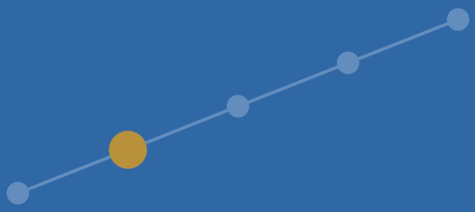
LEADERSHIP SERIES FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING

VOLUME TWO



Character

"Character is what determines your value to the world."

ORISON SWETT MARDEN

Edited and narrated by Richard Gorham

Leadership-Tools.com

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Character

The Grandest Thing in the World

Based on the original edition of
Character: The Grandest Thing in the World (1899)

ORISON SWETT MARDEN

Author of Pushing to the Front

Edited for ebook and audio by
Richard Gorham

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Leadership-Tools.com

ABOUT THIS EDITION

Orison Swett Marden published *Character: The Grandest Thing in the World* in 1899. Richard Gorham edited it for ebook and audio in 2006. He shortened some passages and brought parts of the language closer to the way people talk today. This 2026 edition keeps that text and gives it a new design, with a contents page that links to each chapter.

The audio edition and the companion workbook are free at Leadership-Tools.com. The audio covers the nine chapters of the book, and the workbook follows the same chapters, with a summary of key points and questions for each one.

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CHAPTER I

A Grand Character

If Drummond was wise in calling an abstract quality such as Love, the Greatest Thing in the World — then Love, paired with a fully developed Character, must truly be the Grandest Thing in the World. Drummond himself, in his life story, is far grander than anything he ever wrote, for his was the life of a radiant personality.

"When you met him," says Dr. George Adam Smith, his biographer, "you saw a graceful, well-dressed gentleman, tall, with a slight swagger in his walk and a brightness in his face; who seemed to carry no worries, and to suffer neither from presumption nor timidity. When you spoke with him, you'd find him knowledgeable and interested about most any topic. He fished, he hunted, he skated, as few can; he played cricket; he would go any distance to see a bon-fire or a football game.

He had a new story or a new puzzle or a new joke every time he met you. If it was on the street, he'd encourage you to watch the everyday happenings with a keen eye for detail. He helped you appreciate the miracle of the smaller things in life. If you'd meet him on the train, he was ever poised to read you a fresh tale

from a book he had most recently discovered. He'd make you more aware of what's going on in the world.

He loved to play and he was known for introducing games and within a matter of minutes he'd have everybody in the thick of it. Children loved him for his generosity and encouragement."

"Drummond had a genius for friendship," says Professor Grose. He so won the affection of working-men that one said, after Drummond died, that he almost felt as if he must talk to him in his prayers — to invoke his influence for good, from out of the heavens.

Ian Maclaren, who first knew Drummond as a boy on the cricket field said, "His influence more than that of any other man I ever met, was mesmerizing — which means that, while other men affect people by their speech and example, he was able to seize one directly by his vibrant personality. Overly reserved and always sensible people grew uneasy in his presence, and would sometime even force themselves to resist Drummond, — as one might do who recognized a magician, and feared his spell. Men would quickly become observant, interested, fascinated by the very sight of the man, and could not take their eyes off him. It was as if the prince from a children's fairytale had dropped in among the common folk."

So when we ask — What is Character? Is it not that sum of qualities which distinguishes one person from another? Do we say that Drummond's versatility and ability to connect with people of all interests was his distinguishing characteristic? It was, in fact, his unique combination of higher qualities; and no man

can acquire a far-reaching influence without a fair mental balance, without great strengths from many sides.

While it is not my intent, in this booklet, to catalogue every mental and moral trait to be acquired by the most ambitious, it is my intent to name certain deep-rooted ideals, which are most essential in the mental make-up of those who set before themselves the goal of developing their character, the highest ideal, also known as The Grandest Thing in the World.

The dominant influences in the shaping of character are heredity and environment. Before an individual can think or act independently these strong influences are hard at work, making their firm impression upon our entire being.

As Daniel Webster wrote:

> "If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal souls, if we imbue them with immortal principles, with the just fear of God and love of fellow men, we engrave on those tablets something which will brighten all eternity."

