing that the other showed signs of fear, said, “Sir, I believe you are frightened.” “Yes, I am,” was the reply, “and if you were half as much frightened, you would run away.”

“That’s a brave man,” said Wellington, when he saw a soldier turn pale as he marched against a battery; “he knows his danger, and faces it.”

“There are many cardinals and bishops at Worms,” said a friend to Luther, “and they will burn your body to ashes as they did that of John Huss.” Luther replied, “Although they should make a fire that should reach from Worms to Wittenberg, and that should flame up to heaven, in the Lord’s name I would pass through it and appear before

them.” He said to another; “I would enter Worms though there were as many devils there as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses.” Another man said to him; “Duke George will surely arrest you.” He replied: “It is my duty to go, and I will go, though it rain Duke Georges for nine days together.”

A Western paper recently invited the surviving Union and Confederate officers to give an account of the bravest act observed by each during the Civil War. Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson said that at a dinner at Beaufort, S. C., where wine flowed freely and ribald jests were bandied, Dr. Miner, a slight, boyish fellow who did not drink, was told that he could not go until he had drunk a toast, told a story, or sung a song. He replied: “I cannot sing, but I will give a toast, although I must drink it in

water. It is ‘Our Mothers.’” The men were so affected and ashamed that they took him by the hand and thanked him for displaying such admirable moral courage.

It takes courage for a young man to stand firmly erect while others are bowing and fawning for praise and power. It takes courage to wear threadbare clothes while your comrades dress in broadcloth. It takes courage to remain in honest poverty when others grow rich by fraud. It takes courage to say “No” squarely when those around you say “Yes.” It takes courage to do your duty in silence and obscurity while others prosper and grow famous although neglecting sacred obligations. It takes courage to unmask your true self, to show your blemishes to a condemning world, and to pass for what you really are.

It takes courage and pluck to be out-voted, beaten, laughed at, scoffed, ridiculed, derided, misunderstood, misjudged, to stand alone with all the world against you, but:

“They are slaves who dare not be

In the right with two or three.”

“An honest man is not the worse because a dog barks at him.”

We live ridiculously for fear of being thought ridiculous.

“’Tis he is the coward who proves false to his vows.

To his manhood, his honor, for a laugh or a sneer.”

The youth who starts out by being afraid to speak what he thinks will usually end by being afraid to think what he wishes.

How we shrink from an act of our own! We live as others live. Custom or fashion, or your doctor or minister, dictates, and they in turn dare not depart from their schools. Dress, living, servants, carriages, everything must conform, or we are ostracized. Who dares conduct his household or business affairs in his own way, and snap his fingers at Dame Grundy?

It takes courage for a public man not to bend the knee to popular prejudice. It takes courage to refuse to follow custom when it is injurious to his health and morals. How much easier for a politician to prevaricate

and dodge an issue than to stand squarely on his feet like a man!

As the strongest man has a weakness somewhere, so the greatest hero is a coward somewhere. Peter was courageous enough to draw his sword to defend his Master, but he could not stand the ridicule and the finger of scorn of the maidens in the high priest’s hall, and he actually denied even the acquaintance of the Master he had declared he would die for.

Don’t be like Uriah Keep, begging everybody’s pardon for taking the liberty of being in the world. There is nothing attractive in timidity, nothing lovable in fear. Both are deformities and are repulsive. Manly courage is always dignified and graceful.

Bruno, condemned to be burned alive in Rome, said to his judge: “You are more afraid to pronounce my sentence than I am to receive it.” Anne Askew, racked until her bones were dislocated, never flinched, but looked her tormentor calmly in the face and refused to abjure her faith.

“I should have thought fear would have kept you from going so far,” said a relative who found the little boy Nelson wandering a long distance from home. “Fear?” said the future admiral, “I don’t know him.”

“To think a thing is impossible is to make it so.” *Courage is victory, timidity is defeat*.

That simple shepherd-lad, David, fresh from his flocks, marching unattended and unarmed, save with his shepherd’s staff and sling, to confront the colossal Goliath

with his massive armor, is the sublimest audacity the world has ever seen.

“Dent, I wish you would get down and see what is the matter with that leg there,” said Grant, when he and Colonel Dent were riding through the thickest of a fire that had become so concentrated and murderous that his troops had all been driven back. “I guess looking after your horse’s legs can wait,” said Dent; “it is simply murder for us to sit here.” “All right,” said Grant; “if you don’t want to see to it, I will.” He dismounted, untwisted a piece of telegraph wire which had begun to cut the horse’s leg, examined it deliberately, and climbed into his saddle. “Dent,” said he, “when you’ve got a horse that you think a great deal of, you should never take any chances with him. If that wire had been left there for

a little time longer, he would have gone dead lame, and would perhaps have been ruined for life.”

Wellington said that at Waterloo the hottest of the battle raged round a farmhouse, with an orchard surrounded by a thick hedge, which was so important a point in the British position that orders were given to hold it at any hazard or sacrifice. At last the powder and ball ran short and the hedges took fire, surrounding the orchard with a wall of flame. A messenger had been sent for ammunition, and soon two loaded wagons came galloping toward the farmhouse. “The driver of the first wagon, with the reckless daring of an English boy, spurred his struggling and terrified horses through the burning heap; but the flames rose fiercely round, and caught the powder,

which exploded in an instant, sending wagon, horses, and rider in fragments into the air. For an instant the driver of the second wagon paused, appalled by his comrade's fate; the next, observing that the flames, beaten back for the moment by the explosion, afforded him one desperate chance, sent his horses at the smoldering breach and, amid the deafening cheers of the garrison, landed his terrible cargo safely within. Behind him the flames closed up, and raged more fiercely than ever."

At the battle of Friedland a cannon-ball came over the heads of the French soldiers, and a young soldier instinctively dodged. Napoleon looked at him and smilingly said: "My friend, if that ball were destined for you, though you were to

burrow a hundred feet underground it would be sure to find you there.”

When the mine in front of Petersburg was finished the fuse was lighted and the Union troops were drawn up ready to charge the enemy’s works as soon as the explosion should make a breach. But seconds, minutes, and tens of minutes passed, without a sound from the mine, and the suspense became painful. Lieutenant Doughty and Sergeant Rees volunteered to examine the fuse. Through the long subterranean galleries they hurried in silence, not knowing but that they were advancing to a horrible death. They found the defect, fired the train anew, and soon a terrible upheaval of earth gave the signal to march to victory.

At the battle of Copenhagen, as Nelson walked the deck slippery with blood and covered with the dead, he said: “This is warm work, and this day may be the last to any of us in a moment. But mark me, I would not be elsewhere for thousands.” At the battle of Trafalgar, when he was shot and was being carried below, he covered his face, that those fighting might not know their chief had fallen.

In a skirmish at Salamanca, while the enemy’s guns were pouring shot into his regiment, Sir William Napier’s men became disobedient. He at once ordered a halt, and flogged four of the ringleaders under fire. The men yielded at once, and then marched three miles under a heavy cannonade as coolly as if it were a review.

Execute your resolutions immediately. Thoughts are but dreams until their effects be tried. Does competition trouble you? work away; what is your 'competitor but a man? *Conquer your place in the world*, for all things serve a brave soul. Combat difficulty manfully; sustain misfortune bravely; endure poverty nobly; encounter disappointment courageously. The influence of the brave man is contagious and creates an epidemic of noble zeal in all about him. Every day sends to the grave obscure men who have only remained in obscurity because their timidity has prevented them from making a first effort; and who, if they could have been induced to begin, would in all probability have gone great lengths in the career of usefulness and fame. “No great deed is done,” says

George Eliot, “by falterers who ask for certainty.”

After the great inward struggle was over, and he had determined to remain loyal to his principles, Thomas More walked cheerfully to the block. His wife called him a fool for staying in a dark, damp, filthy prison when he might have his liberty by merely renouncing his doctrines, as some of the bishops had done. But Thomas More preferred death to dishonor.

His daughter showed the power of love to drive away fear. She remained true to her father when all others, even her mother, had forsaken him. After his head had been cut off and exhibited on a pole on London Bridge, the poor girl begged it of the authorities, and requested that it be buried

in the coffin with her. Her request was granted, for her death soon occurred.

When Sir Walter Raleigh came to the scaffold, he was very faint, and began his speech to the crowd by saying that during the last two days he had been visited by two ague fits. “If, therefore, you perceive any weakness in me, I beseech you ascribe it to my sickness rather than to myself.” He took the ax and kissed the blade, and said to the sheriff: “’T is a sharp medicine, but a sound cure for all diseases.”

Don’t waste time dreaming of obstacles you may never encounter, or in crossing bridges you have not reached. To half will and to hang forever in the balance is to lose your grip on life.

Abraham Lincoln’s boyhood was one long struggle with poverty, with little education, and no influential friends. When at last he had begun the practise of law, it required no little courage to cast his fortune with the weaker side in politics, and thus imperil what small reputation he had gained. Only the most sublime moral courage could have sustained him as President to hold his ground against hostile criticism and a long train of disaster; to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, to support Grant and Stanton against the clamor of the politicians and the press.

Lincoln never shrank from espousing an unpopular cause when he believed it to be right. At the time when it almost cost a young lawyer his bread and butter to defend the fugitive slave, and when other

lawyers had refused, Lincoln would always plead the cause of the unfortunate whenever an opportunity presented. “Go to Lincoln,” people would say, when these hounded fugitives were seeking protection; “he’s not afraid of any cause, if it’s right.”

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,

Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and ’tis prosperous to be just:

Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside.

Doubting in his abject spirit, till bis Lord is crucified. — Lowell

As Salmon P. Chase left the court room after an impassioned plea for the runaway slave girl Matilda, a man looked at him in surprise and said: “There goes a fine young

fellow who has just ruined himself." But in thus ruining himself Chase had taken the first important step in a career in which he became Governor of Ohio, United States Senator from Ohio, Secretary of the United States Treasury, and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

At the trial of William Penn for having spoken at a Quaker meeting, the recorder, not satisfied with the first verdict, said to the jury: "We will have a verdict by the help of God, or you shall starve for it." "You are Englishmen," said Penn; "mind your privileges, give not away your right." At last the jury, after two days and two nights without food, returned a verdict of "Not guilty." The recorder fined them forty marks apiece for their independence.

What cared Christ for the jeers of the crowd? The palsied hand moved, the blind saw, the leper was made whole, the dead spake, despite the ridicule and scoffs of the spectators.

What cared Wendell Phillips for rotten eggs, derisive scorn, and hisses? In him “at last the scornful world had met its match.” Were Beecher and Gough to be silenced by the rude English mobs that came to extinguish them? No! they held their ground and compelled unwilling thousands to hear and to heed. Did Anna Dickinson leave the platform when the pistol bullets of the Molly Maguires flew about her head? She silenced those pistols by her courage and her arguments.

What the world wants is a Knox, who dares to preach on with a musket leveled at his

head; a Garrison, who is not afraid of a jail, or a mob, or a scaffold erected in front of his door.

When General Butler was sent with nine thousand men to quell the New York riots, he arrived in advance of his troops, and found the streets thronged with an angry mob, which had already hanged several men to lamp-posts. Without waiting for his men, Butler went to the place where the crowd was most dense, overturned an ash barrel, stood upon it, and began: “Delegates from Five Points, fiends from hell, you have murdered your superiors,” and the bloodstained crowd quailed before the courageous words of a single man in a city which Mayor Fernando Wood could not restrain with the aid of police and militia.

“Our enemies are before us,” exclaimed the Spartans at Thermopylae. “And we are before them,” was the cool reply of Leonidas. "Deliver your arms,” came the message from Xerxes. “Come and take them,” was the answer Leonidas sent back. A Persian soldier said: “You will not be able to see the sun for flying javelins and arrows.” “Then we will fight in the shade,” replied a Lacedemonian. What wonder that a handful of such men checked the march of the greatest host that ever trod the earth!

“It is impossible,” said a staff officer, when Napoleon gave directions for a daring plan. “Impossible!” thundered the great commander, “impossible is the adjective of fools!”

The courageous man is an example to the intrepid. His influence is magnetic. Men follow him, even to the death.

Men who have dared have moved the world, often before reaching the prime of life. It is astonishing what daring to begin and perseverance have enabled even youths to achieve. Alexander, who ascended the throne at twenty, had conquered the known world before dying at thirty-three. Julius Caesar captured eight hundred cities, conquered three hundred nations, defeated three million men, became a great orator and one of the greatest statesmen known, and still was a young man. Washington was appointed adjutant-general at nineteen, was sent at twenty-one as an ambassador to treat with the French, and won his first battle as a

colonel at twenty-two. Lafayette was made general of the whole French Army at twenty, Charlemagne was master of France and Germany at thirty. Galileo was but eighteen when he saw the principle of the pendulum in the swing lamp in the cathedral at Pisa. Peel was in Parliament at twenty-one. Gladstone was in Parliament before he was twenty-two, and at twenty-four he was Lord of the Treasury. Elizabeth Barrett Browning was proficient in Greek and Latin at twelve; De Quincey at eleven. Robert Browning wrote at eleven poetry of no mean order. Cowley, who sleeps in Westminster Abbey, published a volume of poems at fifteen. Luther was but twenty-nine when he nailed his famous thesis to the door of the bishop and defied the pope. Nelson was a lieutenant in the

British Navy before he was twenty. He was but forty-seven when he received his death wound at Trafalgar. At thirty-six, Cortez was the conqueror of Mexico; at thirty-two, Clive had established the British power in India. Hannibal, the greatest of military commanders, was only thirty when, at Cannae, he dealt an almost annihilating blow at the republic of Rome, and Napoleon was only twenty-seven when, on the plains of Italy, he outgeneraled and defeated, one after another, the veteran marshals of Austria.

Equal courage and resolution are often shown by men who have passed the allotted limit of life. Victor Hugo and Wellington were both in their prime after they had reached the age of threescore years and ten. Gladstone ruled England

with a strong hand at eighty-four, and was a marvel of literary and scholarly ability.

Shakespeare says: “He is not worthy of the honeycomb that shuns the hive because the bees have stings.”

"The brave man is not he who feels no fear.

For that were stupid and irrational;

But he whose noble soul its fear subdues

And bravely dares the danger nature shrinks from.”

Many a bright youth has accomplished nothing of worth to himself or the world simply because he did not dare to commence things.

Begin! Begin! Begin!!!

Whatever people may think of you, do that which you believe to be right. Be alike

indifferent to censure or praise. — Pythagoras.

I dare to do all that may become a man:

Who dares do more is none. — Shakespeare.

For man's great actions are performed in minor struggles. There are obstinate and unknown braves who defend themselves inch by inch in the shadows against the fatal invasion of want and turpitude. There are noble and mysterious triumphs which no eye sees, no renown rewards, and no flourish of trumpets salutes. Life, misfortune, isolation, abandonment, and poverty are battlefields which have their heroes. — Victor Hugo.

Quit yourselves like men. — 1 Samuel iv. 9.

Chapter 3: The Will and the Way

“I will find a way or make one.”

Nothing is impossible to the man who can will. — Mirabeau.

The iron will of one stout heart shall make a thousand quail:

A feeble dwarf, dauntlessly resolved, will turn the tide of battle.

And rally to a nobler strife the giants that had fled. Tupper.

In the lexicon of youth which fate reserves for a bright manhood there is no such word as fail. — Bulwer.

When a firm and decisive spirit is recognized, it is curious to see how the space clears around a man and leaves him room and freedom. — John Foster.

“As well can the Prince of Orange pluck the stars from the sky, as bring the ocean to the wall of Leyden for your relief,” was the derisive shout of the Spanish soldiers when told that the Dutch fleet would raise that terrible four months’ siege of 1 574. But from the parched lips of William, tossing on his bed of fever at Rotterdam, had issued the command: *“Break down the dikes: give Holland hack to ocean!”* and the people had replied: “Better a drowned land than a lost land.” They began to demolish dike after dike of the strong lines, ranged one within another for fifteen miles to their city of the interior. It was an enormous task; the garrison was starving; and the besiegers laughed in scorn at the slow progress of the puny insects who sought to rule the waves of the sea. But ever, as of old, Heaven aids

those who help themselves. On the first and second .of October a violent equinoctial gale rolled the ocean inland, and swept the fleet on the rising waters almost to the camp of the Spaniards. The next morning the garrison sallied out to attack their enemies, but the besiegers had fled in terror under cover of the darkness. The next day the wind changed, and a counter tempest brushed the water, with the fleet upon it, from the surface of Holland. The outer dikes were replaced at once, leaving the North Sea within its old bounds. When the flowers bloomed the following spring, a joyous procession marched through the streets to found the University of Leyden, in commemoration of the wonderful deliverance of the city.

At a dinner party given in 1837, at the residence of Chancellor Kent, in New York City, some of the most distinguished men in the country were invited, and among them was a young and rather melancholy and reticent Frenchman. Professor Morse was also one of the guests, and during the evening he drew the attention of Mr. Gallatin, then a prominent statesman, to the stranger, observing that his forehead indicated a great intellect. “Yes,” replied Mr. Gallatin, touching his own forehead with his finger, “there is a great deal in that head of his but he has a strange fancy. Can you believe it? He has the idea that he will one day be the Emperor of France. Can you conceive anything more absurd than that?”

It did seem absurd, for this reserved Frenchman was then a poor adventurer, an

exile from his country, without fortune or powerful connections, and yet, fourteen years later, his idea became a fact, — his dream of becoming Napoleon HI. was realized. True, before he accomplished his purpose there were long, dreary years of imprisonment, exile, disaster, and patient labor and hope, but he gained his ambition at last. He was not scrupulous as to the means employed to accomplish his ends, yet he is a remarkable example of what pluck and energy can do.

When Mr. Ingram, publisher of the “Illustrated London News,” began life as a newsdealer at Nottingham, England, he walked ten miles to deliver a single paper rather than disappoint a customer. Does anyone wonder that such a youth succeeded? Once he rose at two o’clock in

the morning and walked to London to get some papers because there was no post to bring them. He determined that his customers should not be disappointed. This is the kind of will that finds a way.

There is scarcely anything in all biography grander than the saying of young Henry Fawcett, Gladstone's last Postmaster General, to his grief-stricken father, who had put out both his eyes by birdshot during a game hunt: "Never mind, father, blindness shall not interfere with my success in life." One of the most pathetic sights in London streets, long afterward, was Henry Fawcett, M. P., led everywhere by a faithful daughter, who acted as amanuensis as well as guide to her plucky father. Think of a young man, scarcely on the threshold of active life, suddenly losing

the sight of both eyes and yet by mere pluck and almost incomprehensible tenacity of purpose, lifting himself into eminence in any direction, to say nothing of becoming one of the foremost men in a country noted for its great men!

The courageous daughter who was eyes to her father was herself a marvelous example of pluck and determination. For the first time in the history of Oxford College, which reaches back centuries, she succeeded in winning the post which had only been gained before by great men, such as Gladstone, — the post of senior wrangler. This achievement had had no parallel in history up to that date, and attracted the attention of the whole civilized world. Not only had no woman ever held this position before, but with few exceptions

it had only been held by men who in after life became highly distinguished.

“Circumstances,” says Milton, “have rarely favored famous men. They have fought their way to triumph through all sorts of opposing obstacles.”

The true way to conquer circumstances is to be a greater circumstance yourself.

Yet, while desiring to impress in the most forcible manner possible the fact that will-power is necessary to success, and that, other things being equal, the greater the will-power. the grander and more complete the success, we cannot indorse the theory that there is nothing in circumstances or environments, or that any man, simply because he has an indomitable will, may become a Bonaparte, a Pitt, a Webster, a

Beecher, a Lincoln. We must temper determination with discretion, and support it with knowledge and common sense, or it will only lead us to run our heads against posts. We must not expect to overcome a stubborn fact merely by a stubborn will. We only have the right to assume that we can do anything within the limit of our utmost faculty, strength, and endurance. Obstacles, permanently insurmountable, bar our progress in some directions, but in any direction we may reasonably hope and attempt to go we shall find that, as a rule, they are either not insurmountable or else not permanent. The strong-willed, intelligent, persistent man will find or make a way where, in the nature of things, a way can be found or made.

Every schoolboy knows that circumstances do give clients to lawyers and patients to physicians; place ordinary clergymen in extraordinary pulpits; place sons of the rich at the head of immense corporations and large houses, when they have very ordinary ability and scarcely any experience, while poor young men with unusual ability, good education, good character, and large experience, often have to fight their way for years to obtain even very mediocre situations; that there are thousands of young men of superior ability, both in the city and in the country, who seem to be compelled by circumstances to remain in very ordinary positions for small pay, when others about them are raised by money or family influence into desirable places. In other

words, we all know that the best men do not always get the best places; circumstances do have a great deal to do with our position, our salaries, our station in life.

Everyone knows that there is not always a way where there is a will; that labor does not always conquer all things; that there are things impossible even to him that wills, however strongly; that one cannot always make anything of himself he chooses; that there are limitations in our very natures which no amount of will-power or industry can overcome.

But while it is true that the will-power cannot perform miracles, yet that it is almost omnipotent, and can perform wonders, all history goes to prove. As Shakespeare says:

Men at some time are masters of their fates;

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars.

But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

Show me a man who according to popular prejudice is a victim of bad luck, and I will show you one who has some unfortunate crooked twist of temperament that invites disaster. He is ill-tempered, conceited, or trifling; lacks character, enthusiasm, or some other requisite for success.

Disraeli said that man is not the creature of circumstances, but that circumstances are the creatures of men.

Believe in the power of will, which annihilates the sickly, sentimental doctrine of fatalism, — you must, but can’t, you ought, but it is impossible.

Give me the man who faces what he must,

“Who breaks his birth’s invidious bar.

And grasps the skirts of happy chance.

And breasts the blows of circumstance.

And grapples with his evil star.”

The indomitable will, the inflexible purpose, will find a way or make one. There is always room for a man of force.

“He who has a firm will,” says Goethe, “molds the world to himself.” “People do not lack strength,” says Victor Hugo, “they lack will.”

“He who resolves upon any great end, by that very resolution has scaled the great barriers to it, and he who seizes the grand idea of self-cultivation, and solemnly resolves upon it, will find that idea, that

resolution, burning like fire within him, and ever putting him upon his own improvement. He will find it removing difficulties, searching out, or making means; giving courage for despondency, and strength for weakness.”

Nearly all great men, those who have towered high above their fellows, have been remarkable above all things else for their energy of will. Of Julius Caesar it was said by a contemporary that it was his activity and giant determination, rather than his military skill, that won his victories. The youth who starts out in life determined to make the most of his eyes and let nothing escape him which he can possibly use for his own advancement; who keeps his ears open for every sound that can help him on his way, who keeps his hands open that he

may clutch every opportunity, who is ever on the alert for everything which can help him to get on in the world, who seizes every experience in life and grinds it up into paint for his great life's picture, who keeps his heart open that he may catch every noble impulse, and everything which may inspire him, — that youth will be sure to make his life successful; there are no "ifs" or "ands" about it. If he has his health, nothing can keep him from final success.

No tyranny of circumstances can permanently imprison a determined will.

The world always stands aside for the determined man.

"The general of a large army may be defeated," said Confucius, "but you cannot defeat the determined mind of a peasant."

The poor, deaf pauper, Kitto, who made shoes in the almshouse, and who became the greatest of Biblical scholars, wrote in his journal, on the threshold of manhood: “I am not myself a believer in impossibilities: I think that all the fine stories about natural ability, etc., are mere rigmarole, and that every man may, according to his opportunities and industry, render himself almost anything he wishes to become.”

Lincoln is probably the most remarkable example on the pages of history, showing the possibilities of our country. From the poverty in which he was born, through the rowdyism of a frontier town, the discouragement of early bankruptcy, and the fluctuations of popular politics, he rose to the championship of union and freedom.

Lincoln’s will made his way. When his friends nominated him as a candidate for the legislature, his enemies made fun of him. When making his campaign speeches he wore a mixed jean coat so short that he could not sit down on it, flax and tow-linen trousers, straw hat, and pot-metal boots. He had nothing in the world but character and friends.

When his friends suggested law to him, he laughed at the idea of his being a lawyer. He said he had not brains enough. He read law barefoot under the trees, his neighbors said, and he sometimes slept on the counter in the store where he worked. He had to borrow money to buy a suit of clothes to make a respectable appearance in the legislature, and walked to take his seat at Vandalia, — one hundred miles.

See Thurlow Weed, defying poverty and wading through the snow two miles, with rags for shoes, to borrow a book to read before the sap-bush fire. See Locke, living on bread and water in a Dutch garret. See Heyne, sleeping many a night on a barn floor with only a book for his pillow. See Samuel Drew, tightening his apron string “in lieu of a dinner.” History is full of such examples. He who will pay the price for victory need never fear final defeat.

Paris was in the hands of a mob, the authorities were panic-stricken, for they did not dare to trust their underlings. In came a man who said, “I know a young officer who has the courage and ability to quell this mob.” “Send for him; send for him; send for him,” said they. Napoleon was sent for, came, subjugated the mob, subjugated the

authorities, ruled France and then conquered Europe.

Success in life is dependent largely upon the will-power, and whatever weakens or impairs it diminishes success. The will can be educated. That which most easily becomes a habit in us is the will. Learn, then, to will decisively and strongly; thus fix your floating life, and leave it no longer to be carried hither and thither, like a withered leaf, by every wind that blows. “It is not talent that men lack, it is the will to labor; it is the purpose.”

It was the insatiable thirst for knowledge which held to his task, through poverty and discouragement, John Leyden, a Scotch shepherd’s son. Barefoot and alone, he walked six or eight miles daily to learn to read, which was all the schooling he had.

His desire for an education defied the extremest poverty, and no obstacle could turn him from his purpose. He was rich when he discovered a little bookstore, and his thirsty soul would drink in the precious treasures from its priceless volumes for hours, perfectly oblivious of the scanty meal of bread and water which awaited him at his lowly lodging. Nothing could discourage him from trying to improve himself by study. It seemed to him that an opportunity to get at books and lectures was all that any man could need. Before he was nineteen, this poor shepherd boy with no chance had astonished the professors of Edinburgh by his knowledge of Greek and Latin.

Hearing that a surgeon’s assistant in the Civil Service was wanted, although he

knew! nothing whatever of medicine, he determined to apply for it. There were only six months before the place was to be filled, but nothing would daunt him, and he took his degree with honor. Walter Scott, who thought this one of the most remarkable illustrations of perseverance, helped to fit him out, and he sailed for India.

Webster was very poor even after he entered Dartmouth College. A friend sent him a recipe for greasing his boots. Webster wrote and thanked him, and added: “But my boots need other doctoring, for they not only admit water, but even peas and gravel-stones.” Yet he became one of the greatest men in the world. Sydney Smith said: “Webster was a living lie, because no man on earth could be as great as he looked.” Carlyle said of him: “One

would incline at sight to back him against the world.”

What seemed to be luck followed Stephen Girard all his life. No matter what he did, it always seemed to others to turn to his account.

Being a foreigner, unable to speak English, short, stout, and with a repulsive face, blind in one eye, it was hard for him to get a start. But he was not the man to give up. He had begun as a cabin boy at thirteen, and for nine years sailed between Bordeaux and the French West Indies. He improved every leisure minute at sea, mastering the art of navigation.

At the age of eight he had first discovered that he was blind in one eye. His father, evidently thinking that he would never

amount to anything, would not help him to an education beyond that of mere reading and writing, but sent his younger brothers to college. The discovery of his blindness, the neglect of his father, and the chagrin of his brothers' advancement soured his whole life.

When he began business for himself in Philadelphia, there seemed to be nothing he would not do for money. He bought and sold anything, from groceries to old junk; he bottled wine and cider, from which he made a good profit. Everything he touched prospered.

He left nothing to chance. His plans and schemes were worked out with mathematical care. His letters written to his captains in foreign ports, laying out their routes and giving detailed instruction, are

models of foresight and systematic planning. He never left anything of importance to others. He was rigidly accurate in his instructions, and would not allow the slightest departure from them. He used to say that while his captains might save him money by deviating from instructions once, yet they would cause loss in ninety-nine other cases.

He never lost a ship, and many times that which brought financial ruin to many others, as the War of 1812, only increased his wealth. Everybody, especially his jealous brother merchants, attributed his great success to his luck. While undoubtedly, he was fortunate in happening to be at the right place at the right time, yet he was precision, method, accuracy, energy itself. What seemed luck with him was only good

judgment and promptness in seizing opportunities, and the greatest care and zeal in improving them to their utmost possibilities.

The mathematician tells you that if you throw the dice, there are thirty chances to one against your turning up a particular number, and a hundred to one against your repeating the same throw three times in succession and so on in an augmenting ratio.

Many a young man who has read the story of John Wanamaker's romantic career has gained very little inspiration or help from it toward his own elevation and advancement, for he looks upon it as the result of good luck, chance, or fate. "What a lucky fellow," he says to himself as he reads; "what a bonanza he fell into!" But a

careful analysis of Wanamaker's life only enforces the same lesson taught by the analysis of most great lives, namely, that a good mother, a good constitution, the habit of hard work, indomitable energy, determination which knows no defeat, decision which never wavers, a concentration which never scatters its forces, courage which never falters, self-mastery which can say No, and stick to it, strict integrity and downright honesty, a cheerful disposition, unbounded enthusiasm in one's calling, and a high aim and noble purpose insure a very large measure of success.

Youth should be taught that there is something in circumstances; that there is such a thing as a poor pedestrian happening to find no obstruction in his way,

and reaching the goal when a better walker finds the drawbridge up, the street blockaded, and so fails to win the race; that wealth often does place unworthy sons in high positions; that family influence does gain a lawyer clients, a physician patients, an ordinary scholar a good professorship; but that, on the other hand, position, clients, patients, professorships, managers' and superintendents' positions do not necessarily constitute success. He should be taught that in the long run, as a rule, *the best man does win the best place*, and that persistent merit does succeed.

There is about as much chance of idleness and incapacity winning real success or a high position in life, as there would be in producing a "Paradise Lost" by shaking up promiscuously the separate words of

Webster’s Dictionary, and letting them fall at random on the floor. Fortune smiles upon those who roll up their sleeves and put their shoulders to the wheel; upon men who are not afraid of dreary, dry, irksome drudgery, men of nerve and grit who do not turn aside for dirt and detail.

The youth should be taught that “he alone is great, who, by a life heroic, conquers fate”; that “diligence is the mother of good luck”; that nine times out of ten what we call luck or fate is but a mere bugbear of the indolent, the languid, the purposeless, the careless, the indifferent; that, as a rule, the man who fails does not see or seize his opportunity. Opportunity is coy, is swift, is gone, before the slow, the unobservant, the indolent, or the careless can seize her:

"In idle wishes fools supinely stay:

Be there a will and wisdom finds a way.”

It has been well said that the very reputation of being strong-willed, plucky, and indefatigable is of priceless value. It often cows enemies and dispels at the start opposition to one’s undertakings which would otherwise be formidable.

It is astonishing what men who have come to their senses late in life have accomplished by a sudden resolution.

Arkwright was fifty years of age when he began to learn English grammar and improve his writing and spelling. Benjamin Franklin was past fifty before he began the study of science and philosophy. Milton, in his blindness, was past the age. of fifty when he sat down to complete his world-known epic, and Scott at fifty-five took up

his pen to redeem a liability of $600,000. “Yet I am learning,” said Michael Angelo, when threescore years and ten were past, and he had long attained the highest triumphs of his art.

Even brains are second in importance to will. The vacillating man is always pushed aside in the race of life. It is only the weak and vacillating who halt before adverse circumstances and obstacles. A man with an iron will, with a determination that nothing shall check his career, is sure, if he has perseverance and grit, to succeed. We may not find time for what we would like, but what we long for and strive for with all our strength, we usually approximate, if we do not fully reach.

I wish it were possible to show the youth of America the great part that the will might

play in their success in life and in their happiness as well. The achievements of will-power are simply beyond computation. Scarcely anything in reason seems impossible to the man who can will strong enough and long enough.

How often we see this illustrated in the case of a young woman who suddenly becomes conscious that she is plain and unattractive; who, by prodigious exercise of her will and untiring industry, resolves to redeem herself from obscurity and commonness; and who not only makes up for her deficiencies, but elevates herself into a prominence and importance which mere personal attractions could never have given her! Charlotte Cushman, without a charm of form or face, climbed to the very top of her profession. How many young

men, stung by consciousness of physical deformity or mental deficiencies, have, by a strong, persistent exercise of will-power, raised themselves from mediocrity and placed themselves high above those who scorned them!

History is full of examples of men and women who have redeemed themselves from disgrace, poverty, and misfortune by the firm resolution of an iron will. The consciousness of being looked upon as inferior, as incapable of accomplishing what others accomplish; the sensitiveness at being considered a dunce in school, has stung many a youth into a determination which has elevated him far above those who laughed at him, as in the case of Newton, of Adam Clark, of Sheridan,

Wellington, Goldsmith, Dr. Chalmers, Curran, Disraeli, and hundreds of others.

It is men like Mirabeau, who “trample upon impossibilities”; like Napoleon, who do not wait for opportunities, but make them; like Grant, who has only “unconditional surrender” for the enemy, who change the very front of the world.

“I can’t, it is impossible,” said a foiled lieutenant to Alexander. “Be gone,” shouted the conquering Macedonian, “there is nothing impossible to him who will try.”

Were I called upon to express in a word the secret of so many failures among those who started out in life with high hopes, I should say unhesitatingly, they lacked will-power. They could not half will. What is a

man without a will? He is like an engine without steam, a mere sport of chance, to be tossed about hither and thither, always at the mercy of those who have wills. I should call the strength of will the test of a young man's possibilities. Can he will strong enough, and hold whatever he undertakes with an iron grip? It is the iron grip that takes the strong hold on life. "The truest wisdom," said Napoleon, "is a resolute determination." An iron will without principle might produce a Napoleon; but with character it would make a Wellington or a Grant, untarnished by ambition or avarice.

"The undivided will

'Tis that compels the elements and wrings

A human music from the indifferent air."

Chapter 4: Uses of Obstacles

Nature, when she adds difficulties, adds brains. — Emerson.

Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties. — Spurgeon.

The good are better made by ill.

As odors crushed are sweeter still. — Rogers.

Though losses and crosses be lessons right severe.

There's wit there ye'll get there, ye'll find no other where. — Burns,

"Adversity is the prosperity of the great."

"Kites rise against, not with, the wind."

“Many and many a time since,” said Harriet Martineau, referring to her father’s failure in business, “have we said that, but for that loss of money, we might have lived on in the ordinary provincial method of ladies with small means, sewing and economizing and growing narrower every year; whereas, by being thrown, while it was yet time, on our own resources, we have worked hard and usefully, won friends, reputation, and independence, seen the world abundantly, abroad and at home; in short, have truly lived instead of vegetating.”

Two of the three greatest epic poets of the world were blind, — Homer and Milton; while the third, Dante, was in his later years nearly, if not altogether, blind. It almost seems as though some great characters

had been physically crippled in certain respects so that they would not dissipate their energy, but concentrate it all in one direction.

A distinguished investigator in science said that when he encountered an apparently insuperable obstacle, he usually found himself upon the brink of some discovery.

“Returned with thanks” has made many an author. Failure often leads a man to success by arousing his latent energy, by firing a dormant purpose, by awakening powers which were sleeping. Men of mettle turn disappointments into helps as the oyster turns into pearl the sand which annoys it.

“Let the adverse breath of criticism be to you only what the blast of the storm wind is

to the eagle, — a force against him that lifts him higher,”

A kite would not fly unless it had a string tying it down. It is just so in life. The man who is tied down by half a dozen blooming responsibilities and their mother will make a higher and stronger flight than the bachelor who, having nothing to keep him steady, is always floundering in the mud.

When Napoleon’s school companions made sport of him on account of his humble origin and poverty, he devoted himself entirely to books, and, quickly rising above them in scholarship, commanded their respect. Soon he was regarded as the brightest ornament of the class.

“To make his way at the bar,” said an eminent jurist, “a young man must live like

a hermit and work like a horse. There is nothing that does a young lawyer so much good as to be half starved.”

Thousands of men of great native ability have been lost to the world because they have not had to wrestle with obstacles, and to struggle under difficulties sufficient to stimulate into activity their dormant powers. No effort is too dear which helps us along the line of our proper career.

Poverty and obscurity of origin may impede our progress, but it is only like the obstruction of ice or debris in the river temporarily forcing the water into eddies, where it accumulates strength and a mighty reserve which ultimately sweeps the obstruction impetuously to the sea. Poverty and obscurity are not insurmountable obstacles, but they often act as a stimulus

to the naturally indolent, and develop a firmer fiber of mind, a stronger muscle and stamina of body.

If the germ of the seed has to struggle to push its way up through the stones and hard sod, to fight its way up to sunlight and air, and then to wrestle with storm and tempest, with snow and frost, the fiber of its timber will be all the tougher and stronger.

There is good philosophy in the injunction to love our enemies, for they are often our best friends in disguise. They tell us the truth when friends flatter. Their biting sarcasm and scathing rebuke are mirrors which reveal us to ourselves. These unkind stings and thrusts are often spurs which urge us on to grander success and nobler endeavor. Friends cover our faults and rarely rebuke; enemies drag out to the light

all our weaknesses without mercy. We dread these thrusts and exposures as we do the surgeon's knife, but are the better for them. They reach depths before untouched, and we are led to resolve to redeem ourselves from scorn and inferiority.

We are the victors of our opponents. They have developed in us the very power by which we overcome them. Without their opposition we could never have braced and anchored and fortified ourselves, as the oak is braced and anchored for its thousand battles with the tempests. Our trials, our sorrows, and our griefs develop us in a similar way.

The man who has triumphed over difficulties bears the signs of victory in his

face. An air of triumph is seen in every movement.

John Calvin, who made a theology for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was tortured with disease for many years, and so was Robert Hall. The great men who have lifted the world to a higher level were not developed in easy circumstances, but were rocked in the cradle of difficulties and pillowed on hardships.

“The gods look on no grander sight than an honest man struggling with adversity.”

“Then I must learn to sing better,” said Anaximander, when told that the very boys laughed at his singing.

Strong characters, like the palm-tree, seem to thrive best when most abused. Men who have stood up bravely under great

misfortune for years are often unable to bear prosperity. Their good fortune takes the spring out of their energy, as the torrid zone enervates races accustomed to a vigorous climate. Some people never come to themselves until baffled, rebuffed, thwarted, defeated, crushed, in the opinion of those around them. Trials unlock their virtues; defeat is the threshold of their victory.

It is defeat that turns bone to flint; it is defeat that turns gristle to muscle; it is defeat that makes men invincible; it is defeat that has made those heroic natures that are now in the ascendency, and that has given the sweet law of liberty instead of the bitter law of oppression.

Difficulties call out great qualities, and make greatness possible. How many

centuries of peace would have developed a Grant? Few knew Lincoln until the great weight of the war showed his character. A century of peace would never have produced a Bismarck. Perhaps Phillips and Garrison would never have been known to history had it not been for slavery.

“Will he not make a great painter?” was asked in regard to an artist fresh from his Italian tour. “No, never,” replied Northcote. “Why not?” “Because he has an income of six thousand pounds a year.” In the sunshine of wealth a man is, as a rule, warped too much to become an artist of high merit. He should have some great thwarting difficulty to struggle against. A drenching shower of adversity would straighten his fibers out again.

The best tools receive their temper from fire, their edge from grinding; the noblest characters are developed in a similar way. The harder the diamond, the more brilliant the luster, and the greater the friction necessary to bring it out. Only its own dust is hard enough to make this most precious stone reveal its full beauty.

The spark in the flint would sleep forever but for friction; the fire in man would never blaze but for antagonism.

Suddenly, with much jarring and jolting, an electric car came to a standstill just in front of a heavy truck that was headed in an opposite direction. The huge truck wheels were sliding uselessly round on the car tracks that were wet and slippery from rain. All the urging of the teamster and the straining of the horses were in vain, — until

the motorman quietly tossed a shovelful of sand on the track under the heavy wheels, and then the truck lumbered on its way. “Friction is a very good thing,” remarked a passenger.

The philosopher Kant observed that a dove, inasmuch as the only obstacle it has to overcome is the resistance of the air, might suppose that if only the air were out of the way it could fly with greater rapidity and ease. Yet if the air were withdrawn, and the bird should try to fly in a vacuum, it would fall instantly to the ground, unable to fly at all. The very element that offers the opposition to flying is at the same time the condition of any flight whatever.

Emergencies make giant men. But for our Civil War the names of its grand heroes

would not be written among the greatest of our time.

The effort or struggle to climb to a higher place in life has strength and dignity in it, and cannot fail to leave us stronger, even though we may never reach the position we desire, or secure the prize we seek.

From an aimless, idle, and useless brain, emergencies often call out powers and virtues before unknown and unsuspected. How often we see a young man develop astounding ability and energy after the death of a parent, or the loss of a fortune, or after some other calamity has knocked the props and crutches from under him. The prison has roused the slumbering fire in many a noble mind. “Robinson Crusoe” was written in prison. The “Pilgrim’s Progress” appeared in Bedford Jail. Sir

Walter Raleigh wrote “The History of the World” during his imprisonment of thirteen years. Luther translated the Bible while confined in the Castle of Wartburg. For twenty years Dante worked in exile, and even under sentence of death.

Take two acorns from the same tree, as nearly alike as possible; plant one on a hill by itself, and the other in the dense forest, and watch them grow. The oak standing alone is exposed to every storm. Its roots reach out in every direction, clutching the rocks and piercing deep into the earth. Every rootlet lends itself to steady the growing giant, as if in anticipation of fierce conflict with the elements. Sometimes its upward growth seems checked for years, but all the while it has been expending its energy in pushing a root across a large

rock to gain a firmer anchorage. Then it shoots proudly aloft again, prepared to defy the hurricane. The gales which sport so rudely with its wide branches find more than their match, and only serve still further to toughen every minutest fiber from pith to bark.

The acorn planted in the deep forest, on the other hand, shoots up a weak, slender sapling. Shielded by its neighbors, it feels no need of spreading its roots far and wide for support.

Take two boys, as nearly alike as possible. Place one in the country away from the hot-house culture and refinements of the city, with only the district school, the Sunday-school, and a few books. Remove wealth and props of every kind; and, if he has the right sort of material in him, he will thrive.

Every obstacle overcome lends him strength for the next conflict. If he falls, he rises with more determination than before. Like a rubber ball, the harder the obstacle he meets the higher he rebounds. Obstacles and opposition are but apparatus of the gymnasium in which the fibers of his manhood are developed. He compels respect and recognition from those who have ridiculed his poverty. Put the other boy in a Vanderbilt family. Give him French and German nurses; gratify his every wish. Place him under the tutelage of great masters and send him to Harvard. Give him thousands a year for spending money, and let him travel extensively.

The two meet. The city lad is ashamed of his country brother. The plain, threadbare clothes, hard hands, tawny face, and

awkward manner of the country boy make sorry contrast with the genteel appearance of the other. The poor boy bemoans his hard lot, regrets that he has “no chance in life,” and envies the city youth. He thinks that it is a cruel Providence that places such a wide gulf between them.

They meet again as men, but how changed! It is as easy to distinguish the sturdy, self-made man from the one who has been propped up all his life by wealth, position, and family influence, as it is for the ship-builder to tell the difference between the plank from the rugged mountain oak and one from the sapling of the forest.

When God wants to educate a man, he does not send him to school to the Graces, but to the Necessities. Through the pit and the dungeon Joseph came to a throne. We

are not conscious of the mighty cravings of our half divine humanity; we are not aware of the God within us until some chasm yawns which must be filled, or till the rending asunder of our affections forces us to become conscious of a need. St. Paul in his Roman cell; John Huss led to the stake at Constance; Tyndale dying in his prison at Amsterdam; Milton, amid the incipient earthquake throes of revolution, teaching two little boys in Aldgate Street; David Livingstone, worn to a shadow, dying in a negro hut in Central Africa, alone — what failures they might all have seemed to themselves to be, yet what mighty purposes was God working out by their apparent humiliations!

Two highwaymen chancing once to pass a gibbet, one of them exclaimed: “What a fine

profession ours would be if there were no gibbets!” “Tut, you blockhead,” replied the other, “gibbets are the making of us; for, if there were no gibbets, everyone would be a highwayman.” Just so with every art, trade, or pursuit; it is the difficulties that scare and keep out unworthy competitors.

“Success grows out of struggles to overcome difficulties,” says Smiles. “If there were no difficulties there would be no success. In this necessity for exertion we find the chief source of human advancement, — the advancement of individuals as of nations. It has led to most of the mechanical inventions and improvements of the age.”

“Stick your claws into me,” said Mendelssohn to his critics when entering

the Birmingham orchestra. “Don’t tell me what you like, but what you don’t like.”

John Hunter said that the art of surgery would never advance until professional men had the courage to publish their failures as well as their successes.

“Young men need to be taught not to expect a perfectly smooth and easy way to the objects of their endeavor or ambition,” says Dr. Peabody. “Seldom does one reach a position with which he has reason to be satisfied without encountering difficulties and what might seem discouragements. But if they are properly met, they are not what they seem, and may prove to be helps, not hindrances. There is no more helpful and profiting exercise than surmounting obstacles.”

It was in the Madrid jail that Cervantes wrote “Don Quixote.” He was so poor that he could not even get paper during the last of his writing, and had to write on scraps of leather. A rich Spaniard was asked to help him, but replied: “Heaven forbid that his necessities should be relieved; it is his poverty that makes the world rich.”

“He has the stuff in him to make a good musician,” said Beethoven of Rossini, “if he had only been well flogged when a boy; but be is spoiled by the ease with which he composes.”

We do our best while fighting desperately to attain what the heart covets.

Waters says that the struggle to obtain knowledge and to advance oneself in the world strengthens the mind, disciplines the

faculties, matures the judgment, promotes self-reliance, and gives one independence of thought and force of character.

Kossuth called himself “a tempest-tossed soul, whose eyes have been sharpened by affliction.”

As soon as young eagles can fly the old birds tumble them out and tear the down and feathers from their nest. The rude and rough experience of the eaglet fits him to become the bold king of birds, fierce and expert in pursuing his prey.

Boys who are bound out, crowded out, kicked out, usually “turn out,” while those who do not have these disadvantages frequently fail to “come out.”

“It was not the victories but the defeats of my life which have strengthened me,” said the aged Sidenham Poyntz.

Almost from the dawn of history, oppression has been the lot of the Hebrews, yet they have given the world its noblest songs, its wisest proverbs, its sweetest music. With them persecution seems to bring prosperity. They thrive where others would starve. They hold the purse-strings of many nations. To them hardship has been “like spring mornings, frosty but kindly, the cold of which will kill the vermin, but will let the plant live.”

In one of the battles of the Crimea a cannon-ball struck inside the fort, crashing through a beautiful garden. But from the ugly chasm there burst forth a spring of water which ever afterward flowed a living

fountain. From the ugly gashes which misfortunes and sorrows make in our hearts, perennial fountains of rich experience and new joys often spring.

Don’t lament and grieve over lost wealth. The Creator may see something grand and mighty which even He cannot bring out as long as your wealth stands in the way. You must throw away the crutches of riches and stand upon your own feet, and develop the long unused muscles of manhood. God may see a rough diamond in you which only the hard hits of poverty can polish.

God knows where the richest melodies of our lives are, and what drill and what discipline are necessary to bring them out. The frost, the snows, the tempests, the lightnings are the rough teachers that bring the tiny acorn to the sturdy oak. Fierce

winters are as necessary to it as long summers. It is its half-century's struggle with the elements for existence, wrestling with the storm, fighting for its life from the moment that it leaves the acorn until it goes into the ship, that gives it value. Without this struggle it would have been characterless, stamina-less, nerveless, and its grain would have never been susceptible of high polish. The most beautiful as well as the strongest woods are found not in tropical climates, but in severe climates, where they have to fight the frosts and the winter's cold.

Many a man has never found himself until he has lost his all. Adversity stripped him only to discover him. Obstacles, hardships, are the chisel and mallet which shape the strong life into beauty. The rough ledge on

the hillside complains of the drill, of the blasting which disturbs its peace of centuries; it is not pleasant to be rent with powder, to be hammered and squared by the quarryman. But look again; behold the magnificent statue, the monument, chiseled into grace and beauty, telling its grand story of valor in the public square for centuries.

The statue would have slept in the marble forever but for the blasting, the chiseling, and the polishing. The angel of our higher and nobler selves would remain forever unknown in the rough quarries of our lives but for the blastings of affliction, the chiseling of obstacles, and the sand-papering of a thousand annoyances.

Who has not observed the patience, the calm endurance, the sweet loveliness

chiseled out of some rough life by the reversal of fortune or by some terrible affliction?

How many businessmen have made their greatest strides toward manhood, and developed their greatest virtues when reverses of fortune have swept away everything they had in the world; when disease had robbed them of all they held dear in life! Often, we cannot see the angel in the quarry of our lives, the statue of manhood, until the blasts of misfortune have rent the ledge, and difficulties and obstacles have squared and chiseled the granite blocks into grace and beauty.

Many a man has been ruined into salvation. The lightning which smote his dearest hopes opened up a new rift in his dark life, and gave him glimpses of himself which,

until then, he had never seen. The grave buried his dearest hopes, but uncovered in his nature possibilities of patience, endurance, and hope which he never before dreamed he possessed.

“Adversity is a severe instructor,” says Edmund Burke, “set over us by one who knows us better than we do ourselves, as he loves us better too. He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. This conflict with difficulty makes us acquainted with our object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations. It will not suffer us to be superficial.”

Men who have the right kind of material in them will assert their personality and rise in spite of a thousand adverse circumstances. You cannot keep them

down. Every obstacle seems only to add to their ability to get on.

The greatest men will ever be those who have risen from the ranks. It is said that there are ten thousand chances to one that genius, talent, and virtue shall issue from a farmhouse rather than from a palace.

Adversity exasperates fools, dejects Cowards, but draws out the faculties of the wise and industrious, puts the modest to the necessity of trying their skill, awes the opulent, and makes the idle industrious. The storms of adversity, like those of the ocean, rouse the faculties, and excite the invention, prudence, skill, and fortitude of the voyager. A man upon whom continuous sunshine falls is like the earth in August: he becomes parched and dry and hard and

close-grained. Men have drawn from adversity the elements of greatness.

Beethoven was almost totally deaf and burdened with sorrow when he produced his greatest works. Schiller wrote his best books in great bodily suffering. He was not free from pain for fifteen years. Milton wrote his leading productions when blind, poor, and sick. “Who best can suffer,” said he, “best can do.” Bunyan said that, if it were lawful, he could even pray for greater trouble, for the greater comfort’s sake.

Not until the breath of the plague had blasted a hundred thousand lives, and the great fire had licked up cheap, shabby, wicked London, did she arise, phoenix-like, from her ashes and ruin, a grand and mighty city.

True salamanders live best in the furnace of persecution. Many of our best poets:

“Are cradled into poetry by wrong.

And learn in suffering what they teach in song.”

Byron was stung into a determination to go to the top by a scathing criticism of his first book, “Hours of Idleness,” published when he was but nineteen years of age. Macaulay said, “There is scarce an instance in history of so sudden a rise to so dizzy an eminence as Byron reached.” In a few years he stood by the side of such men as Scott, Southey, and Campbell, and died at thirty-seven, that age so fatal to genius. Many an orator like “stuttering Jack Curran,” or “Orator Mum,” as he was once

called, has been spurred into eloquence by ridicule and abuse.

This is the crutch age. “Help ” and aid are advertised everywhere. We have institutes, colleges, universities, teachers, books, libraries, newspapers, magazines. Our thinking is done for us. Our problems are all worked out in “explanations” and “keys.” Our boys are too often tutored through college with very little study. “Short roads” and “abridged methods” are characteristic of the century. Ingenious methods are used everywhere to get the drudgery out of the college course. Newspapers give us our politics, and preachers our religion. Self-help and self-reliance are getting old-fashioned. Nature, as if conscious of delayed blessings, has rushed to man’s relief with her wondrous forces, and

undertakes to do the world's drudgery and emancipate him from Eden's curse.

But do not misinterpret her edict. She emancipates from the lower only to call to the higher. She does not bid the world go and play while she does the work. She emancipates the muscles only to employ the brain and heart.

The most beautiful as well as the strongest characters are not developed in warm climates, where man finds his bread ready made on trees, and where exertion is a great effort, but rather in a trying climate and on a stubborn soil. It is not chance that returns to the Hindoo ryot a penny and to the American laborer a dollar for his daily toil; that makes Mexico with its mineral wealth poor, and New England with its granite and ice rich. It is rugged necessity,

it is the struggle to obtain; it is poverty, the priceless spur, that develops the stamina of manhood, and calls the race out of barbarism. Intelligent labor found the world a wilderness and has made it a garden.

As the sculptor thinks only of the angel imprisoned in the marble block, so Nature cares only for the man or woman shut up in the human being. The sculptor cares nothing for the block as such; Nature has little regard for the mere lump of breathing clay. The sculptor will chip off all unnecessary material to set free the angel. Nature will chip and pound us remorselessly to bring out our possibilities. She will strip us of wealth, humble our pride, humiliate our ambition, let us down from the ladder of fame, will discipline us in a thousand ways, if she can develop a little

character. Everything must give way to that.

“The hero is not fed on sweets,

Daily his own heart he eats;

Chambers of the great are jails,

And head-winds right for royal sails.”

Then welcome each rebuff.

That turns earth’s smoothness rough.

Each sting, that bids not sit nor stand but go. — Browning.

Chapter 5: One Unwavering Aim

Life is an arrow — therefore you must know What mark to aim at, how to use the bow — Then draw it to the head and let it go. — Henry van Dyke.

The important thing in life is to have a great aim, and to possess the aptitude and perseverance to attain it. — Goethe.

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Let everyone ascertain his special business and calling, and then stick to it if he would be successful. — Franklin.

"Why do you lead such a solitary life?" asked a friend of Michael Angelo. "Art is a jealous mistress," replied the artist; "she requires the whole man." During his labors

at the Sistine Chapel, according to Disraeli, he refused to meet anyone, even at his own house.

“This day we sailed westward, which was our course,” were the simple but grand words which Columbus wrote in his journal day after day. Hope might rise and fall, terror and dismay might seize upon the crew at the mysterious variations of the compass, but Columbus, unappalled, pushed due west and nightly added to his record the above words.

“Cut an inch deeper,” said a member of the Old Guard to the surgeon probing his wound, “and you will find the Emperor,” — meaning his heart. By the marvelous power of concentrated purpose Napoleon had left his name on the very stones of the capital, had burned it indelibly into the heart of

every Frenchman, and had left it written in living letters all over Europe. France today has not shaken off the spell of that name. In the fair city on the Seine the mystic “N” confronts you everywhere.

Oh, the power of a great purpose to work miracles! It has changed the face of the world. Napoleon knew that there were plenty of great men in France, but they did not know the might of the unwavering aim by which he was changing the destinies of Europe. He saw that what was called the “balance of power” was only an idle dream; that, unless some master-mind could be found which was a match for events, the millions would rule in anarchy. His iron will grasped the situation; and like William Pitt, he did not loiter around balancing the probabilities of failure or success, or dally

with his purpose. There was no turning to the right nor to the left; no dreaming away time, nor building air-castles; but one look and purpose, forward, upward and onward, straight to his goal. His great success in war was due largely to his definiteness of aim. He always hit the bullseye. He was like a great burning-glass, concentrating the rays of the sun upon a single spot; he burned a hole wherever he went. After finding the weak place in the enemy's ranks, he would mass his men and hurl them like an avalanche upon the critical point, crowding volley upon volley, charge upon charge, till he made a breach. What a lesson of the power of concentration there is in this man's life!

To succeed today a man must concentrate all the faculties of his mind upon one

unwavering aim, and have a tenacity of purpose which means death or victory. Every other inclination which tempts him from his aim must be suppressed.

A man may starve on a dozen half-learned trades or occupations; he may grow rich and famous upon one trade thoroughly mastered, even though it be the humblest.

Even Gladstone, with his ponderous yet active brain, said he could not do two things at once; he threw his entire strength upon whatever he did. The most intense energy characterized everything he undertook, even his recreation. If such concentration of energy is necessary for the success of a Gladstone, what can we common mortals hope to accomplish by “scatteration”?

All great men have been noted for their power of concentration which makes them oblivious of everything outside their aim. Victor Hugo wrote his “Notre Dame” during the revolution of 1830, while the bullets were whistling across his garden. He shut himself up in one room, locking his clothes up in another, lest they should tempt him to go out into the street, and spent most of that winter wrapped in a big gray comforter, pouring his very life into his work.

Abraham Lincoln possessed such power of concentration that he could repeat quite correctly a sermon to which he had listened in his boyhood.

A New York sportsman, in answer to an advertisement, sent twenty-five cents for a sure receipt to prevent a shotgun from scattering, and received the following:

“Dear Sir: To keep a gun from scattering put in but a single shot.”

It is the men who do one thing in this world who come to the front. Who is the favorite actor? It is a Jefferson, who devotes a lifetime to a “Rip Van Winkle,” a Booth, an Irving, a Kean, who plays one character until he can play it better than any other man living, and not the shallow players who impersonate all parts. The great man is the one who never steps outside of his specialty or dissipates his individuality. It is an Edison, a Morse, a Bell, a Howe, a Stephenson, a Watt. It is an Adam Smith, spending ten years on the “Wealth of Nations.” It is a Gibbon, giving twenty years to his “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.” It is a Hume, writing thirteen hours a day on his “History of England.” It is a

Webster, spending thirty-six years on his dictionary. It is a Bancroft, working twenty-six years on his “History of the United States.” It is a Field, crossing the ocean fifty times to lay a cable, while the world ridicules. It is a Newton, writing his “Chronology of Ancient Nations” sixteen times.

A one-talent man who decides upon a definite object accomplishes more than a ten-talent man who scatters his energies and never knows exactly what he will do. The weakest living creature, by concentrating his powers upon one thing, can accomplish something; the strongest, by dispersing his over many, may fail to accomplish anything.

A great purpose is cumulative; and, like a great magnet, it attracts all that is kindred along the stream of life.

A Yankee can splice a rope in many different ways; an English sailor only knows one way, but that is the best one. It is the one-sided man, the sharp-edged man, the man of single and intense purpose, the man of one idea, who cuts his way through obstacles and forges to the front. The time has gone forever when a Bacon can span universal knowledge; or when, absorbing all the knowledge of the times, a Dante can sustain arguments against fourteen disputants in the University of Paris, and conquer in them all. The day when a man can successfully drive a dozen callings abreast is a thing of the past. Concentration is the keynote of the century.

Scientists estimate that there is energy enough in less than fifty acres of sunshine to run all the machinery in the world, if it could be concentrated. But the sun might blaze out upon the earth forever without setting anything on fire; although these rays focused by a burning-glass would melt solid granite, or even change a diamond into vapor. There are plenty of men who have ability enough; the rays of their faculties, taken separately, are all right, but they are powerless to collect them, to bring them all to bear upon a single spot. Versatile men, universal geniuses, are usually weak, because they have no power to concentrate their talents upon one point, and this makes all the difference between success and failure.

Chiseled upon the tomb of a disappointed, heartbroken king, Joseph II. of Austria, in the Royal Cemetery at Vienna, a traveler tells us, is this epitaph: “Here lies a monarch who, with the best of intentions, never carried out a single plan.”

Sir James Mackintosh was a man of remarkable ability. He excited in everyone who knew him the greatest expectations. Many watched his career with much interest, expecting that he would dazzle the world; but there was no purpose in his life. He had intermittent attacks of enthusiasm for doing great things, but his zeal all evaporated before he could decide what to do. This fatal defect in his character kept him balancing between conflicting motives; and his whole life was almost thrown away. He lacked power to choose one object and

persevere with a single aim, sacrificing every interfering inclination. He, for instance, vacillated for weeks trying to determine whether to use “usefulness” or “utility” in a composition.

One talent utilized in a single direction will do infinitely more than ten talents scattered. A thimbleful of powder behind a ball in a rifle will do more execution than a carload of powder unconfined. The rifle-barrel is the purpose that gives direct aim to the powder, which otherwise, no matter how good it might be, would be powerless. The poorest scholar in school or college often, in practical life, far outstrips the class leader or senior wrangler, simply because what little ability he has he employs for a definite object, while the other, depending

upon his general ability and brilliant prospects, never concentrates his powers.

It is fashionable to ridicule the man of one idea, but the men who have changed the front of the world have been men of a single aim. No man can make his mark on this age of specialties who is not a man of one idea, one supreme aim, one master passion. The man who would make himself felt on this bustling planet, who would make a breach in the compact conservatism of our civilization, must play all his guns on one point. A wavering aim, a faltering purpose, has no place in the twentieth century. “Mental shiftlessness” is the cause of many a failure. The world is full of unsuccessful men who spend their lives letting empty buckets down into empty wells.

“Mr. A. often laughs at me,” said a young American chemist, “because I have but one idea. He talks about everything, aims to excel in many things; but I have learned that, if I ever wish to make a breach, I must play my guns continually upon one point.” This great chemist, when an obscure schoolmaster, used to study by the light of a pine knot in a log cabin. Not many years later he was performing experiments in electro-magnetism before English earls, and subsequently he was at the head of one of the largest scientific institutes of this country. He was the late Professor Henry, of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

We should guard against a talent which we cannot hope to practise in perfection, says Goethe. Improve it as we may, we shall always, in the end, when the merit of the

matter has become apparent to us, painfully lament the loss of time and strength devoted to such botching. An old proverb says: “The master of one trade will support a wife and seven children, and the master of seven will not support himself.”

It is the single aim that wins. Men with monopolizing ambitions rarely live in history. They do not focus their powers long enough to burn their names indelibly into the roll of honor. Edward Everett, even with his magnificent powers, disappointed the expectations of his friends. He spread himself over the whole field of knowledge and elegant culture; but the mention of the name of Everett does not call up any one great achievement as does that of names like Garrison and Phillips. Voltaire called the Frenchman La Harpe an oven which

was always heating, but which never cooked anything. Hartley Coleridge was splendidly endowed with talent, but there was one fatal lack in his character — he had no definite purpose, and his life was a failure. Unstable as water, he could not excel. Southey, the uncle of Coleridge, says of him: “Coleridge has two left hands.” He was so morbidly shy from living alone in his dreamland that he could not open a letter without trembling. He would often rally from his purposeless life, and resolve to redeem himself from the oblivion he saw staring him in the face; but, like Sir James Mackintosh, he remained a man of promise merely to the end of his life.

The man who succeeds has a program. He fires his course and adheres to it. He lays his plans and executes them. He goes

straight to his goal. He is not pushed this way and that every time a difficulty is thrown in his path; if he cannot get over it, he goes through it. Constant and steady use of the faculties under a central purpose gives strength and power, while the use of faculties without an aim or end only weakens them. The mind must be focused on a definite end, or, like machinery without a balance-wheel, it will rack itself to pieces.

This age of concentration calls, not for educated men merely, not for talented men, not for geniuses, not for jacks-of-all-trades, but for men who are .trained to do one thing as well as it can be done. Napoleon could go through the drill of his soldiers better than any one of his men.

Stick to your aim. The constant changing of one's occupation is fatal to all success.

After a young man has spent five or six years in a dry goods store, he concludes that he would rather sell groceries, thereby throwing away five years of valuable experience which will be of very little use to him in the grocery business; and so he spends a large part of his life drifting around from one kind of employment to another, learning part of each but all of none, forgetting that experience is worth more to him than money and that the years devoted to learning his trade or occupation are the most valuable. Half-learned trades, no matter if a man has twenty, will never give him a good living, much less a competency, while wealth is absolutely out of the question.