CHAPTER II

The Light Bearers

True worth is in being, not seeming,—
In doing, each day that goes by,
Some little good, not in the dreaming
Of great things to do by and by.
For whatever men say in their blindness,
And in spite of the fancies of youth,
There's nothing so kingly as kindness,
And nothing so royal as truth.

— Alice Cary

A gentleman's first characteristic is that fineness of structure in the body which renders it capable of the most delicate sensation, and of structure in the mind which renders it capable of the most delicate sympathies; one may say, simply, "fineness of nature."

— Ruskin

There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy... By being happy we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves.

— Stevenson

On the steps of a public building in Florence, an old soldier sat playing a violin. By his side stood a faithful dog holding in his mouth the disabled veteran's hat, into which, now and then, a passer-by would drop a coin. A gentleman, in passing, paused, and asked for the violin; first tuning it, he then began to play.

The sight of such a well-dressed man, playing the poor man's violin in such a place, and with such kindness and enthusiasm, attracted the passersby, and they stopped. The music was so charming that they stood there, enchanted. The number of donations in the hat increased largely. The hat became so heavy that the dog began to growl. It was emptied, and soon filled again. The company grew until a great congregation was gathered. The performer played one of the national anthems, handed the violin back to its owner, and quickly went along his way.

One man who was present said: "That was Amard Bucher, the world-renowned violinist. He did this for charity; let us follow his example." And immediately the hat was passed again for a collection for the old veteran. Mr. Bucher did not give a penny, but yet he flooded the old man's day with sunshine and showed him that there was one who cared for his welfare and truly appreciated him for his service.

• • •

So, too, it is related that when Michael Angelo was at the height of his fame, when monarchs and popes were paying fabulous prices for his works, a little boy met him in the street, with an old pencil and a piece of dirty brown paper, and asked him for a picture. The great artist sat on the curbstone and drew a picture for his little admirer.

• • •

Another like charming story is told of Jenny Lind, a famous singer from Sweden, the story tells us of her noble nature. Once when walking with a friend she saw an old woman staggering

into the door of her concert hall. Her pity for the woman was immediate, and she entered the door, pretending to need to rest for a moment, but in reality she wished to give something to the poor woman. To her surprise, the old woman began at once to talk of Jenny Lind, saying, —

"I have lived a long time in this world, and desire nothing more before I die but to hear the sweet sound of the great Jenny Lind."

"Would it make you happy?" inquired Jenny.

"Ay, that it would; but such folks as I can't afford to go to the concert, and so I shall never hear her in person."

"Don't be so sure of that," said Jenny. "Sit down, my friend, and listen."

She then sang, with genuine glee, one of her best songs. The old woman was wild with delight and wonder, when she added,—

"Now you have heard Jenny Lind."

> "Sweeter than the perfume of roses, is a reputation for a kind, charitable, unselfish nature; a ready disposition to do for others any good turn that is within your power. The health and well-being of the mind is closely linked to the sensibilities of the body; even what the body wears and where it resides has influence on our self-esteem."

• • •

"Good looking," Horace Smith remarks," is looking good." "Be good, be manly, be womanly, be gentle, generous in your sympathies, take rightful ownership of all the good that is all around you, — do this and you will never lack kind words of admiration toward others."

Was there ever an unselfish person, of charitable and generous impulses; one who was sociable, loving, kind, of tender spirit and thoughtful of others, who was not universally beloved by all? The kind soul, indeed, can be regarded as “the light-bearer.”

Some people are naturally happy and optimistic. No matter what their circumstances are, they are joyous, content, and satisfied with most everything. They carry a perpetual holiday in their eyes, and see joy and beauty everywhere. When we meet them they impress us as having just met with some good luck, or as having some grand news to share. Like the bees that extract honey from every flower, they have a happy air about them which transforms gloom into sunshine. In the hospitals their smiles and wit outperform the physician and have a more potent effect than most drugs. All doors open to these people. They are welcome everywhere.

The most fascinating person is always the one with the most winning manners. Inner character eventually outshines the most seductive outward physical beauty.