How many young men fail to reach the point of efficiency in one line of work before

they get discouraged and venture into something else! How easy to see the thorns in one’s own profession or vocation, and only the roses in that of another! A young man in business, for instance, seeing a physician riding about town in his carriage, visiting his patients, imagines that a doctor must have an easy, ideal life, and wonders that he himself should have embarked in an occupation so full of disagreeable drudgery and hardships.

He does not know of the years of dry, tedious study which the physician has consumed, the months and perhaps years of waiting for patients, the dry detail of anatomy, the endless names of drugs and technical terms.

There is a sense of great power in a vocation after a man has reached the point

of efficiency in it, the point of productiveness, the point where his skill begins to tell and brings in returns. Up to this point of efficiency, while he is learning his trade, the time seems to have been almost thrown away. But he has been storing up a vast reserve of knowledge of detail, laying foundations, forming his acquaintances, gaining his reputation for truthfulness, trustworthiness, and integrity, and in establishing his credit. When he reaches this point of efficiency, all the knowledge and skill, character, influence, and credit thus gained come to his aid, and he soon finds that in what seemed almost thrown away lies the secret of his prosperity. The credit he established as a clerk, the confidence, the integrity, the friendships formed, he finds equal to a

large capital when he starts out for himself and takes the highway to fortune; while the young man who half learned several trades, got discouraged and stopped just short of the point of efficiency, just this side of success, is a failure because he didn't go far enough; he did not press on to the point at which his acquisition would have been profitable.

In spite of the fact that nearly all very successful men have made a life work of one thing, we see on every hand hundreds of young men and women flitting about from occupation to occupation, trade to trade, in one thing today and another to-morrow, — just as though they could go from one thing to another by turning a switch, as though they could run as well on another track as on the one they have left,

regardless of the fact that no two careers have the same gage, that every man builds his own road upon which another man's engine cannot run either with speed or safety. This fickleness, this disposition to shift about from one occupation to another, seems to be peculiar to American life, so much so that, when a young man meets a friend whom he has not seen for some time, the commonest question to ask is, "What are you doing now?" showing the improbability or uncertainty that he is doing today what he was doing when they last met.

Some people think that if they "keep everlastingly at it" they will succeed, but this is not always so. Working without a plan is as foolish as going to sea without a compass.

A ship which has broken its rudder in mid-ocean may “keep everlastingly at it,” may keep on a full head of steam, driving about all the time, but it never arrives anywhere, it never reaches any port unless by accident; and if it does find a haven, its cargo may not be suited to the people, the climate, or conditions. The ship must be directed to a definite port, for which its cargo is adapted, and where there is a demand for it, and it must aim steadily for that port through sunshine and storm, through tempest and fog. So a man who would succeed must not drift about rudderless on the ocean of life. He must not only steer straight toward his destined port when the ocean is smooth, when the currents and winds serve, but he must keep his course in the very teeth of the wind and

the tempest, and even when enveloped in the fogs of disappointment and mists of opposition. Atlantic liners do not stop for fogs or storms; they plow straight through the rough seas with only one thing in view, their destined port, and no matter what the weather is, no matter what obstacles they encounter, their arrival in port can be predicted to within a few hours.

On the prairies of South America there grows a flower that always inclines in the same direction. If a traveler loses his way and has neither compass nor chart, by turning to this flower he will find a guide on which he can implicitly rely; for no matter how the rains descend or the winds blow, its leaves point to the north. So there are many men whose purposes are so well known, whose aims are so constant, that

no matter what difficulties they may encounter, or what opposition they may meet, you can tell almost to a certainty where they will come out. They may be delayed by head winds and counter currents, but they will always head for the port and will steer straight towards the harbor. You know to a certainty that whatever else they may lose, they will not lose their compass or rudder.

Whatever may happen to a man of this stamp, even though his sails may be swept away and his mast stripped to the deck, though he may be wrecked by the storms of life, the needle of his compass will still point to the North Star of his hope. Whatever comes, his life will not be purposeless. Even a wreck that makes its port is a greater success than a full-rigged

ship with all its sails flying, with every mast and every rope intact, which merely drifts along into an accidental harbor.

To fix a wandering life and give it direction is not an easy task, but a life which has no definite aim is sure to be frittered away in empty and purposeless dreams. “Listless triflers,” “busy idlers,” “purposeless busybodies,” are seen everywhere. A healthy, definite purpose is a remedy for a thousand ills which attend aimless lives. Discontent and dissatisfaction flee before a definite purpose. What we do begrudgingly without a purpose becomes a delight with one, and no work is well done nor healthily done which is not enthusiastically done.

Mere energy is not enough; it must be concentrated on some steady, unwavering aim. What is more common than

“unsuccessful geniuses,” or failures with “\ commanding talents”? Indeed, the term “unrewarded genius” has become a proverb. Every town has unsuccessful educated and talented men. But education is of no value, talent is worthless, unless it can do something, achieve something. Men who can do something at everything and a very little at anything are not wanted in this age.

What this age wants is young men and women who can do one thing without losing their identity or individuality, or becoming narrow, cramped, or dwarfed. Nothing can take the place of an all-absorbing purpose; education cannot, genius cannot, talent cannot, industry cannot, will-power cannot. The purposeless life must ever be a failure. What good are powers, faculties, unless we

can use them for a purpose? What good would a chest of tools do a carpenter unless he could use them? A college education, a head full of knowledge, are worth little to the men who cannot use them to some definite end.

The man without a purpose never leaves his mark upon the world. He has no individuality; he is absorbed in the mass, lost in the crowd, weak, wavering, and incompetent.

“Consider, my lord,” said Rowland Hill to the Prime Minister of England, “that a letter to Ireland and the answer back would cost thousands upon thousands of my affectionate countrymen more than a fifth of their week’s wages. If you shut the post-office to them, which you do now, you shut out warm hearts and generous affections

from home, kindred, and friends.” The lad learned that it cost to carry a letter from London to Edinburgh, four hundred and four miles, one eighteenth of a cent, while the government charged for a simple folded sheet of paper twenty-eight cents, and twice as much if there was the smallest enclosure. Against the opposition and contempt of the post-office department he at length carried his point, and on January 10, 1840, penny postage was established throughout Great Britain. Mr. Hill was chosen to introduce the system, at a salary of fifteen hundred pounds a year. His success was most encouraging, but at the end of two years a Tory minister dismissed him without paying for his services, as agreed. The public was indignant, and at once contributed sixty-five thousand

dollars; and, at the request of Queen Victoria, Parliament voted him one hundred thousand dollars cash, together with ten thousand dollars a year for life.

It is a great purpose which gives meaning to life; it unifies all our powers, binds them together in one cable and makes strong and united what was weak, separated, scattered.

“Smatterers” are weak and superficial. Of what use is a man who knows a little of everything and not much of anything? It is the momentum of constantly repeated acts that tells the story. “Let thine eyes look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left.” One great secret of St. Paul’s power lay in his strong purpose. Nothing could daunt,

nothing intimidate him. The Roman Emperor could not muzzle him, the dungeon could not appal him, no prison suppress him, obstacles could not discourage him. “This one thing I do” was written all over his work. The quenchless zeal of his mighty purpose burned its way down through the centuries, and its contagion will never cease to fire the hearts of men.

“Try and come home somebody,” said his mother to Gambetta as she sent him off to Paris to school. Poverty pinched this lad hard in his little garret study and his clothes were shabby, but what of that? He had made up his mind to get on in the world. For years he was chained to his desk and worked like a hero. At last his opportunity came. Jules Favre was to plead a great

cause on a certain day; but being ill, he chose this young man, absolutely unknown, rough and uncouth, to take his place. For many years Gambetta had been preparing for such an opportunity, and he was equal to it. He made one of the greatest speeches that up to that time had ever been made in France. That night all the papers in Paris were sounding the praises of this ragged, uncouth Bohemian, and soon all France recognized him as the Republican leader. This sudden rise was not due to luck or accident. He had been steadfastly working and fighting his way up against oppositions and poverty for just such an occasion. Had he not been equal to it, it would only have made him ridiculous. What a stride; yesterday, poor and unknown, living in a garret; today,

deputy-elect, in the city of Marseilles, and the great Republican leader!

When Louis Napoleon had been defeated at Sedan and had delivered his sword to William of Prussia, and when the Prussian army was marching on Paris, the brave Gambetta went out of the besieged city in a balloon barely grazed by the Prussian guns, landed in Amiens, and by almost superhuman skill raised three armies of 800,000 men, provided for their maintenance, and directed their military operations. A German officer said. “This colossal energy is the most remarkable event of modern history, and will carry down Gambetta’s name to remote posterity.” This youth who was poring over his books in an attic while other youths were promenading the Champs Elysees,

although but thirty-two years old, was now virtually dictator of France, and the greatest orator in the Republic. What a striking example of the great reserve of personal power, which, even in dissolute lives, is sometimes called out by a great emergency or sudden sorrow, and ever after leads the life to victory! When Gambetta found that his first speech had electrified all France, his great reserve rushed to the front; he was suddenly weaned from dissipation, and resolved to make his mark in the world. Nor did he lose his head in his quick leap into fame. He still lived in the upper room in the musty Latin Quarter, and remained a poor man, without stain of dishonor, though he might easily have made himself a millionaire. When he died the “Figaro” said, “The Republic has

lost its greatest man." American boys should study this great man, for he loved our country, and took our Republic as the pattern for France.

There is no grander sight in the world than that of a young man fired with a great purpose, dominated by one unwavering aim. He is bound to win; the world stands to one side and lets him pass; it always makes way for the man with a will in him. He does not have one-half the opposition to overcome that the undecided, purposeless man has who, like driftwood, runs against all sorts of snags to which he must yield simply because he has no momentum to force them out of his way. What a sublime spectacle it is to see a youth going straight to his goal, cutting his way through difficulties, and surmounting

obstacles which dishearten others, as though they were but stepping-stones! Defeat, like a gymnasium, only gives him new power; opposition only doubles his exertions; dangers only increase his courage. No matter what comes to him, sickness, poverty, disaster, he never turns his eye from his goal.

“Duos qui sequitur lepores, neutrum capit.”

Chapter 6: Self-Help

I learned that no man in God's wide earth is either willing or able to help any other man. — Pestalozzi.

What I am I have made myself. — Humphry Davy.

Be sure, my son, and remember that the best men always make themselves. — Patrick Henry.

Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not

Who would be free themselves must strike the blow? — Byron.

Who waits to have his task marked out,

Shall die and leave his errand unfulfilled. — Lowell.

“Colonel Crockett makes room for himself!” exclaimed a backwoods congressman in answer to the exclamation of the White House usher to “Make room for Colonel Crockett!” This remarkable man was not afraid to oppose the head of a great nation. He preferred being right to being president. Though rough, uncultured, and uncouth, Crockett was a man of great courage and determination.

“Poverty is uncomfortable, as I can testify,” said James A. Garfield; “but nine times out of ten the best thing that can happen to a young man is to be tossed overboard and compelled to sink or swim for himself. In all my acquaintance I have never known a man to be drowned who was worth the saving.”

Garfield was the youngest member of the House of Representatives when he entered, but he had not been in his seat sixty days before his ability was recognized and his place conceded. He stepped to the front with the confidence of one who belonged there. He succeeded because all the world in concert could not have kept him in the background, and because when once in the front he played his part with an intrepidity and a commanding ease that were but the outward evidences of the immense reserves of energy on which it was in his power to draw.

“Take the place and attitude which belong to you,” says Emerson, “and all men acquiesce. The world must be just. It leaves every man with profound unconcern to set his own rate.”

“A person under the firm persuasion that he can command resources virtually has them,” says Livy.

Richard Arkwright, the thirteenth child, in a hovel, with no education, no chance, gave his spinning model to the world, and put a scepter in England’s right hand such as the queen never wielded.

Solario, a wandering gypsy tinker, fell deeply in love with the daughter of the painter Coll’ Antonio del Fiore, but was told that no one but a painter as good as the father should wed the maiden. “Will you give me ten years to learn to paint, and so entitle myself to the hand of your daughter?” Consent was given. Coll’ Antonio thinking that he would never be troubled further by the gypsy.

About the time that the ten years were to end the king's sister showed Coll' Antonio a Madonna and Child, which the painter extolled in terms of the highest praise. Judge of his surprise on learning that Solario was the artist. His great determination gained him his bride.

Louis Philippe said he was the only sovereign in Europe fit to govern, for he could black his own boots.

When asked to name his family coat-of-arms, a self-made President of the United States replied, "A pair of shirtsleeves."

It is not the men who have inherited most, except it be in nobility of soul and purpose, who have risen highest; but rather the men with no "start" who have won fortunes, and

have made adverse circumstances a spur to goad them up the steep mount, where:

“Fame’s proud temple shines afar.”

To such men, every possible goal is accessible, and honest ambition has no height that genius or talent may tread, which has not felt the impress of their feet.

You may leave your millions to your son, but have you really given him anything? You cannot transfer the discipline, the experience, the power, which the acquisition has given you; you cannot transfer the delight of achieving, the joy felt only in growth, the pride of acquisition, the character which trained habits of accuracy, method, promptness, patience, dispatch, honesty of dealing, politeness of manner have developed. You cannot transfer the

skill, sagacity, prudence, foresight, which lie concealed in your wealth. It meant a great deal for you, but means nothing to your heir. In climbing to your fortune, you developed the muscle, stamina, and strength which enabled you to maintain your lofty position, to keep your millions intact. You had the power which comes only from experience, and which alone enables you to stand firm on your dizzy height. Your fortune was experience to you, joy, growth, discipline, and character; to him it will be a temptation, an anxiety, which will probably dwarf him. It was wings to you, it will be a dead weight to him; to you it was education and expansion of your highest powers; to him it may mean inaction, lethargy, indolence, weakness, ignorance. You have taken the priceless

spur — necessity — away from him, the spur which has goaded man to nearly all the great achievements in the history of the world.

You thought it a kindness to deprive yourself in order that your son might begin where you left off. You thought to spare him the drudgery, the hardships, the deprivations, the lack of opportunities, the meager education, which you had on the old farm. But you have put a crutch into his hand instead of a staff; you have taken away from him the incentive to self-development, to self-elevation, to self-discipline and self-help, without which no real success, no real happiness, no great character is ever possible. His enthusiasm will evaporate, his energy will be dissipated, his ambition, not being

stimulated by the struggle for self-elevation, will gradually die away. If you do everything for your son and fight his battles for him, you will have a weakling on your hands at twenty-one.

“My life is a wreck,” said the dying Cyrus W. Field, “my fortune gone, my home dishonored. Oh, I was so unkind to Edward when I thought I was being kind. If I had only had firmness enough to compel my boys to earn their living, then they would have known the meaning of money.” His table was covered with medals and certificates of honor from many nations, in recognition of his great work for civilization in mooring two continents side by side in thought, of the fame he had won and could never lose. But grief shook the sands of life as he thought only of the son who had

brought disgrace upon a name before unsullied; the wounds were sharper than those of a serpent's tooth.

During the great financial crisis of 1857 Maria Mitchell, who was visiting England, asked an English lady what became of daughters when no property was left them. "They live on their brothers," was the reply. "But what becomes of the American daughters," asked the English lady, "when there is no money left?" "They earn it," was Miss Mitchell's reply.

Men who have been bolstered up all their lives are seldom good for anything in a crisis. When misfortune comes, they look around for somebody to lean upon. If the prop is not there, down they go. Once down, they are as helpless as capsized turtles, or unhorsed men in armor. Many a

frontier boy has succeeded beyond all his expectations simply because all props were early knocked out from under him and he was obliged to stand upon his own feet.

“A man’s best friends are his ten fingers,” said Robert Collyer, who brought his wife to America in the steerage.

There is no manhood mill which takes in boys and turns out men. What you call “no chance” may be your only chance. Don’t wait for your place to be made for you; make it yourself. Don’t wait for somebody to give you a lift; lift yourself. Henry Ward Beecher did not wait for a call to a big church with a large salary. He accepted the first pastorate offered him, in a little town near Cincinnati. He became literally the light of the church, for he trimmed the lamps, kindled the fires, swept the rooms,

and rang the bell. His salary was only about $200 a year, — but he knew that a fine church and great salary cannot make a great man. It was work and opportunity that he wanted. He felt that if there were anything in him work would bring it out.

When Beethoven was examining the work of Moscheles, he found written at the end, “Finis, with God’s help.” He wrote under it, “Man, help yourself.”

A young man stood listlessly watching some anglers on a bridge. He was poor and dejected. At length, approaching a basket filled with fish, he sighed, “If now I had these, I would be happy. I could sell them and buy food and lodgings.” “I will give you just as many and just as good,” said the owner, who chanced to overhear his words, “if you will do me a trifling favor.” “And what

is that?” asked the other. “Only to tend this line till I come back; I wish to go on a short errand.” The proposal was gladly accepted. The old man was gone so long that the young man began to get impatient. Meanwhile the fish snapped greedily at the hook, and he lost all his depression in the excitement of pulling them in. When the owner returned, he had caught a large number. Counting out from them as many as were in the basket, and presenting them to the youth, the old fisherman said, “I fulfil my promise from the fish you have caught, to teach you whenever you see others earning what you need to waste no time in foolish wishing, but cast a line for yourself.”

A white squall caught a party of tourists on a lake in Scotland, and threatened to capsize the boat. When it seemed that the

crisis had really come, the largest and strongest man in the party, in a state of intense fear, said, “Let us pray.” “No, no, my man,” shouted the bluff old boatman; *“let the little man pray. You take an oar.”*

The grandest fortunes ever accumulated or possessed on earth were and are the fruit of endeavor that had no capital to begin with save energy, intellect, and the will. From Croesus down to Rockefeller the story is the same, not only in the getting of wealth, but also in the acquirement of eminence; those men have won most who relied most upon themselves.

“The male inhabitants in the Township of Loaferdom, in the County of Hatework,” says a printer’s squib, “found themselves laboring under great inconvenience for want of an easily traveled road between

Poverty and Independence. They therefore petitioned the Powers that be to levy a tax upon the property of the entire county for the purpose of laying out a macadamized highway, broad and smooth, and all the way downhill to the latter place."

"Everyone is the artificer of his own fortune," says Sallust.

Man is not merely the architect of his own fate, but he must lay the bricks himself. Bayard Taylor, at twenty-three, wrote: "I will become the sculptor of my own mind's statue." His biography shows how often the chisel and hammer were in his hands to shape himself into his ideal.

Labor is the only legal tender in the world to true success. The gods sell everything for that, nothing without it. You will never

find success “marked down.” The door to the temple of success is never left open. Everyone who enters makes his own door, which closes behind him to all others.

Circumstances have rarely favored great men. They have fought their way to triumph over the road of difficulty and through all sorts of opposition. A lowly beginning and a humble origin are no bar to a great career. The farmers’ boys fill many of the greatest places in legislatures, in business, at the bar, in pulpits, in Congress, today. Boys of lowly origin have made many of the greatest discoveries, are presidents of our banks, of our colleges, of our universities. Our poor boys and girls have written many of our greatest books, and have filled the highest places as teachers and journalists. Ask almost any great man in our large cities

where he was born, and he will tell you it was on a farm or in a small country village. Nearly all of the great capitalists of the city came from the country.

Isaac Rich, the founder of Boston University, left Cape Cod for Boston to make his way with a capital of only four dollars. Like Horace Greeley, he could find no opening for a boy; but what of that? He made an opening. He found a board, and made it into an oyster stand on the street corner. He borrowed a wheelbarrow, and went three miles to an oyster smack, bought three bushels of oysters, and wheeled them to his stand. Soon his little savings amounted to $130, and then he bought a horse and cart.

Self-help has accomplished about all the great things of the world. How many young

men falter, faint, and dally with their purpose because they have no capital to start with, and wait and wait for some good luck to give them a lift! But success is the child of drudgery and perseverance. It cannot be coaxed or bribed; pay the price and it is yours. Where is the boy today who has less chance to rise in the world than Elihu Burritt, apprenticed to a blacksmith, in whose shop he had to work at the forge all the daylight, and often by candlelight? Yet, he managed, by studying with a book before him at his meals, carrying it in his pocket that he might utilize every spare moment, and studying at night and holidays, to pick up an excellent education in the odds and ends of time which most boys throw away. While the rich boy and the idler were yawning and stretching and

getting their eyes open, young Burritt had seized the opportunity and improved it. At thirty years of age he was master of every important language in Europe and was studying those of Asia. What chance had such a boy for distinction?

Probably not a single youth will read this book who has not a better opportunity for success. Yet he had a thirst for knowledge and a desire for self-improvement, which overcame every obstacle in his pathway.

If the youth of America who are struggling against cruel circumstances to do something and be somebody in the world could only understand that ninety per cent, of what is Called genius is merely the result of persistent, determined industry, in most cases of downright hard work, that it is the slavery to a single idea which has given to

many a mediocre talent the reputation of being a genius, they would be inspired with new hope. It is interesting to note that the men who talk most about genius are the men who like to work the least. The lazier the man, the more he will have to say about great things being done by genius.

The greatest geniuses have been the greatest workers. Sheridan was considered a genius, but it was found that the “brilliants” and “off-hand sayings” with which he used to dazzle the House of Commons were elaborated, polished and repolished, and put down in his memorandum book ready for any emergency.

Genius has been well defined as the infinite capacity for taking pains. If men who have done great things could only reveal to the

struggling youth of today how much of their reputations was due to downright hard digging and plodding, what an uplift of inspiration and encouragement they would give! How often I have wished that the discouraged, struggling youth could know of the heartaches, the headaches, the nerve aches, the disheartening trials, the discouraged hours, the fears and despair involved in works which have gained the admiration of the world, but which have taxed the utmost powers of their authors. You can read in a few minutes or a few hours a poem or a book with only pleasure and delight, but the days and months of weary plodding over details and dreary drudgery often required to produce it would stagger belief.

The greatest works in literature have been elaborated and elaborated, line by line, paragraph by paragraph, often rewritten a dozen times. The drudgery which literary men have put into the productions which have stood the test of time is almost incredible. Lucretius worked nearly a lifetime on one poem. It completely absorbed his life. It is said that Bryant rewrote “Thanatopsis” a hundred times, and even then, was not satisfied with it. John Foster would sometimes linger a week over a single sentence. He would hack, split, prune, pull up by the roots, or practise any other severity on whatever he wrote, till it gained his consent to exist. Chalmers was once asked what Foster was about in London. “Hard at it,” he replied, “at the rate of a line a week.”

Even Lord Bacon, one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived, at his death left large numbers of manuscripts filled with “sudden thoughts set down for use.” Hume toiled thirteen hours a day on his “History of England.” Lord Eldon astonished the world with his great legal learning, but when he was a student too poor to buy books, he had actually borrowed and copied many hundreds of pages of large law books. Matthew Hale for years studied law sixteen hours a day. Speaking of Fox, someone declared that he wrote “drop by drop.” Rousseau says of the labor involved in his smooth and lively style: “My manuscripts, blotted, scratched, interlined, and scarcely legible, attest the trouble they cost me. There is not one of them which I have not been obliged to transcribe four or

five times before it went to press. . . . Some of my periods I have turned or returned in my head for five or six nights before they were fit to be put to paper.”

Beethoven probably surpassed all other musicians in his painstaking fidelity and persistent application. There is scarcely a bar in his music that was not written and rewritten at least a dozen times. His favorite maxim was, “The barriers are not yet erected which can say to aspiring talent and industry ‘thus far and no further.’” Gibbon wrote his autobiography nine times, and was in his study every morning, summer and winter, at six o’clock; and yet youth who waste their evenings wonder at the genius which can produce “The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,” upon which Gibbon worked twenty years. Even Plato,

one of the greatest writers that ever lived, wrote the first sentence in his “Republic” nine different ways before he was satisfied with it. Burke wrote the conclusion of his speech at the trial of Hastings sixteen times, and Butler his famous “Analogy” twenty times. It took Virgil seven years to write his Georgics, and twelve years to write the AEneid. He was so displeased with the latter that he attempted to rise from his deathbed to commit it to the flames.

Haydn was very poor; his father was a coachman and he, friendless and lonely, married a servant girl. He was sent away from home to act as errand boy for a music teacher. He absorbed a great deal of information, but he had a hard life of persecution until he became a barber in Vienna. Here he blacked boots for an

influential man, who became a friend to him. In 1798 this poor boy's oratorio, "The Creation," came upon the musical world like the rising of a new sun which never set. He was courted by princes and dined with kings and queens; his reputation was made; there was no more barbering, no more poverty. But of his eight hundred compositions, "The Creation" eclipsed them all. He died while Napoleon's guns were bombarding Vienna, some of the shot falling in his garden.

When a man like Lord Cavanagh, without arms or legs, manages to put himself into Parliament, when a man like Francis Joseph Campbell, a blind man, becomes a distinguished mathematician, a musician, and a great philanthropist, we get a hint as to what it means to make the most possible

out of ourselves and our opportunities. Perhaps ninety-nine of a hundred under such unfortunate circumstances would be content to remain helpless objects of charity for life. If it is your call to acquire money power instead of brain power, to acquire business power instead of professional power, double your talent just the same, no matter what it may be.

A glover's apprentice of Glasgow, Scotland, who was too poor to afford even a candle or a fire, and who studied by the light of the shop windows in the streets, and when the shops were closed climbed the lamp-post, holding his book in one hand, and clinging to the lamp-post with the other, — this poor boy, with less chance than almost any boy in America, became the most eminent scholar of Scotland.

Francis Parkman, half blind, became one of America's greatest historians in spite of everything, because he made himself such. Personal value is a coin of one's own minting; one is taken at the worth he has put into himself. Franklin was but a poor printer's boy, whose highest luxury at one time was only a penny roll, eaten in the streets of Philadelphia.

Michael Faraday was a poor boy, son of a blacksmith, who apprenticed him at the age of thirteen to a bookbinder in London. Michael laid the foundations of his future greatness by making himself familiar with the contents of the books he bound. He remained at night, after others had gone, to read and study the precious volumes. Lord Tenterden was proud to point out to his son the shop where he had shaved for a penny.

A French doctor once taunted Flechier, Bishop of Nismes, who had been a tallow-chandler in his youth, with the meanness of his origin, to which he replied, “If you had been born in the same condition that I was, you would still have been but a maker of candles.”

Edwin Chadwick, in his report to the British Parliament, stated that children, working on half time (that is, studying three hours a day and working the rest of their time out of doors), really made the greatest intellectual progress during the year. Businessmen have often accomplished wonders during the busiest lives by simply devoting one, two, three, or four hours daily to study or other literary work.

James Watt received only the rudiments of an education at school, for his attendance

was irregular on account of delicate health. He more than made up for all deficiencies, however, by the diligence with which he pursued his studies at home. Alexander V. was a beggar; he was “born mud, and died marble.” William Herschel, placed at the age of fourteen as a musician in the band of the Hanoverian Guards, devoted all his leisure to philosophical studies. He acquired a large fund of general knowledge, and in astronomy, a science in which he was wholly self-instructed, his discoveries entitle him to rank with the greatest astronomers of all time.

George Washington was the son of a widow, born under the roof of a Westmore land farmer; almost from infancy his lot had been that of an orphan. No academy had welcomed him to its shade, no college

crowned him with its honors; to read, to write, to cipher — these had been his degrees in knowledge. Shakespeare learned little more than reading and writing at school, but by self-culture he made himself the great master among literary men. Burns, too, enjoyed few advantages of education, and his youth was passed in almost abject poverty.

James Ferguson, the son of a half-starved peasant, learned to read by listening to the recitations of one of his elder brothers. While a mere boy he discovered several mechanical principles, made models of mills and spinning-wheels, and by means of beads on strings worked out an excellent map of the heavens. Ferguson made remarkable things with a common penknife. How many great men have

mounted the hill of knowledge by out-of-the-way paths! Gifford worked his intricate problems with a shoemaker’s awl on a bit of leather. Rittenhouse first calculated eclipses on his plow-handle.

Columbus, while leading the life of a sailor, managed to become the most accomplished geographer and astronomer of his time.

When Peter the Great, a boy of seventeen, became the absolute ruler of Russia his subjects were little better than savages, and in himself even the passions and propensities of barbarism were so strong that they were frequently exhibited during his whole career. But he determined to transform himself and the Russians into civilized people. He instituted reforms with great energy, and at the age of twenty-six

started on a visit to the other countries of Europe for the purpose of learning about their arts and institutions. At Saardam, Holland, he was so impressed with the sights of the great East India dockyard that he apprenticed himself to a ship-builder, and helped to build the St. Peter, which he promptly purchased. Continuing his travels, after he had learned his trade, he worked in England in paper-mills, sawmills, rope-yards, watchmakers' shops, and other manufactories, doing the work and receiving the treatment of a common laborer.

While traveling, his constant habit was to obtain as much information as he could beforehand with regard to every place he was to visit, and he would demand, "Let me see all." When setting out on his

investigations, on such occasions, he carried his tablets in his hand and whatever he deemed worthy of remembrance was carefully noted down. He would often leave his carriage if he saw the country people at work by the wayside as he passed along, and not only enter into conversation with them on agricultural affairs, but also accompany them to their homes, examine their furniture, and take drawings of their implements of husbandry. Thus he obtained much minute and correct knowledge, which he would scarcely have acquired by other means, and which he afterward turned to admirable account in the improvement of his own country.

The ancients said, “Know thyself”; the twentieth century says, “Help thyself.” Self-culture gives a second birth to the soul. A

liberal education is a true regeneration. When a man is once liberally educated, he will generally remain a man, not shrink to a manikin, nor dwindle to a brute. But if he is not properly educated, if he has merely been crammed and stuffed through college, if he has merely a broken-down memory from trying to hold crammed facts enough to pass the examination, he will continue to shrink, shrivel, and dwindle, often below his original proportions, for he will lose both his confidence and self-respect, as his crammed facts, which never became a part of himself, evaporate from his distended memory.

Every bit of education or culture is of great advantage in the struggle for existence. The microscope does not create anything new, but it reveals marvels. To educate the

eye adds to its magnifying power until it sees beauty where before it saw only ugliness. It reveals a world we never suspected, and finds the greatest beauty even in the commonest things. The eye of an Agassiz could see worlds of which the uneducated eye never dreamed. The cultured hand can do a thousand things the uneducated hand cannot do. It becomes graceful, steady of nerve, strong, skilful, indeed it almost seems to think, so animated is it with intelligence. The cultured will can seize, grasp, and hold the possessor, with irresistible power and nerve, to almost superhuman effort. The educated touch can almost perform miracles. The educated taste can achieve wonders almost past belief. What a contrast between the cultured, logical,

profound, masterly reason of a Gladstone and that of the hod-carrier who has never developed or educated his reason beyond what is necessary to enable him to mix mortar and carry brick!

Be careful to avoid that over-intellectual culture which is purchased at the expense of moral vigor. An observant professor of one of our colleges has remarked that “the mind may be so rounded and polished by education, and so well balanced, as not to be energetic in any one faculty. In other men not thus trained, the sense of deficiency and of the sharp, jagged corners of their knowledge leads to efforts to fill up the chasms, rendering them at last far better educated men than the polished, easy-going graduate who has just knowledge enough to prevent

consciousness of his ignorance. While all the faculties of the mind should be cultivated, it is yet desirable that it should have two or three rough-hewn features of massive strength. Young men are too apt to forget the great end of life, which is to be and do, not to read and brood over what other men have been and done."

"I repeat that my object is not to give him knowledge, but to teach him how to acquire it at need," said Rousseau.

All learning is self-teaching. It is upon the working of the pupil's own mind that his progress in knowledge depends. The great business of the master is to teach the pupil to teach himself.

"Thinking, not growth, makes manhood," says Isaac Taylor. "Accustom yourself,

therefore, to thinking. Set yourself to understand whatever you see or read. To join thinking with reading is one of the first maxims, and one of the easiest operations.”

“How few think justly of the thinking few:

How many never think who think they do.”

Chapter 7: Work and Wait

What we do upon some great occasion will probably depend on what we already are; and what we are will be the result of previous years of self-discipline. — H. P. Liddon.

I consider a human soul without education like marble in a quarry, which shows none of its inherent beauties until the skill of the polisher sketches out the colors, makes the surface shine, and discovers every ornamental cloud, spot, and vein that runs throughout the body of it. — Addison.

Use your gifts faithfully, and they shall be enlarged; practise what you know, and you shall attain to higher knowledge. — Arnold.

Haste trips up its own heels, fetters and stops itself. — Seneca.

The more you know, the more you can save yourself and that which belongs to you, and do more work with less effort. — Charles Kingsley.

“I was a mere cipher in that vast sea of human enterprise,” said Henry Bessemer, speaking of his arrival in London in 1831. Although but eighteen years old, and without an acquaintance in the city, he soon made work for himself by inventing a process of copying bas-reliefs on cardboard. His method was so simple that could learn in ten minutes how to make a die from an embossed stamp for a penny. Having ascertained later that in this way the raised stamps on all official papers in England could easily be forged, he set to work and invented a perforated stamp which could not be forged nor removed

from a document. At the public stamp office he was told by the chief that the government was losing £100,000 a year through the custom of removing stamps from old parchments and using them again.

The chief also fully appreciated the new danger of easy counterfeiting. So he offered Bessemer a definite sum for his process of perforation, or an office for life at eight hundred pounds a year. Bessemer chose the office, and hastened to tell the good news to a young woman with whom he had agreed to share his fortune. In explaining his invention, he told how it would prevent anyone from taking a valuable stamp from a document a hundred years old and using it a second time.

“Yes,” said his betrothed, “I understand that; but, surely, if all stamps had a date put

upon them they could not at a future time be used without detection.”

This was a very short speech, and of no special importance if we omit a single word of four letters; but, like the schoolboy’s pins which saved the lives of thousands of people annually by not getting swallowed, that little word, by keeping out of the ponderous minds of the British revenue officers, had for a long period saved the government the burden of caring for an additional income of £100,000 a year. And the same little word, if published in its connection, would render Bessemer’s perforation device of far less value than a last year’s bird’s nest. He felt proud of the young woman’s ingenuity, and promptly suggested the improvement at the stamp office.

As a result his system of perforation was abandoned and he was deprived of his promised office, the government coolly making use from that day to this, without compensation, of the idea conveyed by that little insignificant word.

So Bessemer's financial prospects were not very encouraging; but, realizing that the best capital a young man can have is a capital wife, he at once entered into a partnership which placed at his command the combined ideas of two very level heads. The result. after years of thought and experiment, was the Bessemer process of making steel cheaply, which has revolutionized the iron industry throughout the world. His method consists simply in forcing hot air from below into several tons of melted pig-iron, so as to produce intense

combustion; and then adding enough spiegel-eisen (looking-glass iron), an ore rich in carbon, to change the whole mass to steel.

He discovered this simple process only after trying in vain much more difficult and expensive methods.

“All things come round to him who will but wait.”

The great lack of the age is want of thoroughness. How seldom you find a young man or woman who is willing to take time to prepare for his life work! A little education is all they want, a little smattering of books, and then they are ready for business.

“Can’t wait” is characteristic of the century, and is written on everything; on commerce,

on schools, on society, on churches. Can’t wait for a high school, seminary, or college. The boy can’t wait to become a youth, nor the youth a man. Youth rush into business with no great reserve of education or drill; of course they do poor, feverish work, and break down in middle life, and many die of old age in the forties. Everybody is in a hurry. Buildings are rushed up so quickly that they will not stand, and everything is made “to sell.”

Not long ago a professor in one of our universities had a letter from a young woman in the West, asking him if he did not think she could teach elocution if she could come to the university and take twelve lessons. Our young people of today are not willing to lay broad, deep foundations. The weary years in preparatory school and

college dishearten them. They only want a “smattering” of an education. But as Pope says:

A little learning is a dangerous thing;

Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:

There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,

And drinking largely sobers us again.

The shifts to cover up ignorance, and “the constant trembling lest some blunder should expose one’s emptiness,” are pitiable. Short cuts and abridged methods are the demand of the hour. But the way to shorten the road to success is to take plenty of time to lay in your reserve power. Hard work, a definite aim, and faithfulness will shorten the way. Don’t risk a life’s superstructure upon a day’s foundation.

Patience is Nature’s motto. She works ages to bring a flower to perfection. What will she not do for the greatest of her creation? Ages and aeons are nothing to her; out of them she has been carving her great statue, a perfect man.

Johnson said a man must turn over half a library to write one book. When an authoress told Wordsworth she had spent six hours on a poem, he replied that he would have spent six weeks. Think of Bishop Hall spending thirty years on one of his works! Owens was working on the “Commentary to the Epistle to the Hebrews” for twenty years. Moore spent several weeks on one of his musical stanzas which reads as if it were a dash of genius.

Carlyle wrote with the utmost difficulty and never executed a page of his great histories till he had consulted every known authority, so that every sentence is the quintessence of many books, the product of many hours of drudging research in the great libraries. Today, “Sartor Resartus” is everywhere. You can get it for a mere trifle at almost any bookseller’s, and hundreds of thousands of copies are scattered over the world. But when Carlyle brought it to London in 1851, it was refused almost contemptuously by three prominent publishers. At length he managed to get it into “Fraser’s Magazine,” the editor of which conveyed to the author the pleasing information that his work had been received with “unqualified disapprobation.”

Henry Ward Beecher sent half a dozen articles to the publisher of a religious paper to pay for his subscription, but they were respectfully declined. The publishers of the “Atlantic Monthly” returned Miss Alcott’s manuscript, suggesting that she had better stick to teaching. One of the leading magazines ridiculed Tennyson’s first poems, and consigned the young poet to temporary oblivion. Only one of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s books had a remunerative sale. Washington Irving was nearly seventy years old before the income from his books paid the expenses of his household.

In some respects it is very unfortunate that the old system of binding boys out to a trade has been abandoned. Today very few boys learn any trade. They pick up what

they know, as they go along, just as a student crams for a particular examination, just to “get through,” without any effort to see how much he may learn on any subject.

Think of an American youth spending ten years with Da Vinci on the model of an equestrian statue that he might master the anatomy of the horse! Most young American artists would expect, in a quarter of that time, to sculpture an Apollo Belvidere.

A rich man asked Howard Burnett to do a little something for his album. Burnett complied and charged a thousand francs. “But it took you only five minutes,” objected the rich man. “Yes, but it took me thirty years to learn how to do it in five minutes.”

What the age wants is men who have the nerve and the grit to work and wait, whether the world applaud or hiss; a Mirabeau, who can struggle on for forty years before he has a chance to show the world his vast reserve, destined to shake an empire; a Farragut, a Von Moltke, who have the persistence to work and wait for half a century for their first great opportunities; a Grant, fighting on in heroic silence, when denounced by his brother generals and politicians everywhere; a Michael Angelo, working seven long years decorating the Sistine Chapel with his matchless “Creation” and the “Last Judgment,” refusing all remuneration therefore, lest his pencil might catch the taint of avarice; a Thurlow Weed, walking two miles through the snow with rags tied around his feet for

shoes, to borrow the history of the French Revolution, and eagerly devouring it before the sap-bush fire; a Milton, elaborating “Paradise Lost” in a world he could not see; a Thackeray, struggling on cheerfully after his “Vanity Fair” was refused by a dozen publishers; a Balzac, toiling and waiting in a lonely garret; men whom neither poverty, debt, nor hunger could discourage or intimidate; not daunted by privations, not hindered by discouragements. It wants men who can work and wait.

When a young lawyer, Daniel Webster, once looked in vain through all the law libraries near him, and then ordered at an expense of fifty dollars the necessary books, to obtain authorities and precedents in a case in which his client was a poor blacksmith. He won his case, but, on

account of the poverty of his client, only charged fifteen dollars, thus losing heavily on the books bought, to say nothing of his time. Years after, as he was passing through New York City, he was consulted by Aaron Burr on an important but puzzling case then pending before the Supreme Court. He saw in a moment that it was just like the blacksmith's case, an intricate question of title, which he had solved so thoroughly that it was to him now as simple as the multiplication table. Going back to the time of Charles H. he gave the law and precedents involved with such readiness and accuracy of sequence that Burr asked in great surprise if he had been consulted before in the case. "Most certainly not," he replied, "I never heard of your case till this evening." "Very well," said Burr, "proceed";

and, when he had finished, Webster received a fee that paid him liberally for all the time and trouble he had spent for his early client.

Albert Bierstadt first crossed the Rocky Mountains with a band of pioneers in 1859, making sketches for the paintings of Western scenes for which he had become famous. As he followed the trail to Pike's Peak, he gazed in wonder upon the enormous herds of buffaloes which dotted the plains as far as the eye could reach, and thought of the time when they would have disappeared before the march of civilization. The thought haunted him and found its final embodiment in "The Last of the Buffaloes" in 1890. To perfect this great work he had spent twenty years.

Everything which endures, which will stand the test of time, must have a deep, solid foundation. In Rome the foundation is often the most expensive part of an edifice, so deep must they dig to build on the living rock.

Fifty feet of Bunker Hill Monument is under ground; unseen and unappreciated by those who tread about that historic shaft, but it is this foundation, apparently thrown away, which enables it to stand upright, true to the plumb-line through all the tempests that lash its granite sides. A large part of every successful life must be spent in laying foundation stones underground. Success is the child of drudgery and perseverance and depends upon “knowing how long it takes to succeed.”

Endurance is a much better test of character than any one act of heroism, however noble.

The pianist Thalberg said he never ventured to perform one of his celebrated pieces in public until he had played it at least fifteen hundred times. He laid no claim whatever to genius; he said it was all a question of hard work. The accomplishments of such industry, such perseverance, would put to shame many a man who claims genius.

Before Edmund Kean would consent to appear in that character which he acted with such consummate skill. The Gentleman Villain, he practised constantly before a glass, studying expression for a year and a half. When he appeared upon the stage, Byron, who went with Moore to

see him, said he never looked upon so fearful and wicked a face. As the great actor went on to delineate the terrible consequences of sin, Byron fainted.

“For years I was in my place of business by sunrise,” said a wealthy banker who had begun without a dollar; “and often I did not leave it for fifteen or eighteen hours.”

Patience, it is said, changes the mulberry leaf to satin. The giant oak on the hillside was detained months or years in its upward growth while its root took a great turn around some rock, in order to gain a hold by which the tree was anchored to withstand the storms of centuries. Da Vinci spent four years on the head of Mona Lisa, perhaps the most beautiful ever painted, but he left therein an artistic thought for all time.

Said Captain Bingham: “You can have no idea of the wonderful machine that the German army is and how well it is prepared for war. A chart is made out which shows just what must be done in the case of wars with the different nations, and every officer’s place in the scheme is laid out beforehand. There is a schedule of trains which will supersede all other schedules the moment war is declared, and this is so arranged that the commander of the army here could telegraph to any officer to take such a train and go to such a place at a moment’s notice.”

A learned clergyman was thus accosted by an illiterate preacher who despised education: “Sir, you have been to college, I presume?” “Yes, sir,” was the reply. “I am thankful,” said the former, “that the Lord

opened my mouth without any learning.” “A similar event,” retorted the clergyman, “happened in Balaam’s time.”

A young man just graduated told the President of Trinity College that he had completed his education, and had come to say good-by. “Indeed,” said the President, “I have just begun my education.”

Many an extraordinary man has been made out of a very ordinary boy; but in order to accomplish this we must begin with him while he is young. It is simply astonishing what training will do for a rough, uncouth, and even dull lad, if he has good material in him, and comes under the tutelage of a skilled educator before his habits become fixed or confirmed.

Even a few weeks' or months' drill of the rawest and roughest recruits in the late Civil War so straightened and dignified stooping and uncouth soldiers, and made them manly, erect, and courteous in their bearing, that their own friends scarcely knew them. If this change is so marked in the youth who has grown to maturity, what a miracle is possible in the lad who is taken early and put under a course of drill and systematic training, both physical, mental, and moral! How often a man who is in the penitentiary, in the poorhouse, or among the tramps, or living out a miserable existence in the slums of our cities, rough, slovenly, has slumbering within the rags possibilities which would have developed him into a magnificent man, an ornament to the human race instead of a foul blot and

ugly scar, had he only been fortunate enough early in life to have enjoyed the benefits of efficient and systematic training!

Laziness begins in cobwebs and ends in iron chains.

Edison described his repeated efforts to make the phonograph reproduce an aspirated sound, and added: “From eighteen to twenty hours a day for the last seven months I have worked on this single word ‘specia.’ I said into the phonograph ‘specia, specia, specia,’ but the instrument responded ‘pecia, pecia, pecia.’ It was enough to drive one mad. But I held firm, and I have succeeded.”

The road to distinction must be paved with years of self-denial and hard work.

Horace Mann, the great author of the common school system of Massachusetts, was a remarkable example of that pluck and patience which can work and wait. His only inheritance was poverty and hard work. But he had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and a determination to get on in the world. He braided straw to earn money to buy books for which his soul thirsted.

Gladstone was bound to win. Although he had spent many years of preparation for his life work, in spite of the consciousness of marvelous natural endowments which would have been deemed sufficient by many young men, and notwithstanding he had gained the coveted prize of a seat in Parliament, yet he decided to make himself master of the situation; and amid all his public and private duties, he not only spent

eleven terms more in the study of the law, but also studied Greek constantly and read every well-written book or paper he could obtain, so determined was he that his life should be rounded out to its fullest measure, and that his mind should have broad and liberal culture.

Ole Bull said: “If I practise one day, I can see the result; if I practise two days, my friends can see it; if I practise three days, the great public can see it.”

The habit of seizing every bit of knowledge, no matter how insignificant it may seem at the time, every opportunity, every occasion, and grinding them all up into experience, cannot be overestimated. You will find use for all of it. Webster once repeated with effect an anecdote which he had heard fourteen years before, and

which he had not thought of in the meantime. It exactly fitted the occasion. “It is an ill mason that rejects any stone.”

Webster was once urged to speak on a subject of great importance, but refused, saying he was very busy and had no time to master the subject. “But,” replied his friend, “a very few words from you would do much to awaken public attention to it.” Webster replied, “If there be so much weight in my words, it is because I do not allow myself to speak on any subject until my mind is imbued with it.” On one occasion Webster made a remarkable speech before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard, when a book was presented to him; but after he had gone, his “impromptu” speech, carefully written out, was found in

the book which he had forgotten to take away.

Demosthenes was once asked to speak on a great and sudden emergency, but replied, “I am not prepared.” In fact, it was thought by many that Demosthenes did not possess any genius whatever, because he never allowed himself to speak on any subject without thorough preparation. In any meeting or assembly, when called upon, he would never rise, even to make remarks, it was said, without previously preparing himself.

Alexander Hamilton said, “Men give me credit for genius. All the genius I have lies just in this; when I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the

effort which I make the people are pleased to call the fruit of genius; it is the fruit of labor and thought." The law of labor is equally binding on genius and mediocrity.

Nelaton, the great surgeon, said that if he had four minutes in which to perform an operation on which a life depended, he would take one minute to consider how best to do it.

"Many men," says Longfellow, "do not allow their principles to take root, but pull them up every now and then, as children do flowers they have planted, to see if they are growing." We must not only work, but also wait.

"The spruce young spark," says Sizer, "who thinks chiefly of his mustache and boots and shiny hat, of getting along nicely and

easily during the day, and talking about the theater, the opera, or a fast horse, ridiculing the faithful young fellow who came to learn the business and make a man of himself because he will not join in wasting his time in dissipation, will see the day, if his useless life is not earlier blasted by vicious indulgences, when he will be glad to accept a situation from the fellow-clerk whom he now ridicules and affects to despise, when the latter shall stand in the firm, dispensing benefits and acquiring fortune."

"I have been watching the careers of young men by the thousand in this busy city of New York for over thirty years," said Dr. Cuyler, "and I find that the chief difference between the successful and the failures lies in the single element of staying power. Permanent success is oftener won by

holding on than by sudden dash, however brilliant. The easily discouraged, who are pushed back by a straw, are all the time dropping to the rear — to perish or to be carried along on the stretcher of charity. They who understand and practise Abraham Lincoln's homely maxim of 'pegging away' have achieved the solidest success."

The Duke of Wellington became so discouraged because he did not advance in the army that he applied for a much inferior position in the customs department, but was refused. Napoleon had applied for every vacant position for seven years before he was recognized, but meanwhile he studied with all his might, supplementing what was considered a thorough military education by researches and reflections

which in later years enabled him easily to teach the art of war to veterans who had never dreamed of his novel combinations.

Reserves which carry us through great emergencies are the result of long working and long waiting. Dr. Collyer declares that reserves mean to a man also achievement, — “the power to do the grandest thing possible to your nature when you feel you must, or some precious thing will be lost, — to do well always, hut best in the crisis on which all things turn; to stand the strain of a long fight, and still find you have something left, and so to never know you are beaten, because you never are beaten.”

He only is independent in action who has been earnest and thorough in preparation and self-culture. “Not for school, but for life,

we learn”; and our habits — of promptness, earnestness, and thoroughness, or of tardiness, fickleness, and superficiality — are the things acquired most readily and longest retained.

To vary the language of another, the three great essentials to success in mental and physical labor are Practise, Patience, and Perseverance, but the greatest of these is Perseverance.

“Let us, then; be up and doing,

With a heart for any fate;

Still achieving, still pursuing.

Learn to labor and to wait.”

Chapter 8: Clear Grit

Let fortune empty her whole quiver on me, I have a soul that, like an ample shield. Can take in all, and verge enough for more. — Dryden.

There's a brave fellow! There's a man of pluck! A man who's not afraid to say his say. Though a whole town's against him. — Longfellow.

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. — Goldsmith.

The barriers are not yet erected which shall say to aspiring talent, "Thus far and no farther." — Beethoven.

"Friends and comrades," said Pizarro, as he turned toward the south, after tracing with his sword upon the sand a line from

east to west, “on that side are toil, hunger, nakedness, the drenching storm, desertion, and death, on this side, ease and pleasure. There lies Peru with its riches here, Panama and its poverty. Choose, each man, what best becomes a brave Castilian. For my part, I go to the south.” So saying, he crossed the line and was followed by thirteen Spaniards in armor. Thus, on the little island of Gallo in the Pacific, when his men were clamoring to return to Panama, did Pizarro and his few volunteers resolve to stake their lives upon the success of a desperate crusade against the powerful empire of the Incas. At the time they had not even a vessel to transport them to the country they wished to conquer. Is it necessary to add that all

difficulties yielded at last to such resolute determination?

“Perseverance is a Roman virtue,

That wins each godlike act, and plucks success

E’en from the spear-proof crest of rugged danger.”

“When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as if you could not hold on a minute longer,” said Harriet Beecher Stowe, “never give up then, for that’s just the place and time that the tide’ll turn.” Charles Sumner said three things are necessary to a strong character; First, backbone; second, backbone; third, backbone. While digging among the ruins of Pompeii, which was buried by the dust and ashes from an eruption of Vesuvius A.

D. 79, the workmen found the skeleton of a Roman soldier in the sentry-box at one of the city's gates. He might have found safety under sheltering rocks close by; but, in the face of certain death, he had remained at his post, a mute witness to the thorough discipline, the ceaseless vigilance and fidelity which made the Roman legionaries masters of the known world.

The world admires the man who never flinches from unexpected difficulties, who calmly, patiently, and courageously grapples with his fate; who dies, if need be, at his post.

"Clear grit" always commands respect. It is that quality which achieves, and everybody admires achievement. In the strife of parties and principles, backbone without brains will carry against brains without

backbone. You cannot, by tying an opinion to a man's tongue, make him the representative of that opinion; at the close of any battle for principles, his name will be found neither among the dead nor among the wounded, but among the missing.

The "London Times" was an insignificant sheet published by Mr. Walter and was steadily losing money. John Walter, Jr., then only twenty-seven years old, begged his father to give him full control of the paper. After many misgivings, the father finally consented. The young journalist began to remodel the establishment and to introduce new ideas everywhere. The paper had not attempted to mold public opinion, and had had no individuality or character of its own. The audacious young editor boldly attacked every wrong, even

the government, whenever he thought it corrupt. Thereupon the public customs, printing, and the government advertisements were withdrawn. The father was in utter dismay. His son, he was sure, would ruin the paper and himself. But no remonstrance could swerve the son from his purpose to give the world a great journal which should have weight, character, individuality, and independence.

The public soon saw that a new power stood behind the “Times”; that its articles meant business; that new life and new blood and new ideas had been infused into the insignificant sheet; that a man with brains and push and tenacity of purpose stood at the helm, — a man who could make a way when he could not find one. Among other new features foreign

dispatches were introduced, and they appeared in the “Times” several days before their appearance in the government organs. The “leading article” also was introduced to stay. The aggressive editor antagonized the government, and his foreign dispatches were all stopped at the outposts, while the ministerial journalists were allowed to proceed. But nothing could daunt this resolute young spirit. At enormous expense he employed special couriers. Every obstacle put in his way, and all opposition from the government, only added to his determination to succeed. Enterprise, push, grit were behind the “Times,” and nothing could stay its progress. Young Walter was the soul of the paper, and his personality pervaded every detail. In those days only three hundred

copies of the paper could be struck off in an hour by the best presses, and Walter had duplicate and even triplicate types set. Then he set his brain to work, and finally the Walter Press, throwing off 17,000 copies per hour, both sides printed, was the result. It was the 29th of November, 1814, that the first steam printed paper was given to the world.

“Mean natures always feel a sort of terror before great natures, and many a base thought has been unuttered, many a sneaking vote withheld, through the fear inspired by the rebuking presence of one noble man.” As a rule, pure grit, character, has the right of way. In the presence of men permeated with grit and sound in character, meanness and baseness slink out of sight.

Mean men are uncomfortable, dishonesty trembles, hypocrisy is uncertain.

Lincoln, being asked by an anxious visitor what he would do after three or four years if the rebellion were not subdued, replied: “Oh, there is no alternative but to keep pegging away.”

“It is in me and it shall come out,” said Sheridan, when told that he would never make an orator as he had failed in his first speech in Parliament. He became known as one of the foremost orators of his day.

When a boy Henry Clay was very bashful and diffident, and scarcely dared recite before his class at school, but he determined to become an orator. So he committed speeches and recited them in

the cornfields, or in the barn with the horse and cows for an audience.

If impossibilities ever exist, popularly speaking, they ought to have been found somewhere between the birth and death of Kitto, that deaf pauper and master of Oriental learning. But Kitto did not find them there. In the presence of his decision and imperial energy they melted away. He begged his father to take him out of the poorhouse, even if he had to subsist like the Hottentots. He told him that he would sell his books and pawn his handkerchief, by which he thought he could raise about twelve shillings. He said he could live upon blackberries, nuts, and field turnips, and was willing to sleep on a hayrick. Here was real grit. What were impossibilities to such a resolute, indomitable will?

Grit is a permanent, solid quality, which enters into the very structure, the very tissues of the constitution.

Many of our generals in the Civil War exhibited heroism; they were “plucky,” and often displayed great determination, but Grant had pure “grit” in the most concentrated form. He could not be moved from his base; he was self-centered, immovable. “If you try to wheedle out of him his plans for a campaign, he stolidly smokes; if you call him an imbecile and a blunderer, he blandly lights another cigar; if you praise him as the greatest general living, he placidly returns the puff from his regalia; and if you tell him he should run for the presidency, it does not disturb the equanimity with which he inhales and exhales the unsubstantial vapor which

typifies the politician's promises. While you are wondering what kind of creature this man without a tongue is, you are suddenly electrified with the news of some splendid victory; proving that behind the cigar, and behind the face discharged of all tell-tale expression, is the best brain to plan and the strongest heart to dare among the generals of the Republic."

Lincoln had pure "grit." When the illustrated papers everywhere were caricaturing him, when no epithet seemed too harsh to heap upon him, when his methods were criticized by his own party, and the generals in the war were denouncing his "foolish" confidence in Grant, and delegations were waiting upon him to ask for that general's removal, the great

President sat with crossed legs, and was reminded of a story.

Lincoln and Grant both had that rare nerve which cares not for ridicule, is not swerved by public clamor, can bear abuse and hatred. There is a mighty force in truth, and in the sublime conviction and supreme self-confidence behind it; in the knowledge that truth is mighty, and the conviction and confidence that it will prevail.

Pure grit is that element of character which enables a man to clutch his aim with an iron grip, and keep the needle of his purpose pointing to the star of his hope. Through sunshine and storm, through hurricane and tempest, through sleet and rain, with a leaky ship, with a crew in mutiny, it perseveres; in fact, nothing but death can subdue it, and it dies still struggling.

The man of grit carries in his very presence a power which controls and commands. He is spared the necessity of declaring himself, for his grit speaks in his every act. It does not come by fits and starts, it is a part of his life. It inspires a sublime audacity and a heroic courage. Man\ of the failures of life are due to the want of grit or business nerve. It is unfortunate for a young man to start out in business life with a weak, yielding disposition, with no resolution or backbone to mark his own course and stick to it; with no ability to say “No” with an emphasis, obliging this man by investing in hopeless speculation, and, rather than offend a friend, indorsing a questionable note.

A little boy was asked how he learned to skate. “Oh, by getting up every time I fell down,” he replied.

Whipple tells a story of Massena which illustrates the masterful purpose that plucks victory out of the jaws of defeat. “After the defeat at Essling, the success of Napoleon’s attempt to withdraw his beaten army depended on the character of Massena, to whom the emperor dispatched a messenger, telling him to keep his position for two hours longer at Aspern. This order, couched in the form of a request, required almost an impossibility; but Napoleon knew the indomitable tenacity of the man to whom he gave it. The messenger found Massena seated on a heap of rubbish, his eyes bloodshot, his frame weakened by his unparalleled

exertions during a contest of forty hours, and his whole appearance indicating a physical state better befitting the hospital than the field. But that steadfast soul seemed altogether unaffected by bodily prostration. Half dead as he was with fatigue, he rose painfully and said courageously, ‘Tell the Emperor that I will hold out for two hours.’ And he kept his word.”

“Often defeated in battle,” said Macaulay of Alexander the Great, “he was always successful in war.”

In the battle of Marengo, the Austrians considered the day won. The French army was inferior in numbers, and had given way. The Austrian army extended its wings on the right and on the left, to follow up the French. Then, though the French

themselves thought that the battle was lost, and the Austrians were confident it was won, Napoleon gave the command to charge; and, the trumpet's blast being given, the Old Guard charged down into the weakened center of the enemy, cut it in two, rolled the two wings up on either side, and the battle was won for France.

Once when Marshal Ney was going into battle, looking down at his knees which were smiting together, he said, "You may well shake; you would shake worse yet if you knew where I am going to take you."

It is victory after victory with the soldier, lesson after lesson with the scholar, blow after blow with the laborer, crop after crop with the farmer, picture after picture with the painter, and mile after mile with the

traveler, that secures what all so much desire — Success.

A promising Harvard student was stricken with paralysis of both legs. Physicians said there was no hope for him. The lad determined to continue his college studies. The examiners heard him at his bedside, and in four years he took his degree. He resolved to make a critical study of Dante, to do which he had to learn Italian and German. He persevered in spite of repeated attacks of illness and partial loss of sight. He was competing for the university prize. Think of the paralytic lad, helpless in bed, competing for a prize, fighting death inch by inch! What a lesson! Before his manuscript was published or the prize awarded, the brave student died, but his work was successful.

Congressman William W. Crapo, while working his way through college, being too poor to buy a dictionary, actually copied one, walking from his home in the village of Dartmouth, Mass., to New Bedford to replenish his store of words and definitions from the town library.

Oh, the triumphs of this indomitable spirit of the conqueror! This it was that enabled Franklin to dine on a small loaf in the printing-office with a book in his hand. It helped Locke to live on bread and water in a Dutch garret. It enabled Gideon Lee to go barefoot in the snow, half-starved and thinly clad. It sustained Lincoln and Garfield on their hard journeys from the log cabin to the White House.

President Chadbourne put grit in place of his lost lung, and worked thirty-five years after his funeral had been planned.

Henry Fawcett put grit in place of eyesight, and became the greatest Postmaster General England ever had.

Prescott also put grit in place of eyesight, and became one of America's greatest historians. Francis Parkman put grit in place of health and eyesight, and became the greatest historian of America in his line. Thousands of men have put grit in place of health, eyes, ears, hands, legs and yet have achieved marvelous success. Indeed, most of the great things of the world have been accomplished by grit and pluck. You cannot keep a man down who has these qualities. He will make stepping-stones out

of his stumbling blocks, and lift himself to success.

At fifty, Barnum was a ruined man, owing thousands more than he possessed, yet he resolutely resumed business once more, fairly wringing success from adverse fortune, and paying his notes at the same time. Again and again he was ruined; but phoenix-like, he rose repeatedly from the ashes of his misfortune each time more determined than before.

“It is all very well,” said Charles J. Fox, “to tell me that a young man has distinguished himself by a brilliant first speech. He may go on, or he may be satisfied with his first triumph; but show me a young man who has not succeeded at first, and nevertheless has gone on, and I will back

that young man to do better than most of those who have succeeded at the first trial."

Cobden broke down completely the first time he appeared on a platform in Manchester, and the chairman apologized for him. But he did not give up speaking till every poor man in England had a larger, better, and cheaper loaf.

See young Disraeli, sprung from a hated and persecuted race; without opportunity, pushing his way up through the middle classes, up through the upper classes, until he stands self-poised upon the topmost round of political and social power. Scoffed, ridiculed, rebuffed, hissed from the House of Commons, he simply says, "The time will come when you will hear me." The time did come, and the boy with no chance swayed

the scepter of England for a quarter of a century.

One of the most remarkable examples in history is Disraeli, forcing his leadership upon that very party whose prejudices were deepest against his race, and which had an utter contempt for self-made men and interlopers. Imagine England's surprise when she awoke to find this insignificant Hebrew actually Chancellor of the Exchequer! He was easily master of all the tortures supplied by the armory of rhetoric; he could exhaust the resources of the bitterest invective; he could sting Gladstone out of his self-control; he was absolute master of himself and his situation. You could see that this young man intended to make his way in the world. Determined audacity was in his very face.

Handsome, with the hated Hebrew blood in his veins, after three defeats in parliamentary elections he was not the least daunted, for he knew his day would come. Lord Melbourne, the great Prime Minister, when this gay young fop was introduced to him, asked him what he wished to be. “Prime Minister of England,” was his audacious reply.

William H. Seward was given a thousand dollars by his father with which to go to college; this was all he was to have. The son returned at the end of the freshman year with extravagant habits and no money. His father refused to give him more, and told him he could not stay at home. When the youth found the props all taken out from under him, and that he must now sink or swim, he left home moneyless,

returned to college, graduated at the head of his class, studied law, was elected Governor of New York, and became Lincoln's great Secretary of State during the Civil War.

Garfield said, "If the power to do hard work is not talent, it is the best possible substitute for it." The triumph of industry and grit over low birth and iron fortune in America, the land of opportunity, ought to be sufficient to put to shame all grumblers over their hard fortune and those who attempt to excuse aimless, shiftless, successless men because they have no chance.

During a winter in the War of 1812, General Jackson's troops, unprovided for and starving, became mutinous and were going home. But the general set the example of

living on acorns; and then he rode before the rebellious line and threatened with instant death the first mutineer that should try to leave.

The race is not always to the swift, the battle is not always to the strong. Horses are sometimes weighted or hampered in the race, and this is taken into account in the result. So in the race of life the distance alone does not determine the prize. We must take into consideration the hindrances, the weights we have carried, the disadvantages of education, of breeding, of training, of surroundings, of circumstances. How many young men are weighted down with debt, with poverty, with the support of invalid parents or brothers and sisters, or friends? How many are fettered with ignorance, hampered by

inhospitable surroundings, with the opposition of parents who do not understand them? How many a round boy is hindered in the race by being forced into a square hole? How many youths are delayed in their course because nobody believes in them, because nobody encourages them, because they get no sympathy and are forever tortured for not doing that against which every fiber of their being protests, and every drop of their blood rebels? How many men have to feel their way to the goal through the blindness of ignorance and lack of experience? How many go bungling along from the lack of early discipline and drill in the vocation they have chosen? How many have to hobble along on crutches because they were never taught to help themselves, but have

been accustomed to lean upon a father's wealth or a mother's indulgence? How many are weakened for the journey of life by self-indulgence, by dissipation, by "life-sappers"; how many are crippled by disease, by a weak constitution, by impaired eyesight or hearing?