We do not need a formal introduction to feel the greatness within a man of true character. If you meet a cheerful man on the street on a cold day you seem to feel the mercury rise several degrees. The two main characteristics of a lady or of a gentleman are, according to Earl Beaconsfield, propriety and consideration, for others. "If you fall into any extreme, let it be on the side of gentleness." "Let each one strive to yield to the wishes of others, in absolute unselfishness." "Never part without loving words."

How appropriate are such giving sentiments, that we should adopt them as our life mottos!

• • •

The following was found in an old manor-house in England, written and framed, and hung over the mantel-piece of a sitting-room:

"The true gentleman is God's servant, the world's master, and his own man. Virtue is his business; study, his recreation; contentment, his rest; and happiness, his reward. God is his Father; the saints, his brethren; and all that need him his friends. Devotion is his chaplain; chastity, his chamberlain; sobriety, his butler; temperance, his cook; hospitality, his housekeeper; Providence, his steward; charity, his treasurer; and discretion, his porter, to let in or out, as appropriate. Thus his whole life is made up of virtue, and he is master of his house. He is committed to take the world with him, on his personal journey toward heaven, and all his business along the way is to make himself and others happy. His determination for good is what makes him — a man."

CHAPTER III

The Great-Hearted

One act of charity will teach us more about the love of God than a thousand sermons ever will.

— Robertson

It was a cold, dark evening, and the city lights were dulled by the gloom of the storm. It was the time when the wealthy were dining out, when the stores were closing, and when the store-workers were making their way home; many too poor to ride home, and so very tired from yet another hard day of honest labor.

One shop-girl was hurrying home through the storm after a long day's work. She was a delicate girl, poorly dressed, and wholly unable to keep out the winter's cold with only a thin fall coat. She was evidently very timid and self-absorbed in making her way toward home.

A blind man was sitting in an alley by the pavement, silently offering pencils for sale to the heedless crowd. The wind and sleet beat down upon him. He had no overcoat. His thin hands held with purple fingers the wet, sleet-covered pencils. He looked as if the cold alone, had aged him.

The girl passed the man, as did the rest of the hurrying crowd. When she had walked half a block away she fumbled in her pocket, then turned and walked back. For a moment she looked intently at the assortment of pencils, and when she saw that he

gave no sign of noticing her presence, she quietly dropped a ten-cent piece into his fingers, and walked on. But she was evidently troubled, for her steps grew slower. Then she stopped, turned, and walked rapidly back to the dark alley, and directly to the man she just left. Bending over him, she said softly, "Are you really blind?"

The man lifted his head and showed her his sightless eyes. Then with an indescribable gesture he pointed to his breast. There hung the dull badge of the Grand Army of the Republic.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said humbly. "Please give me back my ten cents."

"Yes, ma'am," he answered, and held out the coin.

She took out her purse. It was a very thin one. It contained two silver dollars, one-third of her week's hard earnings, — all she had. She put one dollar of it into his hand with the words — "Take this instead, for the dear Lord's sake, and go home now; you should not be sitting here in this bitter wind and sleet." Then quickly, she turned her steps homeward.

> "The high desire that others may be blest savors of heaven."

• • •

A poor woman, knowing that Dr. Goldsmith had studied physics, and hearing of his great humanity, solicited him in a letter to send her something for her husband, who had lost his appetite and was reduced to a most melancholy state. The good-natured doctor waited on her instantly, and after some discourse with his patient found him suffering only from poverty and a negative

disposition. The doctor told him they should hear from him in an hour, when he would send them some pills which he believed would prove helpful. He immediately went home and put ten regular aspirin into a medicine box, with the following label: "These must be used only as necessities require. Be patient, and of good spirit."