When the prizes of life shall be finally awarded, the distance we have run, the weights we have carried, the handicaps, will all be taken into account. Not the distance we have run, but the obstacles we have overcome, the disadvantages under which we have made the race, will decide the prizes. The poor wretch who has plodded along against unknown temptations, the poor woman who has buried her sorrows in her silent heart and sewed her weary way through life, those

who have suffered abuse in silence, and who have been unrecognized or despised by their fellow-runners, will often receive the greater prize.

“The wise and active conquer difficulties,
By daring to attempt them; sloth and folly
Shiver and sink at sight of toil and hazard,
And make the impossibility they fear.”

Chapter 9: Rich Without Money

Let others plead for pensions; I can be rich without money, by endeavoring to be superior to everything poor. I would have my services to my country unstained by any interested motive. — Lord Collingwood.

I ought not to allow any man, because he has broad lands, to feel that he is rich in my presence. I ought to make him feel that I can do without his riches, that I cannot be bought, — neither by comfort, neither by pride, — and although I be utterly penniless, and receiving bread from him, that he is the poor man beside me. — Emerson.

He is richest who is content with the least, for content is the wealth of nature. — Socrates.

My crown is in my heart, not on my head.

Nor decked with diamonds and Indian stones.

Nor to be seen: my crown is called content;

A crown it is, that seldom kings enjoy. — Shakespeare.

Many a man is rich without money. Thousands of men with nothing in their pockets are rich.

A man born with a good, sound constitution, a good stomach, a good heart and good limbs, and a pretty good head-piece, is rich.

Good bones are better than gold, tough muscles than silver, and nerves that carry energy to every function are better than houses and land.

“Heart-life, soul-life, hope, joy, and love are true riches,” said Beecher.

Why should I scramble and struggle to get possession of a little portion of this earth? This is my world now; why should I envy others its mere legal possession? It belongs to him who can see it, enjoy it. I need not envy the so-called owners of estates in Boston or New York. They are merely taking care of my property and keeping it in excellent condition for me. For a few pennies for railroad fare whenever I wish I can see and possess the best of it all. It has cost me no effort, it gives me no care; yet the green grass, the shrubbery,

and the statues on the lawns, the finer sculptures and the paintings within, are always ready for me whenever I feel a desire to look upon them. I do not wish to carry them home with me, for I could not give them half the care they now receive; besides, it would take too much of my valuable time, and I should be worrying continually lest they be spoiled or stolen. I have much of the wealth of the world now. It is all prepared for me without any pains on my part. All around me are working hard to get things that will please me, and competing to see who can give them the cheapest. The little that I pay for the use of libraries, railroads, galleries, parks, is less than it would cost to care for the least of all I use. Life and landscape are mine, the stars and flowers, the sea and air, the birds

and trees. What more do I want? All the ages have been working for me; all mankind are my servants. I am only required to feed and clothe myself, an easy task in this land of opportunity.

A millionaire pays a big fortune for a gallery of paintings, and some poor boy or girl comes in, with open mind and poetic fancy, and carries away a treasure of beauty which the owner never saw. A collector bought at public auction in London, for one hundred and fifty-seven guineas, an autograph of Shakespeare; but for nothing a schoolboy can read and absorb the riches of “Hamlet.”

“Want is a growing giant whom the coat of Have was never large enough to cover.” “A man may as soon fill a chest with grace, or

a vessel with virtue," says Phillips Brooks, "as a heart with wealth."

Shall we seek happiness through the sense of taste or of touch? Shall we idolize our stomachs and our backs? Have we no higher missions, no nobler destinies? Shall we "disgrace the fair day by a pusillanimous preference of our bread to our freedom "?

What does your money say to you; what message does it bring to you? Does it say to you, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die"? Does it bring a message of comfort, of education, of culture, of travel, of books, of an opportunity to help your fellowmen, or is the message "More land, more thousands and millions"? What message does it bring you? Clothes for the naked, bread for the starving, schools for

the ignorant, hospitals for the sick, asylums for the orphans, or of more for yourself and none for others? Is it a message of generosity or of meanness, breadth or narrowness? Does it speak to you of character? Does it mean a broader manhood, a larger aim, a nobler ambition, or does it cry, “More, more, more”?

Are you an animal loaded with ingots, or a man filled with a purpose? He is rich whose mind is rich, whose thought enriches the intellect of the world.

A sailor on a sinking vessel in the Caribbean Sea eagerly filled his pockets with Spanish dollars from a barrel on board while his companions, about to leave in the only boat, begged him to seek safety with them. But he could not leave the bright metal which he had so longed for and

idolized, and when the vessel went down, he was prevented by his very riches from reaching shore.

“Who is the richest of men?” asked Socrates. “He who is content with the least, for contentment is nature’s riches.”

In More’s “Utopia” gold was despised. Criminals were forced to wear heavy chains of it, and to have rings of it in their ears; it was put to the vilest uses to keep up the scorn of it. Bad characters were compelled to wear gold head-bands. Diamonds and pearls were used to decorate infants, so that the youth would discard and despise them.

“Ah, if the rich were as rich as the poor fancy riches!” exclaims Emerson.

In excavating Pompeii a skeleton was found with the fingers clenched round a quantity of gold. A man of business in the town of Hull, England, when dying, pulled a bag of money from under his pillow, which he held between his clenched fingers with a grasp so firm as scarcely to relax under the agonies of death.

“Oh! blind and wanting wit to choose,

Who house the chaff and burn the grain;

Who hug the wealth ye cannot use.

And lack the riches all may gain.”

Poverty is the want of much, avarice the want of everything.

A poor man while scoffing at the wealthy for not enjoying themselves was met by a stranger who gave him a purse, in which he

was always to find a ducat. As fast as he took one out another was to drop in, but he was not to begin to spend his fortune until he had thrown away the purse. He took ducat after ducat out, but continually procrastinated and put off the hour of enjoyment until he had got “a little more,” and died at last counting his millions.

A beggar was once met by Fortune, who promised to fill his wallet with gold, as much as he might desire, on condition that whatever touched the ground should turn at once to dust. The beggar opened his wallet, asked for more and yet more, until the bag burst. The gold fell to the ground, and all was lost.

When the steamer Central America was about to sink, the stewardess, having collected all the gold she could from the

staterooms, and tied it in her apron, jumped for the last boat leaving the steamer. She missed her aim, fell into the water and the gold carried her down headfirst.

Franklin said money never made a man happy yet; there is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more a man has, the more he wants. Instead of filling a vacuum, it makes one. A great bank account can never make a man rich. It is the mind that makes the body rich. No man is rich, however much money or land he may possess, who has a poor heart. If that is poor, he is poor indeed, though he own and rule kingdoms. He is rich or poor according to what he is, not according to what he has.

Some men are rich in health, in constant cheerfulness, in a mercurial temperament

which floats them over troubles and trials enough to sink a shipload of ordinary men. Others are rich in disposition, family, and friends. There are some men so amiable that everybody loves them; so cheerful that they carry an atmosphere of jollity about them.

The human body is packed full of marvelous devices, of wonderful contrivances, of infinite possibilities for the happiness and enrichment of the individual. No physiologist, inventor, nor scientist has ever been able to point out a single improvement, even in the minutest detail, in the mechanism of the human body. No chemist has ever been able to suggest a superior combination in any one of the elements which make up the human structure.

One of the first great lessons of life is to learn the true estimate of values. As the youth starts out in his career all sorts of wares will be imposed upon him and all kinds of temptations will be used to induce him to buy. His success will depend very largely upon his ability to estimate properly, not the apparent but the real value of everything presented to him. Vulgar Wealth will flaunt her banner before his eyes, and claim supremacy over everything else. A thousand different schemes will be thrust into his face with their claims for superiority. Every occupation and vocation will present its charms and offer its inducements in turn. The youth who would succeed must not allow himself to be deceived by appearances, but must place the emphasis of life upon the right thing.

Raphael was rich without money. All doors opened to him, and he was more than welcome everywhere. His sweet spirit radiated sunshine wherever he went.

Henry Wilson, the sworn friend of the oppressed, whose one question, as to measures or acts, was ever “Is it right; will it do good?” was rich without money. So scrupulous had this Natick cobbler been not to make his exalted position a means of worldly gain, that when he came to be inaugurated as Vice-President of the country, he was obliged to borrow of his fellow-senator, Charles Sumner, one hundred dollars to meet the necessary expenses of the occasion.

Mozart, the great composer of the “Requiem,” left barely enough money to bury him, but he has made the world richer.

A rich mind and noble spirit will cast over the humblest home a radiance of beauty which the upholsterer and decorator can never approach. Who would not prefer to be a millionaire of character, of contentment, rather than possess nothing but the vulgar coins of a Croesus? Whoever uplifts civilization, though he die penniless, is rich, and future generations will erect his monument.

An Asiatic traveler tells us that one day he found the bodies of two men laid upon the desert sand beside the carcass of a camel. They had evidently died from thirst, and yet around the waist of each was a large store of jewels of different kinds, which they had doubtless been crossing the desert to sell in the markets of Persia.

The man who has no money is poor, but one who has nothing but money is poorer. He only is rich who can enjoy without owning; he is poor who though he have millions is covetous. There are riches of intellect, and no man with an intellectual taste can be called poor. He is rich as well as brave who can face compulsory poverty and misfortune with cheerfulness and courage.

We can so educate the will power that it will focus the thoughts upon the bright side of things, and upon objects which elevate the soul, thus forming a habit of happiness and goodness which will make us rich. The habit of making the best of everything and of always looking on the bright side is a fortune in itself.

He is rich who values a good name above gold. Among the ancient Greeks and Romans honor was more sought after than wealth. Rome was imperial Rome no more when the imperial purple became an article of traffic.

Diogenes was captured by pirates and sold as a slave. His purchaser released him, giving him charge of his household and of the education of his children. Diogenes despised wealth and affectation, and lived in a tub. “Do you want anything?” asked Alexander the Great, greatly impressed by the abounding cheerfulness of the philosopher under such circumstances. “Yes,” replied Diogenes, “I want you to stand out of my sunshine and not take from me what you cannot give me” “Were I not

Alexander," exclaimed the great conqueror, "I would be Diogenes."

"I don't want such things," said Epictetus to the rich Roman orator who was making light of his contempt for money-wealth; "and besides," said the stoic, "you are poorer than I am, after all. You have silver vessels, but earthenware reasons, principles, appetites. My mind to me a kingdom is, and it furnishes me with abundant and happy occupation in lieu of your restless idleness. All your possessions seem small to you; mine seem great to me. Your desire is insatiate, mine is satisfied."

"Do you know, sir," said a devotee of Mammon to John Bright, "that I am worth a million sterling?" "Yes," said the irritated but

calm-spirited respondent, “I do; and I know that it is all you are worth,”

A bankrupt merchant, returning home one night, said to his noble wife, “My dear, I am ruined; everything we have is in the hands of the sheriff.” After a few moments of silence the wife looked into his face and asked, “Will the sheriff sell you?” “Oh, no.” “Will the sheriff sell me?” “Oh, no.” “Then do not say we have lost everything. All that is most valuable remains to us, — manhood, womanhood, childhood. We have lost but the results of our skill and industry. We can make another fortune if our hearts and hands are left us.”

What power can poverty have over a home where loving hearts are beating with a consciousness of untold riches of the head and heart?

St. Paul was never so great as when he occupied a prison cell under the streets of Rome; and Jesus Christ reached the height of His success when, smitten, spat upon, tormented, and crucified. He cried in agony, and yet with triumphant satisfaction, “It is finished.”

Don’t start out in life with a false standard; a truly great man makes official position and money and houses and estates look so tawdry, so mean and poor, that we feel like sinking out of sight with our cheap laurels and our gold.

A friend of Professor Agassiz, an eminent practical man, once expressed his wonder that a man of such abilities should remain contented with such a moderate income as he received. “I have enough,” was Agassiz’s reply. “I have no time to waste in

making money. Life is not sufficiently long to enable a man to get rich and do his duty to his fellow-men at the same time.”

How were the thousands of businessmen who lost every dollar they had in the Chicago fire enabled to go into business at once, some into the wholesale business, without money? By means of their record. The commercial agencies said they were square men; that they had always paid one hundred cents on a dollar; that they had paid promptly, and that they were industrious and dealt honorably with all men. This record was as good as a bank account. They drew on their character. Character was the coin which enabled penniless men to buy thousands of dollars’ worth of goods. The best part of them, their

integrity, was beyond the reach of fire and could not be burned.

What are the toil-sweated productions of wealth piled up in vast profusion around some of our millionaires when weighed against the stores of wisdom, the treasures of knowledge, and the strength, beauty, and glory with which victorious virtue has enriched and adorned a great multitude of minds during the march of a hundred generations?

Is it any wonder that our children start out with wrong ideals of life, with wrong ideas of what constitutes success? The child is urged to “get on,” to “rise in the world,” to “make money.” The youth is constantly told that nothing succeeds like success. False standards are everywhere set up for him,

and then the boy is blamed if he goes wrong.

One of the great lessons to teach in this century of sharp competition and the survival of the fittest is how to be rich without money and to learn how to live without success according to the popular standard.

In the poem, “The Changed Cross,” a weary woman is represented as dreaming that she was led to a place where many crosses lay, crosses of divers shapes and sizes. The most beautiful one was set in jewels of gold. It was so tiny and exquisite that she changed her own plain cross for it, thinking she was fortunate in finding one so much lighter and lovelier. But soon her back began to ache under the glittering burden, and she changed it for another,

very beautiful and entwined with flowers. But she soon found that underneath the flowers were piercing thorns which tore her flesh. At last she came to a very plain cross without jewels, without carving, and with only the word, “Love,” inscribed upon it. She took this one up and it proved the easiest and best of all. She was amazed, however, to find that it was her old cross which she had discarded.

It is easy to see the jewels and the flowers in other people’s crosses, but the thorns and heavy weight are known only to the bearers. How easy other people’s burdens seem to us compared with our own! We do not realize the secret burdens which almost crush the heart, nor the years of weary waiting for delayed success — the aching hearts longing for sympathy, the hidden

poverty, the suppressed emotion in other lives.

William Pitt, the Great Commoner, considered money as dirt beneath his feet compared with the public interest and public esteem. His hands were clean.

The object for which we strive tells the story of our lives. Men and women should be judged by the happiness they create in those around them. Noble deeds always enrich, but millions of mere dollars may impoverish. *Character is perpetual wealth*, and by the side of him who possesses it the millionaire who has it not seems a pauper.

Invest in yourself, and you will never be poor. Floods cannot carry your wealth away, fire cannot burn it, rust cannot consume it.

“If a man empties his purse into his head,” says Franklin, “no man can take it from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.”

Howe’er it be, it seems to me,

’Tis only noble to be good.

Kind hearts are more than coronets,

And simple faith than Norman blood. — Tennyson.

Chapter 10: Opportunities Where You Are

To each man's life there comes a time supreme;

One day, one night, one morning, or one noon.

One freighted hour, one moment opportune,

One rift through which sublime fulfilments gleam,

One space when fate goes tiding with the stream.

One Once, in balance 'twixt Too Late, Too Soon,

And ready for the passing instant's boon

To tip in favor the uncertain beam.

Ah, happy he who, knowing how to wait.

Knows also how to watch and work and stand

On Life's broad deck alert, and at the prow

To seize the passing moment, big with fate.

From Opportunity's extended hand.

When the great clock of destiny strikes Now! — Mary A. Townsend.

What is opportunity to a man who can't use it? An unfecundated egg, which the waves of time wash away into nonentity. — George Eliot.

The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity when it comes. — Disraeli.

"There are no longer any good chances for young men," complained a youthful law

student to Daniel Webster. “There is always room at the top,” replied the great statesman and jurist.

No chance, no opportunities, in a land where thousands of poor boys become rich men, where newsboys go to Congress, and where those born in the lowest stations attain the highest positions? The world is all gates, all opportunities to him who will use them. But, like Bunyan’s Pilgrim in the dungeon of Giant Despair’s castle, who had the key of deliverance all the time with him but had forgotten it, we fail to rely wholly upon the ability to advance all that is good for us which has been given to the weakest as well as the strongest. We depend too much upon outside assistance.

“We look too high

For things close by.”

A Baltimore lady lost a valuable diamond bracelet at a ball, and supposed that it was stolen from the pocket of her cloak. Years afterward she washed the steps of the Peabody Institute, pondering how to get money to buy food. She cut up an old, worn-out, ragged cloak to make a hood, when lo! in the lining of the cloak she discovered the diamond bracelet. During all her poverty she was worth $3500, but did not know it.

Many of us who think we are poor are rich in opportunities, if we could only see them. in possibilities all about us, in faculties worth more than diamond bracelets. In our large Eastern cities it has been found that at least ninety-four out of every hundred found their first fortune at home, or near at

hand, and in meeting common every-day wants. It is a sorry day for a young man who cannot see any opportunities where he is, but thinks he can do better somewhere else. Some Brazilian shepherds organized a party to go to California to dig gold, and took along a handful of translucent pebbles to play checkers with on the voyage. After arriving in San Francisco, and after they had thrown most of the pebbles away, they discovered that they were diamonds. They hastened back to Brazil, only to find that the mines from which the pebbles had been gathered had been taken up by other prospectors and sold to the government.

The richest gold and silver mine in Nevada was sold by the owner for $42, to get money to pay his passage to other mines, where he thought he could get rich.

Professor Agassiz once told the Harvard students of a farmer who owned a farm of hundreds of acres of unprofitable woods and rocks, and concluded to sell out and get into a more profitable business. He decided to go into the coal-oil business; he studied coal measures and coal-oil deposits, and experimented for a long time. He sold his farm for $200, and engaged in his new business two hundred miles away. Only a short time after, the man who bought his farm discovered upon it a great flood of coal-oil, which the farmer had previously ignorantly tried to drain off.

Hundreds of years ago there lived near the shore of the river Indus a Persian by the name of Ali Hafed. He lived in a cottage on the riverbank, from which he could get a grand view of the beautiful country

stretching away to the sea. He had a wife and children; an extensive farm, fields of grain, gardens of flowers, orchards of fruit, and miles of forest. He had plenty of money and everything that heart could wish. He was contented and happy. One evening a priest of Buddha visited him, and, sitting before the fire, explained to him how the world was made, and how the first beams of sunlight condensed on the earth's surface into diamonds.

The old priest said that a drop of sunlight the size of his thumb was worth more than large mines of copper, silver, or gold; that with one of them he could buy many farms like his; that with a handful he could buy a province, and with a mine of diamonds he could purchase a kingdom. Ali Hafed listened, and was no longer a rich man. He

had been touched with discontent, and with that all wealth vanishes. Early the next morning he woke the priest who had been the cause of his unhappiness, and anxiously asked him where he could find a mine of diamonds. “What do you want of diamonds?” asked the astonished priest. “I want to be rich and place my children on thrones.” “All you have to do is to go and search until you find them,” said the priest. “But where shall I go?” asked the poor farmer. “Go anywhere, north, south, east, or west.” “How shall I know when I have found the place?” “When you find a river running over white sands between high mountain ranges, in those white sands you will find diamonds,” answered the priest.

The discontented man sold the farm for what he could get, left his family with a

neighbor, took the money he had at interest, and went to search for the coveted treasure. Over the mountains of Arabia, through Palestine and Egypt, he wandered for years, but found no diamonds. When his money was all gone and starvation stared him in the face, ashamed of his folly and of his rags, poor Ali Hafed threw himself into the tide and was drowned. The man who bought his farm was a contented man, who made the most of his surroundings, and did not believe in going away from home to hunt for diamonds or success. While his camel was drinking in the garden one day, he noticed a flash of light from the white sands of the brook. He picked up a pebble, and pleased with its brilliant hues took it into the house, put it on the shelf near the fireplace, and forgot all about it.

The old priest of Buddha who had filled Ali Hafed with the fatal discontent called one day upon the new owner of the farm. He had no sooner entered the room than his eye caught that flash of light from the stone. “Here’s a diamond! here’s a diamond!” he shouted in great excitement. “Has Ali Hafed returned?” “No,” said the farmer, “nor is that a diamond. That is but a stone.” They went into the garden and stirred up the white sand with their fingers, and behold, other diamonds more beautiful than the first gleamed out of it. So the famous diamond beds of Golconda were discovered. Had Ali Ha fed been content to remain at home, and dug in his own garden, instead of going abroad in search for wealth, he would have been one of the richest men in the world,

for the entire farm abounded in the richest of gems.

You have your own special place and work. Find it, fill it. Scarcely a boy or girl will read these lines but has much better opportunity to win success than Garfield, Wilson, Franklin, Lincoln, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frances Willard, and thousands of others had. But to succeed you must be prepared to seize and improve the opportunity when it comes. Remember that four things come not back: the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life, and the neglected opportunity.

It is one of the paradoxes of civilization that the more opportunities are utilized, the more new ones are thereby created. New openings are as easy to find as ever to those who do their best; although it is not so easy as formerly to obtain great

distinction in the old lines, because the standard has advanced so much and competition has so greatly increased. “The world is no longer clay,” said Emerson, “but rather iron in the hands of its workers, and men have got to hammer out a place for themselves by steady and rugged blows.”

Thousands of men have made fortunes out of trifles which others pass by. As the bee gets honey from the same flower from which the spider gets poison, so some men will get a fortune out of the commonest and meanest things, as scraps of leather, cotton waste, slag, iron filings, from which others get only poverty and failure. There is scarcely a thing which contributes to the welfare and comfort of humanity, scarcely an article of household furniture, a kitchen utensil, an article of clothing or of food, that

is not capable of an improvement in which there may be a fortune.

Opportunities? They are all around us. Forces of nature plead to be used in the service of man, as lightning for ages tried to attract his attention to the great force of electricity, which would do his drudgery and leave him to develop the God-given powers within him. There is power lying latent everywhere waiting for the observant eye to discover it.

First find out what the world needs and then supply the want. An invention to make smoke go the wrong way in a chimney might be a very ingenious thing, but it would be of no use to humanity. The patent office at Washington is full of wonderful devices of ingenious mechanism, but not one in hundreds is of use to the inventor or

to the world. And yet how many families have been impoverished, and have struggled for years amid want and woe, while the father has been working on useless inventions. A. T. Stewart, as a boy, lost eighty-seven cents, when his capital was one dollar and a half, in buying buttons and thread which shoppers did not call for. After that he made it a rule never to buy anything which the public did not want, and so prospered.

An observing man, the eyelets of whose shoes pulled out, but who could not afford to get another pair, said to himself, “I will make a metallic lacing hook, which can be riveted into the leather.” He was then so poor that he had to borrow a sickle to cut grass in front of his hired tenement. He became a very rich man.

An observing barber in Newark, N. J., thought he could make an improvement on shears for cutting hair, invented clippers, and became rich. A Maine man was called in from the hayfield to wash clothes for his invalid wife. He had never realized what it was to wash before. Finding the method slow and laborious, he invented the washing machine, and made a fortune. A man who was suffering terribly with toothache felt sure there must be some way of filling teeth which would prevent their aching and he invented the method of gold filling for teeth.

The great things of the world have not been done by men of large means. Ericsson began the construction of the screw propellers in a bathroom. The cotton-gin was first manufactured in a log cabin. John

Harrison, the great inventor of the marine chronometer, began his career in the loft of an old barn. Parts of the first steamboat ever run in America were set up in the vestry of a church in Philadelphia by Fitch. McCormick began to make his famous reaper in a gristmill. The first model dry-dock was made in an attic. Clark, the founder of Clark University of Worcester, Mass., began his great fortune by making toy wagons in a horse shed. Farquhar made umbrellas in his sitting-room, with his daughter's help, until he sold enough to hire a loft. Edison began his experiments in a baggage car on the Grand Trunk Railroad when a newsboy.

Michael Angelo found a piece of discarded Carrara marble among waste rubbish beside a street in Florence, which some

unskilful workman had cut, hacked, spoiled, and thrown away. No doubt many artists had noticed the fine quality of the marble, and regretted that it should have been spoiled. But Michael Angelo still saw an angel in the ruin, and with his chisel and mallet he called out from it one of the finest pieces of statuary in Italy, the young David.

Patrick Henry was called a lazy boy, a good-for-nothing farmer, and he failed as a merchant. He was always dreaming of some far-off greatness, and never thought he could be a hero among the corn and tobacco and saddlebags of Virginia. He studied law for six weeks; when he put out his shingle. People thought he would fail, but in his first case he showed that he had a wonderful power of oratory. It then first dawned upon him that he could be a hero

in Virginia. From the time the Stamp Act was passed and Henry was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses, and he had introduced his famous resolution against the unjust taxation of the American colonies, he rose steadily until he became one of the brilliant orators of America. In one of his first speeches upon this resolution he uttered these words, which were prophetic of his power and courage: “Caesar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third — may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it.”

The great natural philosopher, Faraday, who was the son of a blacksmith, wrote, when a young man, to Humphry Davy, asking for employment at the Royal Institution. Davy consulted a friend on the

matter. “Here is a letter from a young man named Faraday; he has been attending my lectures, and wants me to give him employment at the Royal Institution — what can I do?” “Do? put him to washing bottles; if he is good for anything he will do it directly; if he refuses, he is good for nothing.” But the boy who could experiment in the attic of an apothecary shop with an old pan and glass vials during every moment he could snatch from his work saw an opportunity in washing bottles, which led to a professorship at the Royal Academy at Woolwich. Tyndall said of this boy with no chance, “He is the greatest experimental philosopher the world has ever seen.” He became the wonder of his age in science.

There is a legend of an artist who long sought for a piece of sandalwood, out of

which to carve a Madonna. He was about to give up in despair, leaving the vision of his life unrealized, when in a dream he was bidden to carve his Madonna from a block of oak wood which was destined for the fire. He obeyed, and produced a masterpiece from a log of common firewood. Many of us lose great opportunities in life by waiting to find sandalwood for our carvings, when they really lie hidden in the common logs that we burn. One man goes through life without seeing chances for doing anything great, while another close beside him snatches from the same circumstances and privileges opportunities for achieving grand results.

Opportunities? They are everywhere. “America is another name for opportunities. Our whole history appears like a last effort

of divine Providence on behalf of the human race.” Never before were there such grand openings, such chances, such opportunities.; Especially is this true for girls and young women. A new era is dawning for them. Hundreds of occupations and professions, which were closed to them only a few years ago, are now inviting them to enter.

We cannot all of us perhaps make great discoveries like Newton, Faraday, Edison, and Thompson, or paint immortal pictures like an Angelo or a Raphael. But we can all of us make our lives sublime, by seizing common occasions and making them great. What chance had the young girl, Grace Darling, to distinguish herself, living on those barren lighthouse rocks alone with her aged parents? But while her brothers

and sisters, who moved to the cities to win wealth and fame, are not known to the world, she became more famous than a princess. This poor girl did not need to go to London to see the nobility; they came to the lighthouse to see her. Right at home she had won fame which the regal heirs might envy, and a name which will never perish from the earth. She did not wander away into dreamy distance for fame and fortune, but did her best where duty had placed her.

If you want to get rich, study yourself and your own wants. You will find that millions have the same wants. The safest business is always connected with man's prime necessities. He must have clothing and a dwelling; he must eat. He wants comforts, facilities of all kinds for pleasure, education,

and culture. Any man who can supply a great want of humanity, improve any methods which men use, supply any demand of comfort, or contribute in any way to their well-being, can make a fortune.

“The golden opportunity

Is never offered twice; seize then the hour

When Fortune smiles and Duty points the way.”

Why thus longing, thus forever sighing.

For the far-off, unattained and dim,

While the beautiful, all around thee lying

Offers up its low, perpetual hymn? — Harriet Winslow

Chapter 11: The Might of Little Things

Think naught a trifle, though it small appear;

Small sands the mountain, moments make the year,

And trifles, life. — Young.

It is but the littleness of man that sees no greatness in trifles. — Wendell Phillips.

He that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little. — Ecclesiasticus.

The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn. — Emerson.

Men are led by trifles. — Napoleon.

"A pebble on the streamlet scant

Has turned the course of many a river."

“The bad thing about a little sin is that it won’t stay little.”

“Arletta’s pretty feet, glistening in the brook, made her the mother of William the Conqueror,” says Palgrave’s “History of Normandy and England.” ”Had she not thus fascinated Duke Robert the Liberal, of Normandy, Harold would not have fallen at Hastings, no Anglo-Norman dynasty could have arisen, no British Empire.”

We may tell which way the wind blew before the Deluge by marking the ripple and cupping of the rain in the petrified sand now preserved forever. We tell the very path by which gigantic creatures, whom man never saw, walked to the river’s edge to find their food.

It was little Greece that rolled back the overflowing tide of Asiatic luxury and despotism, giving instead to Europe and America models of the highest political freedom yet attained, and germs of limitless mental growth. A different result at Platsea would have delayed the progress of the human race more than ten centuries.

Among the lofty Alps, it is said, the guides sometimes demand absolute silence, lest the vibration of the voice bring down an avalanche.

The power of observation in the American Indian would put many an educated man to shame. Returning home, an Indian discovered that his venison, which had been hanging up to dry, had been stolen. After careful observation he started to track the thief through the woods. Meeting a man

on the route, he asked him if he had seen a little, old, white man, with a short gun, and with a small bob-tailed dog. The man told him he had met such a man, but was surprised to find that the Indian had not even seen the one he described, and asked him how he could give such a minute description of the man he had never seen. “I knew the thief was a little man,” said the Indian, “because he rolled up a stone to stand on in order to reach the venison; I knew he was an old man by his short steps; I knew he was a white man by his turning out his toes in walking, which an Indian never does; I knew he had a short gun by the mark it left on the tree where he had stood it up; I knew the dog was small by his tracks and short steps, and that he had a

bob-tail by the mark it left in the dust where he sat.”

Two drops of rain, falling side by side, were separated a few inches by a gentle breeze. Striking on opposite sides of the roof of a court-house in Wisconsin, one rolled southward through the Rock River and the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico; while the other entered successively the Fox River, Green Bay, Lake Michigan, the Straits of Mackinaw, Lake Huron, St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, Detroit River, Lake Erie, Niagara River, Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River, and finally reached the Gulf of St. Lawrence. How slight the influence of the breeze, yet such was the formation of the continent that a trifling cause was multiplied almost beyond the power of figures to express its momentous

effect upon the destinies of these companion raindrops. Who can calculate the future of the smallest trifle when a mud crack swells to an Amazon and the stealing of a penny may end on the scaffold? The act of a moment may cause a life's regret. A trigger may be pulled in an instant, but the soul returns never.

A spark falling upon some combustibles led to the invention of gunpowder. A few bits of seaweed and driftwood, floating on the waves, enabled Columbus to stay a mutiny of his sailors which threatened to prevent the discovery of a new world. There are moments in history which balance years of ordinary life. Dana could interest a class for hours on a grain of sand; and from a single bone, such as no one had ever seen before, Agassiz could deduce the entire

structure and habits of an animal which no man had ever seen so accurately that subsequent discoveries of complete skeletons have not changed one of his conclusions.

A cricket once saved a military expedition from destruction. The commanding officer and hundreds of his men were going to South America on a great ship, and, through the carelessness of the watch, they would have been dashed upon a ledge of rock had it not been for a cricket which a soldier had brought on board. When the little insect scented the land, it broke its long silence by a shrill note, and thus warned them of their danger.

By gnawing through a dike, even a rat may drown a nation. A little boy in Holland saw water trickling from a small hole near the

bottom of a dike. He realized that the leak would rapidly become larger if the water were not checked, so he held his hand over the hole for hours on a dark and dismal night until he could attract the attention of passers-by. His name is still held in grateful remembrance in Holland.

The beetling chalk cliffs of England were built by rhizopods, too small to be clearly seen without the aid of a magnifying-glass.

What was so unlikely as that throwing an empty wine-flask in the fire should furnish the first notion of a locomotive, or that the sickness of an Italian chemist’s wife and her absurd craving for reptiles for food should begin the electric telegraph? Madame Galvani noticed the contraction of the muscles of a skinned frog which was accidentally touched at the moment her

husband took a spark from an electrical machine. She gave the hint which led to the 'discovery of galvanic electricity, now so useful in the arts and in transmitting vocal or written language.

“The fate of a nation,” says Gladstone, “has often depended upon the good or bad digestion of a fine dinner.”

A stamp act to raise £60,000 produced the American Revolution, a war that cost England £100,000,000. A war between France and England, costing more than a hundred thousand lives, grew out of a quarrel as to which of two vessels should first be served with water. The quarrel of two Indian boys over a grasshopper led to the “Grasshopper War.” What mighty contests rise from trivial things!

A young man once went to India to seek his fortune, but, finding no opening, he went to his room, loaded his pistol, put the muzzle to his head, and pulled the trigger. But it did not go off. He went to the window to point it in another direction and try it again, resolved that if the weapon went off, he would regard it as a Providence that he was spared. He pulled the trigger and it went off the first time. Trembling with excitement he resolved to hold his life sacred, to make the most of it, and never again to cheapen it. This young man became General Robert Clive, who, with but a handful of European soldiers, secured to the East India Company and afterwards to Great Britain a great and rich country with two hundred million people.

The cackling of a goose aroused the sentinels and saved Rome from the Gauls, and the pain from a thistle warned a Scottish army of the approach of the Danes.

Henry Ward Beecher came within one vote of being elected superintendent of a railway. If he had had that vote America would probably have lost its greatest preacher. What a little thing fixes destiny!

Trifles light as air often suggest to the thinking mind ideas which have revolutionized the world.

A famous ruby was offered to the English government. The report of the crown jeweler was that it was the finest he had ever seen or heard of, but that one of the “facets” was slightly fractured. That

invisible fracture reduced the value of the ruby thousands of dollars, and it was rejected from the regalia of England.

It was a little thing for the janitor to leave a lamp swinging in the cathedral at Pisa, but in that steady swaying motion the boy Galileo saw the pendulum, and conceived the idea of thus measuring time.

“I was singing to the mouthpiece of a telephone,” said Edison, “when the vibrations of my voice caused a fine steel point to pierce one of my fingers held just behind it. That set me to thinking. If I could record the motions of the point and send it over the same surface afterward, I saw no reason why the thing would not talk. I determined to make a machine that would work accurately, and gave my assistants the necessary instructions, telling them

what I had discovered. That’s the whole story. The phonograph is the result of the pricking of a finger.”

It was a little thing for a cow to kick over a lantern left in a shanty, but it laid Chicago in ashes, and rendered homeless a hundred thousand people.

Some little weakness, some self-indulgence. a quick temper, want of decision, are little things, you say, when placed beside great abilities, but they have wrecked many a career.

The Parliament of Great Britain, the Congress of the United States, and representative governments all over the world have come from King John signing the Magna Charta.

Bentham says, “The turn of a sentence has decided many a friendship, and, for aught we know, the fate of many a kingdom.” Perhaps you turned a cold shoulder but once, and made but one stinging remark, yet it may have cost you a friend forever.

The sight of a stranded cuttlefish led Cuvier to an investigation which made him one of the greatest natural historians in the world. The web of a spider suggested to Captain Brown the idea of a suspension bridge.

A missing marriage certificate kept the hod-carrier of Hugh Miller from establishing his claim to the Earldom of Crawford. The masons would call out, “John, Yearl of Crawford, bring us anither hod o’ lime.”

The absence of a comma in a bill which passed through Congress years ago cost

our government a million dollars. A single misspelled word prevented a deserving young man from obtaining a situation as instructor in a New England college.

“I cannot see that you have made any progress since my last visit,” said a gentleman to Michael Angelo. “But,” said the sculptor, “I have retouched this part, polished that, softened that feature, brought out that muscle, given some expression to this lip, more energy to that limb, etc.” “But they are trifles!” exclaimed the visitor. “It may be so,” replied the great artist, “but trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle.” That infinite patience which made Michael Angelo spend a week in bringing out a muscle in a statue with more vital fidelity to truth, or Gerhard Dow a day in giving the right effect to a dewdrop

on a cabbage leaf, makes all the difference between success and failure.

The cry of the infant Moses attracted the attention of Pharaoh's daughter, and gave the Jews a lawgiver. A bird alighting on the bough of a tree at the mouth of the cave where Mahomet lay hid turned aside his pursuers, and gave a prophet to many nations. A flight of birds probably prevented Columbus from discovering this continent. When he was growing anxious, Martin Alonzo Pinzon persuaded him to follow a flight of parrots toward the southwest; for to the Spanish seamen of that day it was good luck to follow in the wake of a flock of birds when on a voyage of discovery. But for his change of course Columbus would have reached the coast of Florida. "Never," wrote

Humboldt, “had the flight of birds more important consequences.”

The children of a spectacle-maker placed two or more pairs of the spectacles before each other in play, and told their father that distant objects looked larger. From this hint came the telescope.

Every day is a little life; and our whole life but a day repeated. Those that dare lose a day are dangerously prodigal; those that dare misspend it, desperate. What is the happiness of your life made up of? Little courtesies, little kindnesses, pleasant words, genial smiles, a friendly letter, good wishes, and good deeds. One in a million — once in a lifetime — may do a heroic action.

Napoleon was a master of trifles. To details which his inferior officers thought too microscopic for their notice he gave the most exhaustive consideration. Nothing was too small for his attention. He must know all about the provisions, the horse fodder, the biscuits, the camp kettles, the shoes. When the bugle sounded for the march to battle, every officer had his orders as to the exact route which he should follow, the exact day he was to arrive at a certain station, and the exact hour he was to leave, and they were all to reach the point of destination at a precise moment. It is said that nothing could be more perfectly planned than his memorable march which led to the victory of Austerlitz, and which sealed the fate of Europe for many years. He would often charge his absent officers

to send him perfectly accurate returns, even to the smallest detail. “When they are sent to me, I give up every occupation in order to read them in detail, and to observe the difference between one monthly return and another. No young girl enjoys her novel as much as I do these returns.” Napoleon left nothing to chance, nothing to contingency, so far as he could possibly avoid it. Everything was planned to a nicety before he attempted to execute it.

Wellington, too, was “great in little things.” He knew no such things as trifles. While other generals trusted to subordinates, he gave his personal attention to the minutest detail. The history of many a failure could be written in three words, “Lack of detail.” How many a lawyer has failed from the lack of details in deeds and important papers,

the lack of little words which seemed like surplusage, and which involved his clients in litigation, and often great losses! How many wills are contested from the carelessness of lawyers in the omission or shading of words, or ambiguous use of language!

Not even Helen of Troy, it is said, was beautiful enough to spare the tip of her nose; and if Cleopatra's had been an inch shorter Mark Antony might never have become infatuated with her wonderful charms, and the blemish would have changed the history of the world. Anne Boleyn's fascinating smile split the great Church of Rome in twain, and gave a nation an altered destiny. Napoleon, who feared not to attack the proudest monarchs in their capitols, shrank from the political

influence of one independent woman in private life, Madame de Staël.

Cromwell was about to sail for America when a law was passed prohibiting emigration. At that time he was a profligate, having squandered all his property. But when he found that he could not leave England he reformed his life. Had he not been detained, who can tell what the history of Great Britain would have been?

From the careful and persistent accumulation of innumerable facts, each trivial in itself, but in the aggregate forming a mass of evidence, a Darwin extracts his law of evolution, and a Linnaeus constructs the science of botany. A pan of water and two thermometers were the tools by which Dr. Black discovered latent heat; and a prism, a lens, and a sheet of pasteboard

enabled Newton to unfold the composition of light and the origin of colors. An eminent foreign *savant* called on Dr. Wollaston, and asked to be shown over those laboratories of his in which science had been enriched by so many great discoveries, when the doctor took him into a little study, and, pointing to an old tea tray on the table, on which stood a few watch glasses, test papers, a small balance, and a blow-pipe, said, “There is my laboratory.” A burnt stick and a barn door served Wilkie in lieu of pencil and paper. A single potato, carried to England by Sir Walter Raleigh in the sixteenth century, has multiplied into food for millions, driving famine from Ireland again and again. It seemed a small thing to drive William Brewster, John Robinson, and the poor people of Austerfield and

Scrooby into perpetual exile, but as Pilgrims they became the founders of a mighty people.

A few immortal sentences from Garrison and Phillips, a few poems from Lowell and Whittier, and the leaven is at work which will not cease its action until the whipping-post and bodily servitude are abolished forever.

“For want of a nail the shoe was lost,

For want of a shoe the horse was lost;

For want of a horse the rider was lost, and all,”

says Poor Richard, “for want of a horseshoe nail.”

A single remark dropped by an unknown person in the street led to the successful

story of “The Breadwinners.” A hymn chanted by the barefooted friars in the temple of Jupiter at Rome led to the famous “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.”

“Words are things” says Byron, “and a small drop of ink, falling like dew upon a thought, produces that which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.”

“I give these books for the founding of a college in this colony”; such were the words of ten ministers who in the year 1700 assembled at the village of Branford, a few miles east of New Haven. Each of the worthy fathers deposited a few books upon the table around which they were sitting; such was the founding of Yale College.

Great men are noted for their attention to trifles. Goethe once asked a monarch to

excuse him, during an interview, while he went to an adjoining room to jot down a stray thought. Hogarth would make sketches of rare faces and characteristics upon his fingernails upon the streets. Indeed, to a truly great mind there are no little things. Trifles light as air suggest to the keen observer the solution of mighty problems. Bits of glass arranged to amuse children led to the discovery of the kaleidoscope. Goodyear discovered how to vulcanize rubber by forgetting, until it became red hot, a skillet containing a compound which he had before considered worthless. A ship-worm boring a piece of wood suggested to Sir Isambard Brunei the idea of a tunnel under the Thames at London. Tracks of extinct animals in the old red sandstone led Hugh Miller on and on

until he became the greatest geologist of his time. Sir Walter Scott once saw a shepherd boy plodding sturdily along, and asked him to ride. This boy was George Kemp, who became so enthusiastic in his study of sculpture that he walked fifty miles and back to see a beautiful statue. He did not forget the kindness of Sir Walter, and, when the latter died, threw his soul into the design of the magnificent monument erected in Edinburgh to the memory of the author of “Waverley.”

A poor boy applied for a situation at a bank in Paris, but was refused. As he left the door, he picked up a pin. The bank president saw this, called the boy back, and gave him a situation from which he rose until he became the greatest banker of Paris. — Laffitte.

A Massachusetts soldier in the Civil War observed a bird hulling rice, and shot it; taking its bill for a model, he invented a hulling machine which has revolutionized the rice business.

The eye is a perpetual camera imprinting upon the sensitive mental plates and packing away in the brain for future use every face, every tree, every plant, flower, hill, stream, mountain, every scene upon the street, in fact, everything which comes within its range. There is a phonograph in our natures which catches, however thoughtless and transient, every syllable we utter, and registers forever the slightest enunciation, and renders it immortal. These notes may appear a thousand years hence, reproduced in our descendants, in all their beautiful or terrible detail.

“Least of all seeds, greatest of all harvests,” seems to be one of the great laws of nature. All life comes from microscopic beginnings. In nature there is nothing small. The microscope reveals as great a world below as the telescope above. All of nature’s laws govern the smallest atoms, and a single drop of water is a miniature ocean.

The strength of a chain lies in its weakest link, however large and strong all the others may be. We are all inclined to be proud of our strong points, while we are sensitive and neglectful of our weaknesses. Yet it is our greatest weakness which measures our real strength.

A soldier who escapes the bullets of a thousand battles may die from the scratch of a pin, and many a ship has survived the

shocks of icebergs and the storms of ocean only to founder in a smooth sea from holes made by tiny insects.

Small things become great when a great soul sees them. A single noble or heroic act of one man has sometimes elevated a nation. Many an honorable career has resulted from a kind word spoken in season or the warm grasp of a friendly hand.

It is the little rift within the lute

That by and by will make the music mute,

And, ever widening, slowly silence all. — Tennyson.

“It was only a glad ‘good-morning,’

As she passed along the way.

But it spread the morning’s glory

Over the livelong day.”

“Only a thought in passing — a smile, or encouraging word,

Has lifted many a burden no other gift could have stirred.”

Chapter 12: Nature’s Little Bill

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;

Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all. — Frederick von Logau.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. — Ecclesiastes.

Man is a watch, wound up at first but never Wound up again; once down he’s down forever. — Herrick.

Old age seizes upon an ill-spent youth like fire upon a rotten house. — South.

Last Sunday a young man died here of extreme old age at twenty-five. — John Newton.

If you will not hear Reason, she'll surely rap your knuckles. — Poor Richard's Sayings.

"Oh! Oh! ah!" exclaimed Franklin; "what have I to merit these cruel sufferings?" "Many things," replied the Gout; "you have eaten and drunk too freely, and too much indulged those legs of yours in your indolence."

Nature seldom presents her bill on the day you violate her laws. But if you overdraw your account at her bank, and give her a mortgage on your body, be sure she will foreclose. She may loan you all you want; but, like Shylock, she will demand the last ounce of flesh. She rarely brings in her

cancer bill before the victim is forty years old. She does not often annoy a man with her drink bill until he is past his prime, and then presents it in the form of Bright's disease, fatty degeneration of the heart, drunkard's liver, or some similar disease. What you pay the saloon keeper is but a small part of your score.

We often hear it said that the age of miracles is past. We marvel that a thief dying on the cross should appear that very day in Paradise; but behold how that bit of meat or vegetable on a Hawarden breakfast table is snatched from Death, transformed into thought, and on the following night shakes Parliament in the magnetism and oratory of a Gladstone. The age of miracles past, when three times a day right before our eyes Nature performs

miracles greater even than raising the dead? Watch that crust of bread thrown into a cell in Bedford Jail and devoured by a poor, hungry tinker; cut. crushed, ground, driven by muscles, dissolved by acids and alkalies; absorbed and hurled into the mysterious red river of life. Scores of little factories along this strange stream, waiting for this crust, transmute it as it passes, as if by magic, here into a bone cell, there into gastric juice, here into bile, there into a nerve cell, yonder into a brain cell. We cannot trace the processes by which this crust arrives at the muscle and acts, arrives at the brain and thinks. We cannot see the manipulating hand which throws back and forth the shuttle which weaves Bunyan's destinies, nor can we trace the subtle alchemy which transforms this prison crust

into the finest allegory in the world, the Pilgrim's Progress. But we do know that, unless we supply food when the stomach begs and clamors, brain and muscle cannot continue to act; and we also know that unless the food is properly chosen, unless we eat it properly, unless we maintain good digestion by exercise of mind and body, it will not produce the speeches of a Gladstone or the allegories of a Bunyan.

Truly we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Imagine a cistern which would transform the foul sewage of a city into pure drinking water in a second's time, as the black venous blood, foul with the ashes of burned-up brain cells and debris of worn-out tissues, is transformed in the lungs, at every breath, into pure, bright, red blood.

Each drop of blood from that magic stream of liquid life was compounded by a divine Chemist. In it float all our success and destiny. In it are the extensions and limits of our possibilities. In it are health and long life, or disease and premature death. In it are our hopes and our fears, our courage, our cowardice, our energy or lassitude, our strength or weakness, our success or failure. In it are susceptibilities of high or broad culture, or pinched or narrow faculties handed down from an uncultured ancestry. From it our bones and nerves, our muscles and brain, our comeliness or ugliness, all come. In it are locked up the elements of a vicious or a gentle life, the tendencies of a criminal or a saint. How important is it, then, that we should obey the laws of health, and thus maintain the

purity and power of this our earthly River of Life!

“We hear a great deal about the ‘vile body,’” said Spencer, “and many are encouraged by the phrase to transgress the laws of health. But Nature quietly suppresses those who treat thus disrespectfully one of her highest products, and leaves the world to be peopled by the descendants of those who are not so foolish.”

Nature gives to him that hath. She shows him the contents of her vast storehouse, and bids him take all he wants and be welcome. But she will not let him keep for years what he does not use. Use or lose is her motto. Every atom we do not utilize this great economist snatches from us.

If you put your arm in a sling and do not use it, Nature will remove the muscle almost to the bone, and the arm will become useless, but in exact proportion to your efforts to use it again she will gradually restore what she took away. Put your mind in the sling of idleness, or inactivity, and in like manner she will remove your brain, even to imbecility. The blacksmith wants one powerful arm, and she gives it to him, but reduces the other. You can, if you will, send all the energy of your life into some one faculty, but all your other faculties will starve.

A young lady may wear tight corsets if she chooses, but Nature will remove the rose from her cheek and put pallor there. She will replace a clear complexion with muddy

hues and sallow spots. She will take away the elastic step, the luster from the eye.

Don’t expect to have health for nothing. Nothing in this world worth anything can be had for nothing. Health is the prize of a constant struggle.

Nature passes no act without affixing a penalty for its violation. Whenever she is outraged, she will have her penalty, although it take a life.

A great surgeon stood before his class to perform a certain operation which the elaborate mechanism and minute knowledge of modern science had only recently made possible. With strong and gentle hand he did his work successfully so far as his part of the terrible business went; and then he turned to his pupils and said,

“Two years ago a safe and simple operation might have cured this disease. Six years ago a wise way of life might have prevented it. We have done our best as the case now stands, but Nature will have her word to say. She does not always consent to the repeal of her capital sentences.” Next day the patient died.

Apart from accidents, we hold our life largely at will. What business have seventy-five thousand physicians in the United States? It is our own fault that even one-tenth of them get a respectable living. What a commentary upon our modern American civilization that three hundred and fifty thousand people in this country die annually from absolutely preventable diseases! Seneca said, “The gods have given us a long life, but we have made it

short.” Few people know enough to become old. It is a rare thing for a person to die of old age. Only three or four out of a hundred die of anything like old age. But Nature evidently intended, by the wonderful mechanism of the human body, that we should live well up to a century.

Thomas Parr, of England, lived to the age of one hundred and fifty-two years. He was married when he was a hundred and twenty, and did not leave off work until he was a hundred and thirty. The great Dr. Harvey examined Parr’s body, but found no cause of death except a change of living. Henry Jenkins, of Yorkshire, England, lived to be a hundred and sixty-nine, and would probably have lived longer had not the king brought him to London, where luxuries hastened his death. The court records of

England show that he was a witness in a trial a hundred and forty years before his death. He swam across a rapid river when he was a hundred.

There is nothing we are more ignorant of than the physiology and chemistry of the human body. Not one person in a thousand can correctly locate important internal organs or describe their use in the animal economy.

What an insult to the Creator who fashioned them so wonderfully and fearfully in His own image, that the graduates from our high schools and even universities, and young women who “finish their education,” become proficient in the languages, in music, in art, and have the culture of travel, but cannot describe or locate the various organs or functions upon

which their lives depend! “The time will come,” says Frances Willard, “when it will be told as a relic of our primitive barbarism that children were taught the list of prepositions and the names of the rivers of Thibet, but were not taught the wonderful laws on which their own bodily happiness is based, and the humanities by which they could live in peace and good-will with those about them.” Nothing else is so important to man as the study and knowledge of himself, and yet he knows less of himself than he does of the beasts about him.

The human body is the great poem of the Great Author. Not to learn how to read it, to spell out its meaning, to appreciate its beauties, or to attempt to fathom its mysteries, is a disgrace to our civilization.

What a price mortals pay for their ignorance, let a dwarfed, half-developed, one-sided, short-lived nation answer.

“A brilliant intellect in a sickly body is like gold in a spent swimmer’s pocket.”

Often, from lack of exercise, one side of the brain gradually becomes paralyzed and deteriorates into imbecility. How intimately the functions of the nervous organs are united! The whole man mourns for a felon. The least swelling presses a nerve against a bone and causes one intense agony, and even a Napoleon becomes a child. A corn on the toe, an affection of the kidneys or of the liver, a boil anywhere on the body, or a carbuncle, may seriously affect the eyes and even the brain. The whole system is a network of nerves, of organs, of functions, which are so intimately joined, and related

in such close sympathy, that an injury to one part is immediately felt in every other.

Nature takes note of all our transactions, physical, mental, or moral, and places every item promptly to our debit or credit.

Let us take a look at a page in Nature's ledger:

To damage the heart in youth by immoderate athletics, tobacco chewing, cigarette smoking, drinking strong tea or coffee, rowing, running to trains, overstudy, excitement, etc.

The "irritable heart," the "tobacco heart," a life of promise impaired or blighted.

To one digestive apparatus ruined, by eating hurriedly, by eating unsuitable or poorly cooked food, by drinking ice water when one is heated, by swallowing

scalding drinks, especially tea, which forms tannic acid on the delicate lining of the stomach; or by eating when tired or worried, or after receiving bad news, when the gastric juice cannot be secreted, etc.

Dyspepsia, melancholia, years of misery to self, anxiety to one's family, pity and disgust of friends.

To one nervous system shattered by dissipation, abuses, overexcitement, a fast life, feverish haste to get riches or fame, hastening puberty by stimulating food, exciting life, etc.

Years of weakness, disappointed ambition, hopeless inefficiency, a burnt-out life.

To damage by undue mental exertion by burning the "midnight oil," exhausting the brain cells faster than they can be renewed.

Impaired powers of mind, softening of the brain, blighted hopes.

To overstraining the brain trying to lead his class in college, trying to take a prize, or to get ahead of somebody else.

A disappointed ambition, a life of invalidism.

To hardening the delicate and sensitive gray matter of the brain and nerves, and ruining the lining membranes of the stomach and nervous system by alcohol, opium, etc.

A hardened brain, a hardened conscience, a ruined home, Bright's disease, fatty degeneration, nervous degeneration, a short, useless, wasted life.

By forced balances, here and there.

Accounts closed. Physiological and moral bankruptcy.

Sometimes two or three such items are charged to a single account. To offset them, there is placed on the credit side a little feverish excitement, too fleeting for calm enjoyment, followed by regret, remorse, and shame. Be sure your sins will find you out. They are all recorded.

“The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices Make instruments to scourge us.”

It is a wonder that we live at all. We violate every law of our being, yet we expect to live to a ripe old age. What would you think of a man who, having an elegant watch delicately adjusted to heat and cold, should leave it on the sidewalk with cases open on a dusty or a rainy day, and yet expect it to

keep good time? What would you think of a householder who should leave the doors and windows of his mansion open to thieves and tramps, to winds and dust and rain?

What are our bodies but timepieces made by an Infinite Hand, wound up to run a century, and so delicately adjusted to heat and cold that the temperature will not vary half a degree between the heat of summer and the cold of winter whether we live in the regions of eternal frost or under the burning sun of the tropics? A particle of dust or the slightest friction will throw this wonderful time-piece out of order, yet we often leave it exposed to all the corroding elements. We do not always keep open the twenty-five miles of ventilating pores in the skin by frequent bathing. We seldom lubricate the

delicate wheels of the body with the oil of gladness. We expose it to dust and cinders, cold and draughts, and poisonous gases.

How careful we are to filter our water, air our beds, ventilate our sleeping-rooms, and analyze our milk! We shrink from contact with filth and disease. But we put paper colored with arsenic on our walls, and daily breathe its poisonous exhalations. We frequent theaters crowded with human beings, many of whom are unclean and diseased. We sit for hours and breathe in upon fourteen hundred square feet of lung tissue the heated, foul, and heavy air; carbonic acid gas from hundreds of gas burners, each consuming as much oxygen as six people; air filled with shreds of tissue expelled from diseased lungs; poisonous effluvia exhaled from the bodies

of people who rarely bathe, from clothing seldom washed, fetid breaths, and skin diseases in different stages of development. For hours we sit in this bath of poison, and wonder at our headache and lassitude next morning.

We pour a glass of ice water into a stomach busy in the delicate operation of digestion, ignorant or careless of the fact that it takes half an hour to recover from the shock and get the temperature back to ninety-eight degrees, so that the stomach can go on secreting gastric juice. Then down goes another glass of water with similar results.

We pour down alcohol which thickens the velvety lining of the stomach, and hardens the soft tissues, the thin sheaths of nerves, and the gray matter of the brain. We crowd meats, vegetables, pastry, confectionery,

nuts, raisins, wines, fruits, etc., into one of the most delicately constructed organs of the body, and expect it to take care of its miscellaneous and incongruous load without a murmur.

After all these abuses we do not give the blood a chance to go to the stomach and help it out of its misery, but summon it to the brain and muscles, notwithstanding the fact that it is so important to have an extra supply to aid digestion that Nature has made the blood vessels of the alimentary canal large enough to contain several times the amount in the entire body.

Who ever saw a horse leave his oats and hay, when hungry, to wash them down with water? The dumb beasts can teach us some valuable lessons in eating and drinking. Nature mixes our gastric juice or

pepsin and acids in just the right proportion to digest our food, and keep it at exactly the right temperature. If we dilute it, or lower its temperature by ice water, we diminish its solvent or digestive power, and dyspepsia is the natural result.

English factory children have received the commiseration of the world because they were scourged to work fourteen hours out of the twenty-four. But there is many a theoretical republican who is a harsher taskmaster to his stomach than this; who allows it no more resting time than he does his watch; who gives it no Sunday, no holiday, no vacation in any sense, and who seeks to make his heart beat faster for the sake of the exhilaration he can thus produce.

Although the heart weighs a little over half a pound, yet it pumps eighteen pounds of blood from itself, forcing it into every nook and corner of the entire body, back to itself in less than two minutes. This little organ, the most perfect engine in the world, does a daily work equal to lifting one hundred and twenty-four tons one foot high, and exerts one-third as much muscle power as does a stout man at hard labor. If the heart should expend its entire force lifting its own weight, it would raise itself nearly twenty thousand feet an hour, ten times as high as a pedestrian can lift himself in ascending a mountain. What folly, then, to goad this willing, hard-working slave to greater exertions by stimulants!

We must pay the penalty of our vocations. Beware of work that kills the workman.

Those who prize long life should avoid all occupations which compel them to breathe impure air or deleterious gases, and especially those in which they are obliged to inhale dust and filings from steel and brass and iron, the dust in coal mines, and dust from threshing machines. Stone-cutters, miners, and steel grinders are short lived, the sharp particles of dust irritating and inflaming the tender lining of the lung cells. The knife and fork grinders in Manchester, England, rarely live beyond thirty-two years. Those who work in grain elevators and those who are compelled to breathe chemical poisons are short lived.

Deep breathing in dusty places sends the particles of dust into the upper and less used lobes of the lungs, and these become a constant irritant, until they finally excite an

inflammation, which may end in consumption. All occupations in which arsenic is used shorten life.

Dr. William Ogle, who is authority upon this subject, says, “Of all the various influences that tend to produce differences of mortality in any community, none is more potent than the character of the prevailing occupations.” Finding that clergymen and priests have the lowest death-rate, he represented it as one hundred, and by comparison found that the rate for inn and hotel servants was three hundred and ninety-seven; miners, three hundred and thirty-one; earthenware makers, three hundred and seventeen; file makers, three hundred; innkeepers, two hundred and seventy-four; gardeners, farmers, and agricultural laborers closely approximating

the clerical standard. He gave as the causes of high mortality, first, working in a cramped or constrained attitude; second, exposure to the action of poisonous or irritating substances; third, excessive work, mental or physical; fourth, working in confined or foul air; fifth, the use of strong drink; sixth, differences in liability to fatal accidents; seventh, exposure to the inhalation of dust. The deaths of those engaged in alcoholic industries were as one thousand five hundred and twenty-one to one thousand of the average of all trades.

It is very important that occupations should be congenial. Whenever our work galls us, whenever we feel it to be a drudgery and uncongenial, the friction grinds life away at a terrible rate.

Health can be accumulated, invested, and made to yield its compound interest, and thus be doubled and redoubled. The capital of health may, indeed, be forfeited by one misdemeanor, as a rich man may sink all his property in one bad speculation; but it is as capable of being increased as any other kind of capital.

One is inclined to think with a recent writer that it looks as if the rich men kept out of the kingdom of heaven were also excluded from the kingdom of brains. In New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago are thousands of millionaires, some of them running through three or four generations of fortune; and yet, in all their ranks, there is seldom a man possessed of the higher intellectual qualities that flower in literature, eloquence, or statesmanship. Scarcely one

of them has produced a book worth printing, a poem worth reading, or a speech worth listening to. They are struck with intellectual sterility. They go to college; they travel abroad; they hire the dearest masters; they keep libraries among their furniture; and some of them buy works of art. But, for all that, their brains wither under luxury, often by their own vices or tomfooleries, and mental barrenness is the result. He who violates Nature's law must suffer the penalty, though he have millions. The fruits of intellect do not grow among the indolent rich. They are usually out of the republic of brains. Work or starve is Nature's motto; starve mentally, starve morally, even if you are rich enough to prevent physical starvation.

How heavy a bill Nature collects of him in whom the sexual instinct has been permitted to taint the whole life with illicit thoughts and deeds, stultifying the intellect, deadening the sensibilities, dwarfing the soul!

“I waive the quantum of the sin.

The hazard of concealing;

But och, it hardens all within,

And petrifies the feeling.”

The sense of fatigue is one of Nature’s many signals of danger. All we accomplish by stimulating or crowding the body or mind when tired is worse than lost. Insomnia, and sometimes even insanity, is Nature’s penalty for prolonged loss of sleep.

One of the worst tortures of the Inquisition was that of keeping victims from sleeping, often driving them to insanity or death. Melancholy follows insomnia; insanity, both. To keep us in a healthy condition. Nature takes us back to herself, puts us under the ether of sleep, and keeps us there nearly one-third of our lives, while she overhauls and repairs in secret our wonderful mechanism. She takes us back each night wasted and dusty from the day's work, broken, scarred, and injured in the great struggle of life. Each cell of the brain is reburnished and refreshened; all the ashes or waste from the combustion of the tissues is washed out into the blood stream, pumped to the lungs, and thrown out in the breath; and the body is returned in the morning as fresh and good as new.

The American honey does not always pay for the sting.

Labor is the eternal condition on which the rich man gains an appetite for his dinner, and the poor man a dinner for his appetite; but the habit of constant, perpetual industry often becomes a disease.

In the Norse legend. Allfader was not allowed to drink from Mirmir's Spring, the fount of wisdom, until he had left his eye as a pledge. Scholars often leave their health, their happiness, their usefulness behind; in their great eagerness to drink deep draughts at wisdom's fountain. Professional men often sacrifice everything that is valuable in life for the sake of reputation, influence, and money. Businessmen sacrifice home, family, health, happiness, in the great struggle for

money and power. The American prize, like the pearl in the oyster, is very attractive, but is too often the result of disease.

Charles Linnaeus, the great naturalist, so exhausted his brain by over-exertion that he could not recognize his own work, and even forgot his own name. Kirk White won the prize at Cambridge, but it cost him his life. He studied at night and forced his brain by stimulants and narcotics in his endeavor to pull through, but he died at twenty-four. Paley died at sixty-two of overwork. He was called “one of the sublimest spirits in the world.”

President Timothy Dwight of Yale College nearly killed himself by overwork when a young man. When at Yale he studied nine hours, taught six hours a day, and took no exercise whatever. He could not be

induced to stop until he became so nervous and irritable that he was unable to look at a book ten minutes a day. His mind gave way, and it was a long time before he fully recovered.

Imagine the surprise of the angels at the death of men and women in the early prime and vigor of life. Could we but read the notes of their autopsies we might say less of mysterious Providence at funerals. They would run somewhat as follows:

Notes From The Angels' Autopsies

What, is it returned so soon? — a body framed for a century's use returned at thirty? — a temple which was twenty-eight years in building destroyed almost before it was completed? What have gray hairs,

wrinkles, a bent form', and death to do with youth?

Has all this beauty perished like a bud just bursting into bloom, plucked by the grim destroyer? Has she fallen a victim to tight-lacing, over-excitement, and the gaiety and frivolity of fashionable life?

Here is an educated, refined woman who died of lung starvation. What a tax human beings pay for breathing impure air! Nature provides them with a tonic atmosphere, compounded by the divine Chemist, but they refuse to breathe it in its purity, and so must pay the penalty in shortened lives. They can live a long time without water, a longer time without food, clothing, or the so-called comforts of life; they can live without education or culture, but their lungs must have good, healthful air-food twenty-

four thousand times a day if they would maintain health. Oh, that they would see, as we do, the intimate connection between bad air, bad morals, and a tendency to crime!

Here are the ruins of an idolized son and loving husband. Educated and refined, what infinite possibilities beckoned him onward at the beginning of his career! But the Devil's agent offered him imagination, sprightliness, wit, eloquence, bodily strength, and happiness in eau de vie, or "water of life," as he called it, at only fifteen cents a glass. The best of our company tried to dissuade him, but to no avail. The poor mortal closed his "bargain" with the dramseller, and what did he get? A hardened conscience, a ruined home, a diseased body, a muddled brain, a

heartbroken wife, wretched children, disappointed friends, triumphant enemies, days of remorse, nights of anguish, an unwept deathbed, an unhonored grave. And only to think that he is only one of many thousands! “What fools these mortals be!”

Did he not see the destruction toward which he was rushing with all the feverish haste of slavish appetite? Ah, yes, but only when it was too late. In his clenched hand, as he lay dead, was found a crumpled paper containing the following, in lines barely legible so tremulous were the nerves of the writer: “Wife, children, and over forty thousand dollars all gone! I alone am responsible. All has gone down my throat. When I was twenty-one, I had a fortune. I am not yet thirty-five years old. I have killed

my beautiful wife, who died of a broken heart; have murdered our children with neglect. When this coin is gone, I do not know how I can get my next meal. I shall die a drunken pauper. This is my last money, and my history. If this bill comes into the hands of any man who drinks, let him take warning from my life's ruin."

What a magnificent specimen of manhood this would have been if his life had been under the rule of reason, not passion! He dies of old age at forty, his hair is gray, his eyes are sunken, his complexion sodden, his body marked with the labels of his disease. A physique fit for a god, fashioned in the Creator's image, with infinite possibilities, a physiological hulk wrecked on passion's seas, and fit only for a danger signal to warn the race. What would

parents think of a captain who would leave his son in charge of a ship without giving him any instructions or chart showing the rocks, reefs, and shoals? Do they not know that those who sleep in the ocean are but a handful compared with those who have foundered on passion’s seas? Oh, the sins of silence which parents commit against those dearer to them than life itself! Youth cannot understand the great solicitude of parents regarding their education, their associations, their welfare generally, and the mysterious silence in regard to their physical natures. An intelligent explanation, by all mothers to the daughters and by all fathers to the sons, of the mysteries of their physical lives, when at the right age, would revolutionize civilization.

This young clergyman killed himself trying to be popular. This student committed suicide by exhausting his brain in trying to lead his class. This young lawyer overdrew his account at Nature's bank, and she foreclosed by a stroke of paralysis.

This merchant died at thirty-five by his own hand. His life was slipping away without enjoyment. He had murdered his capacity for happiness, and dug his own spiritual grave while making preparations for enjoying life. This young society man died of nothing to do and dissipation, at thirty.

What a miserable farce the life of men and women seems to us! Time, which is so precious that even the Creator will not give a second moment until the first is gone, they throw away as though it were water. Opportunities which angels covet they fling

away as of no consequence, and die failures, because they have “no chance in life.” Life, which seems so precious to us, they spurn as if but a bauble. Scarcely a mortal returns to us who has not robbed himself of years of precious life. Scarcely a man returns to us dropping off in genuine old age, as autumn leaves drop in the forest.

Has life become so cheap that mortals thus throw it away?

Chapter 13: Choosing A Vocation

Be what nature intended you for, and you will succeed; be anything else, and you will be ten thousand times worse than nothing. — Sydney Smith.

“Many a man pays for his success with a slice of his constitution.”

No man struggles perpetually and victoriously against his own character; and one of the first principles of success in life is so to regulate our career as rather to turn our physical constitution and natural inclinations to good account than to endeavor to counteract the one or oppose the other. — Bulwer.

He that hath a trade hath an estate. — Franklin.

Nature fits all her children with something to do. — Lowell.

As occupations and professions have a powerful influence upon the length of human life, the youth should first ascertain whether the vocation he thinks of choosing is a healthy one. Statesmen, judges, and clergymen are noted for their longevity. They are not swept into the great business vortex, where the friction and raspings of sharp competition whittle life away at a fearful rate. Astronomers, who contemplate vast systems, moving through enormous distances, are exceptionally long lived, — as Herschel and Humboldt. Philosophers, scientists, and mathematicians, as Galileo, Bacon, Newton, Euler, Dalton, in fact, those who have dwelt upon the exact sciences, seem to have escaped many of

the ills from which humanity suffers. Great students of natural history have also, as a rule, lived long and happy lives. Of fourteen members of a noted historical society in England, who died in 1870, two were over ninety, five over eighty, and two over seventy.

The occupation of the mind has a great influence upon the health of the body.

There is no employment so dangerous and destructive to life but plenty of human beings can be found to engage in it. Of all the instances that can be given of recklessness of life, there is none which exceeds that of the workmen employed in what is called dry-pointing — the grinding of needles and of table forks. The fine steel dust which they breathe brings on a painful disease, of which they are almost sure to

die before they are forty. Yet not only are men tempted by high wages to engage in this employment, but they resist to the utmost all contrivances devised for diminishing the danger, through fear that such things would cause more workmen to offer themselves and thus lower wages. Many physicians have investigated the effects of work in the numerous match factories in France upon the health of the employees, and all agree that rapid destruction of the teeth, decay or necrosis of the jawbone, bronchitis, and other diseases result.

We will probably find more old men on farms than elsewhere. There are many reasons why farmers should live longer than persons residing in cities or than those engaged in other occupations. Aside from

the purer air, the outdoor exercise, both conducive to a good appetite and sound sleep, which comparatively few in cities enjoy, they are free from the friction, harassing cares, anxieties, and the keen competition incident to city life. On the other hand, there are some great drawbacks and some enemies to longevity, even on the farm. Man does not live by bread alone. The mind is by far the greatest factor in maintaining the body in a healthy condition. The social life of the city, the great opportunities afforded the mind for feeding upon libraries and lectures, great sermons, and constant association with other minds, the great variety of amusements compensate largely for the loss of many of the advantages of farm life. In spite of the great temperance and

immunity from things which corrode, whittle, and rasp away life in the cities, farmers in many places do not live so long as scientists and some other professional men.

There is no doubt that aspiration and success tend to prolong life. Prosperity tends to longevity, if we do not wear life away or burn it out in the feverish pursuit of wealth. Thomas W. Higginson made a list of thirty of the most noted preachers of the last century, and found that their average length of life was sixty-nine years.

Among miners in some sections over six hundred out of a thousand die from consumption. In the prisons of Europe, where the fatal effects of bad air and filth are shown, over sixty-one per cent, of the deaths are from tuberculosis. In Bavarian

monasteries, fifty per cent, of those who enter in good health die of consumption, and in the Prussian prisons it is almost the same. The effect of bad air, filth, and bad food is shown by the fact that the death-rate among these classes, between the ages of twenty and forty, is five times that of the general population of the same age. In New York City, over one-fifth of all the deaths of persons over twenty are from this cause. In large cities in Europe the percentage is often still greater. Of one thousand deaths from all causes, on the average, one hundred and three farmers die of pulmonary tuberculosis, one hundred and eight fishermen, one hundred and twenty-one gardeners, one hundred and twenty-two farm laborers, one hundred and sixty-seven grocers, two hundred and nine

tailors, three hundred and one dry-goods dealers, and four hundred and sixty-one compositors, — nearly one-half.

According to a long series of investigations by Drs. Benoysten and Lombard into occupations or trades where workers must inhale dust, it appears that mineral dust is the most detrimental to health, animal dust .ranking next, and vegetable dust third.

In choosing an occupation, cleanliness, pure air, sunlight, and freedom from corroding dust and poisonous gases are of the greatest importance. A man who would sell a year of his life for any amount of money would be considered insane, and yet we deliberately choose occupations and vocations which statistics and physicians tell us will be practically sure to cut off from five to twenty-five, thirty, or

even forty years of our lives, and are seemingly perfectly indifferent to our fate.

There is danger in a calling which requires great expenditure of vitality at long, irregular intervals. He who is not regularly, or systematically employed incurs perpetual risk. “Of the thirty-two all-round athletes in a New York club not long ago,” said a physician, “three are dead of consumption, five have to wear trusses, four or five are lop-shouldered, and three have catarrh and partial deafness.” Dr. Patten, chief surgeon at the National Soldiers’ Home at Dayton, Ohio, says that “of the five thousand soldiers in that institution fully eighty per cent, are suffering from heart disease in one form or another, due to the forced physical exertions of the campaigns.”

Man’s faculties and functions are so interrelated that whatever affects one affects all. Athletes who overdevelop the muscular system do so at the expense of the physical, mental, and moral well-being. It is a law of nature that the overdevelopment of any function or faculty, forcing or straining it, tends not only to ruin it, but also to cause injurious reactions on every other faculty and function.

Vigorous thought must come from a fresh brain. We cannot expect nerve, snap, robustness and vigor, sprightliness and elasticity, in the speech, in the book, or in the essay, from an exhausted, jaded brain. The brain is one of the last organs of the body to reach maturity (at about the age of twenty-eight), and should never be overworked, especially in youth. The whole

future of a man is often ruined by over-straining the brain in school.

Brain-workers cannot do good, effective work in one line many hours a day. When the brain is weary, when it begins to lose its elasticity and freshness, there will be the same lack of tonicity and strength in the brain product. Some men often do a vast amount of literary work in entirely different lines during their spare hours.

Cessation of brain activity does not necessarily constitute brain rest, as most great thinkers know. The men who accomplish the most brain-work, sooner or later — usually later, unfortunately — learn to give rest to one set of faculties and use another, as interest begins to flag and a sense of weariness comes. In this way they have been enabled to astonish the world by

their mental achievements, which is very largely a matter of skill in exercising alternate sets of faculties, allowing rest to some while giving healthy exercise to others. The continual use of one set of faculties by an ambitious worker will soon bring him to grief. No set of brain cells can possibly set free more brain force in the combustion of thought than is stored up in them. The tired brain must have rest, or nervous exhaustion, brain fever, or even softening of the brain is liable to follow.

As a rule, physical vigor is the condition of a great career. What would Gladstone have accomplished with a weak, puny physique? He addresses an audience at Corfu in Greek, and another at Florence in Italian. A little later he converses at ease with Bismarck in German, or talks fluent French

in Paris, or piles up argument on argument in English for hours in Parliament. There are families that have “clutched success and kept it through generations from the simple fact of a splendid physical organization handed down from one generation to another.”

All occupations that enervate, paralyze, or destroy body or soul should be avoided. Our manufacturing interests too often give little thought to the employed; the article to be made is generally the only object considered. They do not care if a man spends the whole of his life upon the head of a pin, or in making a screw in a watch factory. They take no notice of the occupations that ruin, or the phosphorus, the dust, the arsenic that destroys the health, that shortens the lives of many

workers; of the cramped condition of the body which creates deformity.

The moment we compel those we employ to do work that demoralizes them or does not tend to elevate or lift them, we are forcing them into service worse than useless. “If we induce painters to work in fading colors, or architects with rotten stone, or contractors to construct buildings with imperfect materials, we are forcing our Michael Angelos to carve in snow.”

Ruskin says that the tendency of the age is to expend its genius in perishable art, *as if it were a triumph to hum its thoughts away in bonfires*. Is the work you compel others to do useful to yourself and to society? If you employ a seamstress to make four or five or six beautiful flounces for your ball dress, flounces which will only clothe

yourself, and which you will wear at only one ball, you are employing your money selfishly. Do not confuse covetousness with benevolence, nor cheat yourself into thinking that all the finery you can wear is so much put into the hungry mouths of those beneath you. It is what those who stand shivering on the street, forming a line to see you step out of your carriage, know it to be. These fine dresses do not mean that so much has been put into their mouths, but *that so much has been taken out of their mouths.*

Select a clean, useful, honorable occupation. If there is any doubt on this point, abandon it at once, for *familiarity with a bad business will make it seem good*. Choose a business that has expansiveness in it. Some kinds of

business not even a J. Pierpont Morgan could make respectable. Choose an occupation which will develop you; which will elevate you; which will give you a chance for self-improvement and promotion. You may not make quite so much money, but you will be more of a man, and *manhood is above all riches, overtops all titles, and character is greater than any career.* If possible, avoid occupations which compel you to work in a cramped position, or where you must work at night and on Sundays. Don't try to justify yourself on the ground that somebody must do this kind of work. Let "somebody," not yourself, take the responsibility. Aside from the right and wrong of the thing, it is injurious to the health to work seven days in the week, to work at night when Nature

intended you to sleep, or to sleep in the daytime when she intended you to work.

Many a man has dwarfed his manhood, cramped his intellect, crushed his aspiration, blunted his finer sensibilities, in some mean, narrow occupation just because there was money in it.

“Study yourself,” says Longfellow, “and most of all, note well wherein kind nature meant you to excel.”

Dr. Matthews says that “to no other cause, perhaps, is failure in life so frequently to be traced as to a mistaken calling.” We can often find out by hard knocks and repeated failures what we cannot do before what we can do. This negative process of eliminating the doubtful chances is often

the only way of attaining to the positive conclusion.

How many men have been made ridiculous for life by choosing law or medicine or theology, simply because they are “honorable professions”! These men might have been respectable farmers or merchants, but are “nobodies” in such vocations. The very glory of the profession which they thought would make them shining lights simply renders more conspicuous their incapacity.

Thousands of youths receive an education that fits them for a profession which they have not the means or inclination to follow, and that unfits them for the conditions of life to which they were born. Unsuccessful students with a smattering of everything are raised as much above their original

condition as if they were successful. A large portion of Paris cabmen are unsuccessful students in theology and other professions and also unfrocked priests. They are very bad cabmen.

“Tompkins forsakes his last and awl

For literary squabbles;

Styles himself poet; but his trade

Remains the same, — he cobbles.”

Don’t choose a profession or occupation because your father, or uncle, or brother is in it. Don’t choose a business because you inherit it, or because parents or friends want you to follow it. Don’t choose it because others have made fortunes in it. Don’t choose it because it is considered the “proper thing” and a “genteel” business. The mania for a “genteel” occupation, for a

“soft job” which eliminates drudgery, thorns, hardships, and all disagreeable things, and one which can be learned with very little effort, ruins many a youth.

When we try to do that for which we are unfitted we are not working along the line of our strength, but of our weakness; our will power and enthusiasm become demoralized; we do half work, botched work, lose confidence in ourselves, and conclude that we are dunces because we cannot accomplish what others do; the whole tone of life is demoralized and lowered because we are out of place.

How it shortens the road to success to make a wise choice of one’s occupation early, to be started on the road of a proper career while young, full of hope, while the animal spirits are high, and enthusiasm is

vigorous; to feel that every step we take, that every day's work we do, that every blow we strike helps to broaden, deepen, and enrich life!

Those who fail are, as a rule, those who are out of their places. *A man out of his place is but half a man; his very nature is perverted*. He is working against his nature, rowing against the current. When his strength is exhausted, he will float down the stream. A man cannot succeed when his whole nature is entering its perpetual protest against his occupation. To succeed, his vocation must have the consent of all his faculties; they must be in harmony with his purpose.

Has a young man a right to choose an occupation which will only call into play his lower and inferior qualities, as cunning,

deceit, letting all his nobler qualities shrivel and die? Has he a right to select a vocation that will develop only the beast within him instead of the man? which will call out the bulldog qualities only, the qualities which overreach and grasp, the qualities which get and never give, which develop long-headedness only, while his higher self atrophies?

The best way to choose an occupation is to ask yourself the question, “What would my government do with me if it were to consider scientifically my qualifications and adaptations, and place me to the best possible advantage for all the people?” The Norwegian precept is a good one: “Give thyself wholly to thy fellow-men; they will give thee back soon enough.” We can do the most possible for ourselves when we

are in a position where we can do the most possible for others. *We are doing the most for ourselves and for others when we are in a position which calls into play in the highest possible way the greatest number of our best faculties; in other words, we are succeeding best for ourselves when we are succeeding best for others.*

The time will come when there will be institutions for determining the natural bent of the boy and girl; where men of large experience and close observation will study the natural inclination of the youth, help him to find where his greatest strength lies and how to use it to the best advantage. Even if we take for granted what is not true, that every youth will sooner or later discover the line of his greatest strength so that he may get his

living by his strong points rather than by his weak ones, the discovery is often made so late in life that great success is practically impossible. Such institutions would help boys and girls to start in their proper careers early in life; and *an early choice shortens the way*. Can anything be more important to human beings than a start in life in the right direction, where even small effort will count for more in the race than the greatest effort — and a life of drudgery — in the wrong direction? A man is seldom unsuccessful, unhappy, or vicious when he is in his place.

After once choosing your occupation, however, never look backward; stick to it with all the tenacity you can muster. Let nothing tempt you or swerve you a hair's breadth from your aim, and you will win. Do

not let the thorns which appear in every vocation, or temporary despondency or disappointment, shake your purpose. You will never succeed while smarting under the drudgery of your occupation, if you are constantly haunted with the idea that you could succeed better in something else. Great tenacity of purpose is the only thing that will carry you over the hard places which appear in every career to ultimate triumph. This determination, or fixity of purpose, has a great moral bearing upon our success, for it leads others to feel confidence in us, and this is everything. It gives credit and moral support in a thousand ways. People always believe in a man with a fixed purpose, and will help him twice as quickly as one who is loosely or indifferently attached to his vocation, and

liable at any time to make a change, or to fail. Everybody knows that determined men are not likely to fail. They carry in their very pluck, grit, and determination the conviction and assurance of success.

The world does not dictate what you shall do, but it does demand that you do something, and that you shall be a king in your line. There is no grander sight than that of a young man or woman in the right place struggling with might and main to make the most of the stuff at command, determined that not a faculty or power shall run to waste. Not money, not position, but power is what we want; and character is greater than any occupation or profession.

“Do not, I beseech you,” said Garfield, “be content to enter on any business that does not require and compel constant

intellectual growth.” Choose an occupation that is refining and elevating; an occupation that you will be proud of; an occupation that will give you time for self-culture and self-elevation; an occupation that will enlarge and expand your manhood and make you a better citizen, a better man.

Power and constant growth toward a higher life are the great end of human existence. Your calling should be the great school of life, the great man-developer, character-builder, that which should broaden, deepen, and round out into symmetry, harmony, and beauty, all the God-given faculties within you.

But whatever you do be greater than your calling; let your manhood overtop your position, your wealth, your occupation, your title. A man must work hard and study

hard to counteract the narrowing, hardening tendency of his occupation. Said Goldsmith:

Burke, born for the universe, narrowed his mind.

And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.

“Constant engagement in traffic and barter has no elevating influence,” says Lyndall. “The endeavor to obtain the upper hand of those with whom we have to deal, to make good bargains, the higgling and scheming, and the thousand petty artifices, which in these days of stern competition are unscrupulously resorted to, tend to narrow the sphere and to lessen the strength of the intellect, and, at the same time, the delicacy of the moral sense.”

Choose upward, study the men in the vocation you think of adopting. Does it elevate those who follow it? Are they broad, liberal, intelligent men? Or have they become mere appendages of their profession, living in a rut with no standing in the community, and of no use to it? Don’t think you will be the great exception, and can enter a questionable vocation without becoming a creature of it. In spite of all your determination and will power to the contrary, your occupation, from the very law of association and habit, will seize you as in a vice, will mold you, shape you, fashion you, and stamp its inevitable impress upon you.

How frequently do we see bright, open-hearted, generous young men come out of college with high hopes and lofty aims,

enter a doubtful vocation, and in a few years return to college commencement so changed that they are scarcely recognized. The once broad, noble features have become contracted and narrowed. The man has become grasping, avaricious, stingy, mean, hard. Is it possible, we ask, that a few years could so change a magnanimous and generous youth?

Go to the bottom if you would get to the top. Be master of your calling in all its details. Nothing is small which concerns your business.

Thousands of men who have been failures in life have done drudgery enough in half a dozen different occupations to have enabled them to reach great success, if their efforts had all been expended in one direction. That mechanic is a failure who

starts out to build an engine, but does not quite accomplish it, and shifts into some other occupation where perhaps he will almost succeed, but stops just short of the point of proficiency in his acquisition and so fails again. The world is full of people who are “almost a success.” They stop just this side of success. Their courage oozes out just before they become expert. How many of us have acquisitions which remain permanently unavailable because not carried quite to the point of skill? How many people “almost know a language or two,” which they can neither write nor speak; a science or two whose elements they have not quite acquired; an art or two partially mastered, but which they cannot practise with satisfaction or profit! The habit of desultoriness, which has been acquired by

allowing yourself to abandon a half-finished work, more than balances any little skill gained in one vocation which might possibly be of use later.

Beware of that frequently fatal gift, versatility. Many a person misses being a great man by splitting into two middling ones. Universality is the *ignis fatuus* which has deluded to ruin many a promising mind. In attempting to gain a knowledge of half a hundred subjects it has mastered none. “The jack-of-all-trades,” says one of the foremost manufacturers of this country, “had a chance in my generation. In this he has none.”

“The measure of a man’s learning will be the amount of his voluntary ignorance,” said Thoreau. If we go into a factory where the mariner’s compass is made, we can

see the needles before they are magnetized, they will point in any direction. But when they have been applied to the magnet and received its peculiar power, from that moment they point to the north, and are true to the pole ever after. So man never points steadily in any direction until he has been polarized by a great master purpose.

Give your life, your energy, your enthusiasm, all to the highest work of which you are capable. Canon Farrar said, “There is only one real failure in life possible, and that is, not to be true to the best one knows.”

“What must I do to be forever known? Thy duty ever.”

Who does the best his circumstance allows,

Does well, acts nobly, angels could do no more. — Young.

“Whoever can make two ears of corn, two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before,” says Swift, “would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together.”

Chapter 14: The Man with An Idea

He who wishes to fulfil his mission must be a man of one idea, that is, of one great overmastering purpose, overshadowing all his aims, and guiding and controlling his entire life. — Bate.

A healthful hunger for a great idea is the beauty and blessedness of life. — Jean Ingelow.

A profound conviction raises a man above the feeling of ridicule. — J. Stuart Mill.

Ideas go booming through the world louder than cannon. Thoughts are mightier than armies. Principles have achieved more victories than horsemen or chariots. — W. M. Paxton.

“What are you bothering yourselves with a knitting machine for?” asked Ari Davis, of Boston, a manufacturer of instruments; “why don’t you make a sewing-machine?” His advice had been sought by a rich man and an inventor who had reached their wits’ ends in the vain attempt to produce a device for knitting woollen goods. “I wish I could, but it can’t be done.” “Oh, yes it can,” said Davis; “I can make one myself.” “Well,” the capitalist replied, “you do it, and I’ll insure you an independent fortune.” The words of Davis were uttered in a spirit of jest, but the novel idea found lodgment in the mind of one of the workmen who stood by, a mere youth of twenty, who was thought not capable of a serious idea.

But Elias Howe was not so rattle-headed as he seemed, and the more he reflected, the

more desirable such a machine appeared to him. Four years passed, and with a wife and three children to support in a great city on a salary of nine dollars a week, the light-hearted boy had become a thoughtful, plodding man. The thought of the sewing-machine haunted him night and day, and he finally resolved to produce one.

After months wasted in the effort to work a needle pointed at both ends, with the eye in the middle, that should pass up and down through the cloth, suddenly the thought flashed through his mind that another stitch must be possible, and with almost insane devotion he worked night and day, until he had made a rough model of wood and wire that convinced him of ultimate success. In his mind’s eye he saw his idea, but his own funds and those of his

father, who had aided him more or less, were insufficient to embody it in a working machine. But help came from an old schoolmate, George Fisher, a coal and wood merchant of Cambridge. He agreed to board Elias and his family and furnish five hundred dollars, for which he was to have one-half of the patent, if the machine proved to be worth patenting. In May, 1845, the machine was completed, and in July Elias Howe sewed all the seams of two suits of woollen clothes, one for Mr. Fisher and the other for himself. The sewing outlasted the cloth. This machine, which is still preserved, will sew three hundred stitches a minute, and is considered more nearly perfect than any other prominent invention at its first trial. There is not one of the millions of sewing-machines now in use

that does not contain some of the essential principles of this first attempt.

When it was decided to try and elevate Chicago out of the mud by raising its immense blocks up to grade, the young son of a poor mechanic, named George M. Pullman, appeared on the scene, and put in a bid for the great undertaking, and the contract was awarded to him. He not only raised the blocks, but did it in such a way that business within them was scarcely interrupted. All this time he was revolving in his mind his pet project of building a “sleeping car” which would be adopted on all railroads. He fitted up two old cars on the Chicago and Alton road with berths, and soon found they would be in demand. He then went to work on the principle that the more luxurious his cars were, the greater

would be the demand for them. After spending three years in Colorado gold mines, he returned and built two cars which cost $18,000 each. Everybody laughed at “Pullman’s folly.” But Pullman believed that whatever relieved the tediousness of long trips would meet with speedy approval, and he had faith enough in his idea to risk his all in it.

Pullman was a great believer in the commercial value of beauty. The wonderful town which he built and which bears his name, as well as his magnificent cars, is an example of his belief in this principle. He counts it a good investment to surround his employees with comforts and beauty and good sanitary conditions, and so the town of Pullman is a model of cleanliness, order, and comfort.

It has ever been the man with an idea, which he puts into practical effect, who has changed the face of Christendom. The germ idea of the steam engine can be seen in the writings of the Greek philosophers, but it was not developed until more than two thousand years later.

It was an English blacksmith, Newcomen, with no opportunities, who in the seventeenth century conceived the idea of moving a piston by the elastic force of steam; but his engine consumed thirty pounds of coal in producing one horsepower. The perfection of the modern engine is largely due to James Watt, a poor, uneducated Scotch boy, who at fifteen walked the streets of London in a vain search for work. A professor in the Glasgow University gave him the use of a

room to work in, and while waiting for jobs he experimented with old vials for steam reservoirs and hollow canes for pipes, for he could not bear to waste a moment. He improved Newcomen's engine by cutting off the steam after the piston had completed a quarter or a third of its stroke, and letting the steam already in the chamber expand and drive the piston the remaining distance. This saved nearly three-fourths of the steam. Watt suffered from pinching poverty and hardships which would have disheartened ordinary men; but he was terribly in earnest, and his brave wife Margaret begged him not to mind her inconvenience, nor be discouraged. "If the engine will not work," she wrote him while struggling in London, "something else will. Never despair."

“I had gone to take a walk,” said Watt, “on a fine Sabbath afternoon, and had passed the old washing-house, thinking upon the engine at the time, when the idea came into my head that, as steam is an elastic body, it would rush into a vacuum, and if a communication were made between the cylinder and an exhausted vessel, it would rush into it, and might be there condensed without cooling the cylinder.” The idea was simple, but in it lay the germ of the first steam engine of much practical value. Sir James Mackintosh places this poor Scotch boy who began with only an idea “at the head of all inventors in all ages and all nations.”

See George Stephenson, working in the coal pits for sixpence a day, patching the clothes and mending the boots of his fellow

workmen at night, to earn a little money to attend a night school, giving the first money he ever earned, $150, to his blind father to pay his debts. People say he is crazy; his “roaring steam engine will set the house on fire with its sparks”; “smoke will pollute the air”; “carriage makers and coachmen will starve for want of work.” For three days the committee of the House of Commons plies questions to him. This was one of them: “If a cow gets on the track of the engine traveling ten miles an hour, will it not be an awkward situation?” “Yes, very awkward, indeed, for the cow,” replied Stephenson. A government inspector said that if a locomotive ever went ten miles an hour, he would undertake to eat a stewed engine for breakfast.

“What pan be more palpably absurd and ridiculous than the prospect held out of locomotives traveling twice as fast as horses?” asked a writer in the English “Quarterly Review” for March, 1825. “We should as soon expect the people of Woolwich to suffer themselves to be fired off upon one of Congreve’s rockets as to trust themselves to the mercy of such a machine, going at such a rate. We trust that Parliament will, in all the railways it may grant, *limit the speed to eight or nine miles an hour*, which we entirely agree with Mr. Sylvester is as great as can be ventured upon.” This article referred to Stephenson’s proposition to use his newly invented locomotive instead of horses on the Liverpool and Manchester Railroad, then in process of construction.

The company decided to lay the matter before two leading English engineers, who reported that steam would be desirable only when used in stationary engines one and a half miles apart, drawing the cars by means of ropes and pulleys. But Stephenson persuaded them to test his idea by offering a prize of about twenty-five hundred dollars for the best locomotive produced at a trial to take place October 6, 1829.

On the eventful day, thousands of spectators assembled to watch the competition of four engines, the “Novelty,” the “Rocket,” the “Perseverance,” and the “Sanspareil.” The “Perseverance” could make but six miles an hour, and so was ruled out, as the conditions called for at least ten. The “Sanspareil” made an

average of fourteen miles an hour, but as it burst a water-pipe it lost its chance. The “Novelty” did splendidly, but also burst a pipe, and was crowded out, leaving the “Rocket” to carry off the honors with an average speed of fifteen miles an hour, the highest rate attained being twenty-nine. This was Stephenson’s locomotive, and so fully vindicated his theory that the idea of stationary engines on a railroad was completely exploded. He had picked up the fixed engines which the genius of Watt had devised, and set them on wheels to draw men and merchandise, against the most direful predictions of the foremost engineers of his day.

In all the records of invention there is no sadder or affecting story than that of John Fitch. Poor he was in many senses, poor in

appearance, poor in spirit. He was born poor, lived poor, and died poor. If there ever was a true inventor, this man was one. He was one of those eager souls that would coin their own flesh to carry their point. He only uttered the obvious truth when he said one day, in a crisis of his invention, that if he could get one hundred pounds by cutting off one of his legs, he would gladly give it to the knife.

He tried in vain both in this country and in France to get money to build his steamboat. He would say, “You and I will not live to see the day, but the time will come when the steamboat will be preferred to all other modes of conveyance, when steamboats will ascend the Western rivers from New Orleans to Wheeling, and when steamboats will cross the ocean. Johnny

Fitch will be forgotten, but other men will carry out his ideas and grow rich and great upon them.”

Poor, ragged, forlorn, jeered at, pitied as a madman, discouraged by the great, refused by the rich, he kept on till, in 1790, he had the first vessel on the Delaware that ever answered the purpose of a steamboat. It ran six miles an hour against the tide, and eight miles with it.

At noon, on Friday, August 4, 1807, a crowd of curious people might have been seen along the wharves of the Hudson River. They had gathered to witness what they considered a ridiculous failure of a “crank” who proposed to take a party of people up the Hudson River to Albany in what he called a steam vessel named the *Clermont*. Did anybody ever hear of such a

ridiculous idea as navigating against the current up the Hudson in a vessel without sails? “The thing will ‘bust,’” says one; “it will burn up,” says another, and “they will all be drowned,” exclaims a third, as he sees vast columns of black smoke shoot up with showers of brilliant sparks. Nobody present, in all probability, ever heard of a boat going by steam. It was the opinion of everybody that the man who had fooled away his money and his time on the *Clermont* was little better than an idiot, and ought to be in an insane asylum. But the passengers go on board, the plank is pulled in, and the steam is turned on. The walking beam moves slowly up and down, and the *Clermont* floats out into the river. “It can never go up stream,” the spectators persist. But it did go up stream, and the boy, who in

his youth said there is nothing impossible, had scored a great triumph, and had given to the world the first steamboat that had any practical value.

Notwithstanding that Fulton had rendered such great service to humanity, a service which has revolutionized the commerce of the world, he was looked upon by many as a public enemy. Critics and cynics turned up their noses when Fulton was mentioned. The severity of the world's censure, ridicule, and detraction has usually been in proportion to the benefit the victim has conferred upon mankind.

As the *Clermont* burned pine wood, dense columns of fire and smoke belched forth from her smoke-stack while she glided triumphantly up the river, and the inhabitants along the banks were utterly

unable to account for the spectacle. They rushed to the shore amazed to see a boat “on fire” go against the stream so rapidly with neither oars nor sails. The noise of her great paddle-wheels increased the wonder. Sailors forsook their vessels, and fishermen rowed home as fast as possible to get out of the way of the fire monster. The Indians were as much frightened as their predecessors were when the first ship approached their hunting-ground on Manhattan Island. The owners of sailing-vessels were jealous of the *Clermont*, and tried to run her down. Others whose interests were affected denied Fulton’s claim to the invention and brought suits against him. But the success of the *Clermont* soon led to the construction of other steamships all over the country. The

government employed Fulton to aid in building a powerful steam frigate, which was called *Fulton the First*. He also built a diving boat for the government for the discharge of torpedoes. By this time his fame had spread all over the civilized world, and when he died, in 1815, newspapers were marked with black lines; the legislature of New York wore badges of mourning; and minute guns were fired as the long funeral procession passed to old Trinity churchyard. Very few private persons were ever honored with such a burial.

True, Dr. Lardner had “proved” to scientific men that a steamship could not cross the Atlantic, but in 1819 the Savannah from New York appeared off the coast of Ireland under sail and steam, having made this

“impossible” passage. Those on shore thought that a fire had broken out below the decks, and a king’s cutter was sent to her relief. Although the voyage was made without accident, it was nearly twenty years before it was admitted that steam navigation could be made a commercial success in ocean traffic.

As Junius Smith impatiently paced the deck of a vessel sailing from an English port to New York, on a rough and tedious voyage in 1832, he said to himself, “Why not cross the ocean regularly in steamships?” In New York and in London a deaf ear was turned to any such nonsense. Smith’s first encouragement came from George Grote, the historian and banker, who said the idea was practicable; but it was the same old story, — he would risk no money in it. At

length Isaac Selby, a prominent businessman of London, agreed to build a steamship of two thousand tons, the *British Queen*. An unexpected delay in fitting the engines led the projectors to charter the *Sirius*, a river steamer of seven hundred tons, and send her to New York. Learning of this, other parties started from Bristol four days later in the *Great Western*, and both vessels arrived at New York the same day. Soon after Smith made the round trip between London and New York in thirty-two days.

What a sublime picture of determination and patience was that of Charles Goodyear, of New Haven, buried in poverty and struggling with hardships for eleven long years, to make India rubber of practical use! See him in prison for debt;

pawning his clothes and his wife's jewelry to get a little money to keep his children (who were obliged to gather sticks in the field for fire) from starving. Watch his sublime courage and devotion to his idea, when he had no money to bury a dead child and when his other five were near starvation; when his neighbors were harshly criticizing him for his neglect of his family and calling him insane. But, behold his vulcanized rubber; the result of that heroic struggle, applied to over five hundred uses by 100,000 employees.

What a pathetic picture was that of Palissy, plodding on through want and woe to rediscover the lost art of enameling pottery; building his furnaces with bricks carried on his back, seeing his six children die of neglect, probably of starvation, his wife in

rags and despair over her husband's "folly"; despised by his neighbors for neglecting his family, worn to a skeleton himself, giving his clothes to his hired man because he could not pay him in money, hoping always, failing steadily, until at last his great work was accomplished, and he reaped his reward.

German unity was the idea engraven upon Bismarck's heart. What cared this herculean despot for the Diet chosen year after year simply to vote down every measure he proposed? He was indifferent to all opposition. He simply defied and sent home every Diet which opposed him. He could play the game alone. To make Germany the greatest power in Europe, to make William of Prussia a greater potentate than Napoleon or Alexander,

was his all-absorbing purpose. It mattered not what stood in his way, whether people. Diet, or nation; all must bend to his mighty will. Germany must hold the deciding voice in the Areopagus of the world. He rode roughshod over everybody and everything that stood in his way, defiant of opposition, imperious, irrepressible!

See the great Dante in exile, condemned to be burnt alive on false charges of embezzlement. Look at his starved features, gaunt form, melancholy, a poor wanderer; but he never gave up his idea; he poured out his very soul into his immortal poem, ever believing that right would at last triumph.

Columbus was exposed to continual scoffs and indignities, being ridiculed as a mere dreamer and stigmatized as an adventurer.

The very children, it is said, pointed to their foreheads as he passed, being taught to regard him as a kind of madman.

An American was once invited to dine with Oken, the famous German naturalist. To his surprise, they had neither meats nor dessert, but only baked potatoes. Oken was too great a man to apologize for their simple fare. His wife explained, however, that her husband's income was very small, and that they preferred to live simply in order that he might obtain books and instruments for his scientific researches.

Before the discovery of ether it often took a week, in some cases a month, to recover from the enormous dose, sometimes five hundred drops of laudanum, given to a patient to deaden the pain during a surgical operation. Young Dr. Morton believed that

there must be some means provided by Nature to relieve human suffering during these terrible operations; but what could he do? He was not a chemist; he did not know the properties of chemical substances; he was not liberally educated.

Dr. Morton did not resort to books, however, nor did he go to scientific men for advice, but immediately began to experiment with well-known substances. He tried intoxicants even to the point of intoxication, but as soon as the instruments were applied the patient would revive. He kept on experimenting with narcotics in this manner until at last he found what he sought in ether.

What a grand idea Bishop Vincent worked out for the young world in the Chautauqua Circle, Dr. Clark in his world-wide Christian

Endeavor movement, the Methodist Church in the Epworth League, Edward Everett Hale in his little bands of King's Daughters and Ten Times One is Ten! Here is Clara Barton who has created the Red Cross Society, which is loved by all nations. She noticed in our Civil War that the Confederates were shelling the hospital. She thought it the last touch of cruelty to fight what couldn't fight back, and she determined to have the barbarous custom stopped. Of course the world laughed at this poor unaided woman. But her idea has been adopted by all nations; and the enemy that aims a shot at the tent or building over which flies the white flag with the red cross has lost his last claim to human consideration.

In all ages those who have advanced the cause of humanity have been men and women “possessed,” in the opinion of their neighbors. Noah in building the ark, Moses in espousing the cause of the Israelites, or Christ in living and dying to save a fallen race, incurred the pity and scorn of the rich and highly educated, in common with all great benefactors. Yet in every age and in every clime men and women have been willing to incur poverty, hardship, toil, ridicule, persecution, or even death, if thereby they might shed light or comfort upon the path which all must walk from the cradle to the grave. In fact it is doubtful whether a man can perform very great service to mankind who is not permeated with a great purpose — with an overmastering idea.

Beecher had to fight every step of the way to his triumph through obstacles which would have appalled all but the greatest characters. Oftentimes in these great battles for principle and struggles for truth, he stood almost alone fighting popular prejudice, narrowness, and bigotry, uncharitableness and envy even in his own church. But he never hesitated nor wavered when he once saw his duty. There was no shilly-shallying, no hunting for a middle ground between right and wrong, no compromise on principles. He hewed close to the chalk line and held his line plumb to truth. He never pandered for public favor nor sought applause. Duty and truth were his goal, and he went straight to his mark. Other churches did not agree with him nor his, but he was too broad for hatred, too

charitable for revenge, and too magnanimous for envy.

What tale of the “Arabian Nights” equals in fascination the story of such lives as those of Franklin, of Morse, Goodyear, Howe, Edison, Bell, Beecher, Gough, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Amos Lawrence, George Peabody, McCormick, Hoe, and scores of others, each representing some great idea embodied in earnest action, and resulting in an improvement of the physical, mental, and moral condition of those around them?

There are plenty of ideas left in the world yet. Everything has not been invented. All good things have not been done. There are thousands of abuses to rectify, and each one challenges the independent soul, armed with a new idea.

“But how shall I get ideas?” Keep your wits open! Observe! Study! But above all. Think! and when a noble image is indelibly impressed upon the mind — Act!

Chapter 15: Decision

Resolve, and thou art free. — Longfellow.

The heaviest charged words in our language are those briefest ones, "yes" and "no." One stands for the surrender of the will, the other for denial; one stands for gratification, the other for character. A stout "no" means a stout character, the ready "yes" a weak one, gild it as we may. — T. T. Munger.

The world is a market where everything is marked at a set price, and whatever we buy with our time, labor, or ingenuity, whether riches, ease, fame, integrity, or knowledge, we must stand by our decision, and not like children, when we have purchased one thing, repine that we do not possess another we did not buy. — Mathews.

A man must master his undertaking and not let it master him. He must have the power to decide instantly on which side he is going to make his mistakes. — P. D. Armour.

When Rome was besieged by the Gauls in the time of the Republic, the Romans were so hard pressed that they consented to purchase immunity with gold. They were in the act of weighing it, a legend tells us, when Camillus appeared on the scene, threw his sword into the scales in place of the ransom, and declared that the Romans should not purchase peace, but would win it with the sword. This act of daring and prompt decision so roused the Romans that they triumphantly swept from the sacred soil the enemy of their peace.

In an emergency, the arrival of a prompt, decided, positive man, who will do something, although it may be wrong, changes the face of everything. Such a man comes upon the scene like a refreshing breeze blown down from the mountain top. He is a tonic to the hesitating, bewildered crowd.

When Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Egypt, which was then under the protection of Rome, the Romans sent an ambassador who met Antiochus near Alexandria and commanded him to withdraw. The invader gave an evasive reply. The brave Roman swept a circle around the king with his sword, and forbade his crossing the line until he had given his answer. By the prompt decision of the intrepid ambassador the invader was led to withdraw, and war

was prevented. The prompt decision of the Romans won them many a battle, and made them masters of the world. All the great achievements in the history of the world are the results of quick and steadfast decision.

Men who have left their mark upon their century have been men of great and prompt decision. An undecided man, a man who is ever balancing between two opinions, forever debating which of two courses he will pursue, proclaims by his indecision that he cannot control himself, that he was meant to be possessed by others; he is not a man, only a satellite. The decided man, the prompt man, does not wait for favorable circumstances; he does not submit to events; events must submit to him.

The vacillating man is ever at the mercy of the opinion of the man who talked with him last. He may see the right, but he drifts toward the wrong. If he decides upon a course, he only follows it until somebody opposes it.

When Julius Caesar came to the Rubicon, which formed the boundary of Italia, — “the sacred and inviolable,” — even his great decision wavered at the thought of invading a territory which no general was allowed to enter without the permission of the Senate. But his alternative was “destroy myself, or destroy my country,” and his intrepid mind did not waver long. “The die is cast,” he said, as he dashed into the stream at the head of his legions. The whole history of the world was changed by that moment’s decision. The man who said, “I came, I

saw, I conquered," could not hesitate long. He, like Napoleon, had the power to choose one course, and sacrifice every conflicting plan on the instant. When he landed with his troops in Britain, the inhabitants resolved never to surrender, Caesar's quick mind saw that he must commit his soldiers to victory or death. In order to cut off all hope of retreat, he burned all the ships which had borne them to the shores of Britain. There was no hope of return, it was victory or death. This action was the key to the character and triumphs of this great warrior.

Satan's sublime decision in "Paradise Lost," after his hopeless banishment from heaven, excites a feeling akin to admiration. After a few moments of terrible suspense he resumes his invincible spirit

and expresses that sublime line: “What matter where, if I be still the same?”

That power to decide instantly the best course to pursue, and to sacrifice every opposing motive; and, when once sacrificed, to silence them forever and not allow them continually to plead their claims and distract us from our single decided course, is one of the most potent forces in winning success. To hesitate is sometimes to be lost. In fact, the man who is forever twisting and turning, backing and filling, hesitating and dawdling, shuffling and parleying, weighing and balancing, splitting hairs over non-essentials, listening to every new motive which presents itself, will never accomplish anything. There is not positiveness enough in him; negativeness never accomplishes anything. The

negative man creates no confidence; he only invites distrust. But the positive man, the decided man, is a power in the world, and stands for something. You can measure him, gauge him. You can estimate the work that his energy will accomplish.

It is related of Alexander the Great that, when asked how it was that he had conquered the world, he replied, “not wavering.”

When the packet ship Stephen Whitney struck, at midnight, on an Irish cliff, and clung for a few moments to the cliff, all the passengers who leaped instantly upon the rock were saved. The positive step landed them in safety. Those who lingered were swept off by the returning wave, and engulfed forever.

The vacillating man is never a prompt man, and without promptness no success is possible. Great opportunities not only come seldom into the most fortunate life, but also are often quickly gone.

“A man without decision,” says John Foster, “can never be said to belong to himself; since, if he dared to assert that he did, the puny force of some cause, about as powerful as a spider, may make a seizure of the unhappy boaster the very next minute, and contemptuously exhibit the futility of the determination by which he was to have proved the independence of his understanding and will. He belongs to whatever can make capture of him; and one thing after another vindicates its right to him by arresting him while he is trying to go on; as twigs and chips floating near the

edge of a river are intercepted by every weed and whirled into every little eddy.”

The decided man not only has the advantage of the time saved from dillydallying and procrastination, but he also saves the energy and vital force which is wasted by the perplexed man who takes up every argument on one side and then on the other, and weighs them until the two sides hang in equipoise, with no prepondering motive to enable him to decide. He is in stable equilibrium, and so does not move at all of his own volition, but moves very easily at the slightest volition of another.

Yet there is not a man living who might not be a prompt and decided man if he would only learn always to act quickly. The punctual man, the decided man, can do

twice as much as the undecided and dawdling man who never quite knows what he wants. Prompt decision saved Napoleon and Grant and their armies many a time when delay would have been fatal. Napoleon used to say that although a battle might last an entire day, yet it generally turned upon a few critical minutes, in which the fate of the engagement was decided. His will, which subdued nearly the whole of Europe, was as prompt and decisive in the minutest detail of command as in the greatest battle.

Decision of purpose and promptness of action enabled him to astonish the world with his marvelous successes. He seemed to be everywhere at once. What he could accomplish in a day surprised all who knew him. He seemed to electrify everybody

about him. His invincible energy thrilled the whole army. He could rouse to immediate and enthusiastic action the dullest troops, and inspire with courage the most stupid men. The “ifs and buts,” he said, “are at present out of season; and above all it must be done with speed.” He would sit up all night if necessary, after riding thirty or forty leagues, to attend to correspondence, dispatches, and details. What a lesson to dawdling, shiftless, half-hearted men!

“The doubt of Charles V.,” says Motley, “changed the destinies of the civilized world.”

So powerful were President Washington’s views in determining the actions of the people, that when Congress adjourned, Jefferson wrote to Monroe at Paris; “You will see by their proceedings the truth of

what I always told you, — namely, that one man outweighs them all in influence, who supports his judgment against their own and that of their representatives. Republicanism resigns the vessel to the pilot.”

There is no vocation or occupation which does not present many difficulties, at times almost overwhelming, and the young man who allows himself to waver every time he comes to a hard place in life will not succeed. Without decision there can be no concentration; and, to succeed, a man must concentrate.

The undecided man cannot bring himself to a focus. He dissipates his energy, scatters his forces, and executes nothing. He cannot hold to one thing long enough to bring success out of it. One vocation or

occupation presents its rosy side to him, he feels sure it is the thing he wants to do, and, full of enthusiasm, adopts it as his life's work. But in a few days the thorns begin to appear, his enthusiasm evaporates, and he wonders why he is so foolish as to think himself fitted for that vocation. The one which his friend adopted is much better suited to him; he drops his own and adopts the other. So he vacillates through life, captured by any new occupation which happens to appeal to him as the most desirable at the time, never using his judgment or common sense, but governed by his impressions and his feelings at the moment. Such people are never led by principle. You never know where to find them; they are here today and there to-morrow, doing this thing and that thing,

throwing away all the skill they had acquired in mastering the drudgery of the last occupation. In fact, they never go far enough in anything to get beyond the drudgery stage to the remunerative and agreeable stage, the skillful stage. They spend their lives at the beginnings of occupations, which are always most agreeable. These people rarely reach the stage of competency, comfort, and contentment.

There is a legend of a powerful genius who promised a lovely maiden a gift of rare value if she would go through a field of corn, and. without pausing, going backward, or wandering hither and thither, select the largest and ripest ear. The value of the gift was to be in proportion to the size and perfection of the ear. She passed by

many magnificent ones, but was so eager to get the largest and most perfect that she kept on without plucking any until the ears she passed were successively smaller and smaller and more stunted. Finally they became so small that she was ashamed to select one of them; and, not being allowed to go backward, she came out on the other side without any.

Alexander, his heart throbbing with a great purpose, conquers the world; Hannibal, impelled by his hatred to the Romans, even crosses the Alps to compass his design. While other men are bemoaning difficulties and shrinking from dangers and obstacles, and preparing expedients, the great soul, without fuss or noise, takes the step, and lo, the mountain has been leveled and the way lies open. Learn, then, to will strongly

and decisively; thus fix your floating life and leave it no longer to be carried hither and thither, like a withered leaf, by every wind that blows. An undecided man is like the turnstile at a fair, which is in everybody's way but stops no one.

"The secret of the whole matter was," replied Amos Lawrence, "we had formed the habit of prompt acting, thus taking the top of the tide; while the habit of some others was to delay till about half tide, thus getting on the flats."

Most of the young men and women who are lost in our cities are ruined because of their inability to say "No" to the thousand allurements and temptations which appeal to their weak passions. If they would only show a little decision at first, one emphatic "No" might silence their solicitors forever.

But they are weak, they are afraid of offending, they don’t like to say “No,” and thus they throw down the gauntlet and are soon on the broad road to ruin. A little resolution early in life will soon conquer the right to mind one’s own business.

An old legend says that a fool and a wise man were journeying together, and came to a point where two ways opened before them, — one broad and beautiful, the other narrow and rough. The fool desired to take the pleasant way; the wise man knew that the difficult one was the shortest and safest, and so declared. But at last the urgency of the fool prevailed; they took the more inviting path, and were soon met by robbers, who seized their goods and made them captives. A little later both they and their captors were arrested by officers of

the law and taken before the judge. Then the wise man pleaded that the fool was to blame because he desired to take the wrong way. The fool pleaded that he was only a fool, and no sensible man should have heeded his counsel. The judge punished them both equally. “If sinners entice thee, consent thou not.”

There is no habit that so grows on the soul as irresolution. Before a man knows what he has done, he has gambled his life away, and all because he has never made up his mind what he would do with it. On many of the tombstones of those who have failed in life could be read between the lines: “He Dawdled,” “Behind Time,” “Procrastination,” “Listlessness,” “Shiftlessness,” “Nervelessness,” “Always Behind.” Oh, the wrecks strewn along the

shores of life “just behind success,” “just this side of happiness,” above which the words of warning are flying!

Webster said of such an undecided man that “he is like the irresolution of the sea at the turn of tide. This man neither advances nor recedes; he simply hovers.” Such a man is at the mercy of any chance occurrence that may overtake him. His “days are lost lamenting o’er lost days.” He has no power to seize the facts which confront him and compel them to serve him.

To indolent, shiftless, listless people life becomes a mere shuffle of expedients. They do not realize that the habit of putting everything off puts off their manhood, their capacity, their success; their contagion infects their whole neighborhood. Scott

used to caution youth against the habit of dawdling, which creeps in at every crevice of unoccupied time and often ruins a bright life. “Your motto must be,” he said, “Hoc age,” — do instantly. This is the only way to check the propensity to dawdling. How many hours have been wasted dawdling in bed, turning over and dreading to get up! Many a career has been crippled by it. Burton could not overcome this habit, and, convinced that it would ruin his success, made his servant promise before he went to bed to get him up at just such a time; the servant called, and called, and coaxed; but Burton would beg him to be left a little longer. The servant, knowing that he would lose his shilling if he did not get him up, then dashed cold water into the bed between the sheets, and Burton came out

with a bound. When one asked a lazy young fellow what made him lie in bed so long, “I am employed,” said he, “in hearing counsel every morning. Industry advises me to get up; Sloth to lie still; and they give me twenty reasons for and against. It is my part, as an impartial judge, to hear all that can be said on both sides, and by the time the cause is over dinner is ready.”

There is no doubt that, as a rule, great decision of character is usually accompanied by great constitutional firmness. Men who have been noted for great firmness of character have usually been strong and robust. There is no quality of the mind which does not sympathize with bodily weakness, and especially is this true with the power of decision, which is usually impaired or weakened from physical

suffering or any great physical debility. As a rule, it is the strong physical man who carries weight and conviction. Any bodily weakness, or lassitude, or lack of tone and vigor, is, perhaps, first felt in the weakened or debilitated power of decisions.

Nothing will give greater confidence, and bring assistance more quickly from the bank or from a friend, than the reputation of promptness. The world knows that the prompt man's bills and notes will be paid on the day, and will trust him. "Let it be your first study to teach the world that you are not wood and straw; that there is some iron in you." "Let men know that what you say you will do; that your decision, once made, is final, — no wavering; that, once resolved, you are not to be allured or intimidated."

Some minds are so constructed that they are bewildered and dazed whenever a responsibility is thrust upon them; they have a mortal dread of deciding anything. The very effort to come to immediate and unflinching decision starts up all sorts of doubts, difficulties, and fears, and they cannot seem to get light enough to decide nor courage enough to attempt to remove the obstacle. They know that hesitation is fatal to enterprise, fatal to progress, fatal to success. Yet somehow, they seem fated with a morbid introspection which ever holds them in suspense. They have just energy enough to weigh motives, but nothing left for the momentum of action. They analyze and analyze, deliberate, weigh, consider, ponder, but never act. How many a man can trace his downfall in

life to the failure to seize his opportunity at the favorable moment, when it was within easy grasp, the nick of time, which often does not present itself but once!

It was said that Napoleon had an officer under him who understood the tactics of war better than his commander, but he lacked that power of rapid decision and powerful concentration which characterized the greatest military leaders perhaps of the world. There were several generals under Grant who were as well skilled in war tactics, knew the country as well, were better educated, but they lacked that power of decision which made unconditional surrender absolutely imperative wherever he met the foe. Grant’s decision was like inexorable fate. There was no going behind it, no opening it

up for reconsideration. It was his decision which voiced itself in those memorable words in the Wilderness, “I propose to fight it out on these lines if it takes all summer,” and which sent back the words “unconditional surrender” to General Buckner, who asked him for conditions of capitulation, that gave the first confidence to the North that the rebellion was doomed. At last Lincoln had a general who had the power of decision, and the North breathed easy for the first time.

The man who would forge to the front in this competitive age must be a man of prompt and determined decision; like Caesar, he must burn his ships behind him, and make retreat forever impossible. When he draws his sword he must throw the scabbard away, lest in a moment of discouragement

and irresolution he be tempted to sheathe it. He must nail his colors to the mast as Nelson did in battle, determined to sink with his ship if he cannot conquer. Prompt decision and sublime audacity have carried many a successful man over perilous crises where deliberation would have been ruin.

“Hoc age.”

Chapter 16: The Curse of Idleness

“Idleness is the sepulcher of the living man.”

Lost wealth may be restored by industry, the wreck of health regained by temperance, forgotten knowledge restored by study; but whoever looked on a vanished hour, or recalled his neglected opportunities — Heaven’s record of wasted time? — Mrs. Sigourney.

An idler is a watch that wants both hands;

As useless if it goes as when it stands. — Cowper.

Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears. — Franklin.

If you are idle, you are on the way to ruin, and there are few stopping-places upon it.

It is rather a precipice than a road. — H. W. Beecher.

“There is a firefly in the southern clime

Which shineth only when upon the wing;

So is it with the mind:

When once we rest, we darken.”

“He is a dreadfully lazy man,” began Spurgeon, when asked to enumerate the bad habits of a ne’er-do-well. “Stop!” exclaimed the old clergyman to whom he was speaking, “all sorts of sins are included in this one.” There never was a truer saying than that “an idle brain is the devil’s workshop.” Indeed, while “The devil tempts all other men, the idle man tempts the devil.”

The following printer’s squib is suggestive:

AUCTION.

“Will be sold by Public Vendue, Friday, the 18th of August, at the house of Lemuel Poorsoul, in Nopenny Township, in the County of Lackthrift, a litter of Pups, two Gamecocks, three Jugs, one Checker-Board, and a Euchre Pack.”

“Nature knows no pause,” writes Goethe, “and attaches a curse upon all inaction.”

While a criminal was exchanging his own for a prison suit in the penitentiary of Connecticut he remarked, “I never did a day’s work in my life.” No wonder that he reached the state prison.

“Out of work” has caused more crime and wretchedness than almost anything else.

These words were found tattooed on the right arm of a convict in a French prison:

“The past has deceived me, the present torments me, and the future terrifies me.” His life had been spent in idleness, which led to crime.

“No trade” is the open sesame to our jails. It is said that ninety per cent, of the convicts in the Massachusetts State Prison at Charlestown entered by the password, “No trade.”

When asked the cause of his brother’s death, Sir Horace Vere replied, “He died, sir, of having nothing to do.” “Ah!” said the Marquis of Spinola, “that is enough to kill any general of us all.”

Epes Sargent said that the man who did not think it respectable to bring up his children to work had just heard from his three sons. One was a driver on a canal; another had

been arrested as a vagrant; and a third had gone to a certain institution, to learn to hammer stone under a keeper.

A lazy fellow once complained that he could not find bread for his family. “Neither can I,” said an honest laborer; “I have to work for all the bread I get.”

A lazy youth will be a lazy man just as surely as a crooked sapling makes a crooked tree. Laziness grows on people; it begins a cobweb and ends in iron chains. If you will be nothing, just wait to be somebody. Idleness travels very leisurely and poverty soon overtakes her. To be idle is to be poor. Leisure is sweet to those who have earned it, but it is burdensome to those who get it for nothing, without effort.

Who are you, young man, in the prime and vigor of manhood, that you should be exempt from life's burdens and duties and eat bread earned by the sweat of another's brow, when you have never added a farthing to the coffers of the world? What if the sheep refuse the wool to cover your lazy back, and its body to gratify your gluttonous stomach? What if the earth refuse bread to prolong your useless, idle life?

Idleness, especially that of beggars, was once punishable in England even by death. The first offense was punished by whipping; after the second offense, the upper part of the ear was cut off; the third offense incurred imprisonment in jail. If indicted for wandering, idleness, loitering, and found guilty, "he shall have judgment

to suffer pains and execution of death as a felon, and as an enemy of the commonwealth.”

In Athens, also, idleness was a punishable crime, and not only were the citizens compelled to industry, but to the utmost exertion of their talents. It was not enough that each should choose a profession; the court of Areopagus inquired into and ascertained the ex

tent of his funds, the amount of his expenditures and the measure of his industry and economy.

A young German nobleman supplemented a college course by extensive travel, and then returned to live in idleness upon his large estate. Life soon became so insupportable that he told a friend that he

should commit suicide the following night. The friend, a manufacturer, made no attempt to dissuade him; but asked him, as a final favor, to inspect some interesting work on which his operatives were engaged. The nobleman came; and, at a sign from the manufacturer, several workmen seized the visitor, put a blouse on him, and made him work hard. When the laborers stopped for refreshment, the visitor was so tired and hungry that he was glad to sit down with the others to a lunch of black bread, sausages, and beer. How good it tasted, and how welcome seemed the few minutes of rest! “Friend,” said a workman who learned of his suicidal intent, “you see before you the father of five children. I lost three of them at one fell swoop. I was almost crazy; I wished to

follow them. But I had to work for the rest, who are dearer to me than life itself; and now working for them has made life sweet to me.” The nobleman thanked his friend for playing so shrewd a trick, and at once began a long and happy career of usefulness.

The emptiness and misery sometimes found in idle high life is illustrated by the following letter written by a French countess to the absent count:

"Dear Husband, — Not knowing what else to do I will write to you. Not knowing what to say, I will now close. Wearily yours, “Countess de R.”

De Quincey pictures a woman sailing over the water in a boat awakening out of a sleep to find her necklace untied. One end

hangs over the side of the boat, and pearl after pearl drops into the stream. While she clutches at one, just falling, another drops beyond her grasp. Like these pearls from the string, our hours and days drop one after another, and are forever beyond our reach.

“I look upon indolence as a sort of suicide,” wrote Lord Chesterfield to his son, “for by it the man is efficiently destroyed, although the appetite of the brute may survive.”

There is no one thing which will sooner wreck a young man and utterly ruin all his future prospects than the reputation of being lazy, shiftless. If possible, dawdlers, who are forever dillydallying, are worse than lazy people. A dawdler is absolutely good for nothing. If a young man is going to amount to anything his success will depend

very largely upon his reputation — what other people think of him. No one is willing to praise or help a dawdler. A young man must have the reputation of being prompt, energetic, decisive, earnest, and true, if he would have the assistance of others; and, without this, success is impossible.

An old sea captain so dreaded this habit of dawdling among his crew, because it demoralized all discipline, that when he could find nothing else for them to do, he would make them scour the anchor.

Who does not know some member of the “Idle Family”? Idleness is a sly thief; she snatches a minute here and a few minutes there; she clips a quarter of an hour from your music lesson, or your other duties. We determine every morning that she shall have none of this day, but every night we

have to confess her petty thefts with chagrin. She holds you “just a minute” till your train has gone, “just a minute” till the bank has closed; she induces you to get your house insured to-morrow, but it burns tonight; to apply for the situation to-morrow, but it is taken today. She makes you tardy at school, just a little late for your engagements, until you have lost your reputation for promptness and ruined your credit.

“I remember,” says Hillard, “a satirical poem, in which the devil is represented as fishing for men, and adapting his bait to the tastes and temperaments of his prey; but the idlers were the easiest victims, for they swallowed even the naked hook.”

It is the holidays, the evenings, the spare moments that try character; the great strain does not come in the busy day.

If you want to know a young man's character, find out what he does with his spare minutes. What do they mean to him? What does he see in them? Does he see education, self-culture, a coveted book, in the odd moments and half-holidays which others throw away; or does he see a sparring-match, a saloon, a gambling-place, horse-racing, or a pool table?

Many a man, after acquiring a fortune by habits of industry and economy, has retired to enjoy the leisure to which he has so long looked forward as the goal of competence, only to find a life of idleness so intolerable that he must choose a renewal of business activity or death from the lack of anything

to keep the vital forces in motion. For the first time he learns that the command to live for a purpose is intended for our good, as without some aim, we cannot long exist. As digestion is measured by appetite, our hold on life is measured by our interest in various objects of thought.

The mind must be active, and if we do not furnish worthy employment, it will feed upon itself and consume its own substance. The man without definite work soon becomes the victim of a diseased mind. Melancholy and disappointment prey upon him and rob him of aspiration and happiness.

Nature demands that you labor until you are tired before she will reward you with sweet, refreshing sleep and a ravenous appetite, — luxuries which the idle and the

lazy never enjoy. She reserves these boons for her hard-handed toilers. As their pay is small, she gives them this additional compensation for doing the world's drudgery.

The bicycle falls the moment it stops; industry keeps many a life from falling.

The let-alone principle is dangerous. Let your brain alone and you will become an imbecile. Let your land alone and you will become a pauper. Let your neighbor alone and you will become selfish. Let your soul alone and you will become devilish.

A lazy man is of no more use in the world than a dead man, and he takes up more room. Who waits for something to turn up, often turns up himself in jail.

“Nothing is worse for those who have business than the visits of those who have none,” was the motto of a Scotch editor.

Time is exactly what we make it. In the hands of the wise, a blessing, a preparation for life eternal; in the hands of the foolish, a curse, a preparation for the condemnation that is everlasting. To you it is much; to your neighbor, it is naught.

Could I give the youth of this country but one word of advice it would be this: *Let no moment pass until you have extracted from it every possibility. Watch every grain in the hourglass.*

Make each day stand for something. Neither heaven nor earth has any place for the drone; he is a libel on his species. No glamour of wealth or social prestige can

hide his essential ugliness. It is better to carry a hod or wield a shovel in honest endeavor to be of some use to humanity than to be nursed in luxury and be a parasite.

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