• • •

At the battle of Fredericksburg, hundreds of Union soldiers lay wounded on the field for an entire day and night; the agonizing cries for water among the wounded were only answered by the roar of the guns. At last a Southern soldier who could no longer endure these piteous cries, begged his general to let him carry water to the suffering. The general told him it would be instant death to appear upon the battlefield, but the cries of the unfortunate wounded drowned the roar of the guns to the soldier's ear, and he rushed out among the wounded and dying with a supply of water. It was an errand of mercy. Wondering eyes from both armies watched the brave fellow as he passed from soldier to soldier, gently raising the head and placing the cool water to his parched lips. The Union soldiers were so struck by the action of this boy in gray, risking his life for his enemies' sake, that they ceased firing from admiration for an hour and a half, as did the Confederates. During this whole time the boy in gray went over the entire battlefield, giving drink to the thirsty, straightening cramped and mangled limbs, putting knapsacks under the heads of sufferers, spreading coats and blankets over them as tenderly as if they had been his own children.

• • •

General Gordon is said to have had a great number of medals for which he cared nothing. There was a gold one, however, given to him by the Empress of China, with a special inscription engraved upon it, for which he had a great liking. But one day it suddenly disappeared; no one knew where or how. Years afterwards it was found out, by a curious accident, that Gordon had erased the inscription, sold the medal for ten pounds, and sent the sum anonymously for the relief of the sufferers from the cotton famine at Manchester.

• • •

Here is one anecdote — matchless if not incredible. It reads like a fable out of the Orient. It relates to a Spanish Moor, whose silent walk in his garden was interrupted by the inrush of a Spanish cavalier who flung himself at his feet and begged for protection. He said that his pursuers were seeking his life for having slain a Moor. Refuge was promised in the garden summer-house until midnight. Unlocking the door at the appointed hour, the Moor said: "I now know that you have killed my only son. But I pledged my word not to betray you." And he placed the murderer upon one of his own mules, saying, "Flee while darkness conceals you. My Creator is just; my character is unspotted, and I have resigned all judgment to God."

If a man's pledge is not sacred, the pillars of heaven may fall. Unless generosity of spirit prevails among men, there can never be upon this earth an ideal life.

The best fruit, comes to late in a man's life, even in the kindliest soul. Tenderness takes the place of an iron fist, self-restraint is given to the self-indulgent, the cold heart turns warm, and philanthropy becomes a need for the aging soul.

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 no wave that follows comes up to its mark, but after a while the whole sea is there and eventually beyond it. In the same way, now and then there comes a man head and shoulders above his fellow-men, showing that Nature has not lost her ideal of great-heartedness and character.

CHAPTER IV

A North-Star Course

Character is moral order, seen through the medium of an individual nature.

— Emerson

No man has come to true greatness who has not felt in some degree that his life belongs to his race, and that what God gives him, He gives him for all mankind.

— Phillips Brooks

The blossom cannot tell what becomes of its odor; and no man can tell what becomes of his influence and example upon others.

— Beecher

Life's more than breath and the quick round of blood;
'T is a great spirit and a busy heart.
We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

— Bailey

In a large open square in New Orleans stands a beautiful marble statue erected by the city, and on the statue are these words: "The Statue of Margaret, of New Orleans."

She was left an orphan by the ravages of yellow fever. She married in early womanhood, but her husband soon died, soon

thereafter her only child following him. She was poor and uneducated, and could scarcely write her name. She went to work in the Orphan Asylum for Girls. She awoke very early and worked late, solicited groceries from merchants, and, indeed, put her whole life into the work for these orphans. When a new and beautiful asylum was built Margaret and one of the Sisters of Mercy freed it from debt.

Margaret opened a dairy and a bakery in the city, of her very own. Everybody knew her, and patronized her milk-wagon and bakery. She worked very hard and saved every cent so that she could continue to help the orphans whom in effect she had adopted as her own children. She never owned a silk dress or wore a white glove; she was very plain: but the city erected this beautiful monument to the orphan's friend, as a heart-felt thank you to the woman, for a beautiful, helpful, unselfish life.

An absolute surrender and devotion of self - to all that is better and purer and truer, is the secret of character building. By a consuming zeal for all that is noble and excellent, our love of self becomes softened and balanced. Through personal assessment and by a constant effort to better ourselves we clear our minds of all the indulgences and impurities. We pay less attention to all things which we cannot carry into the eternal life. It is in living with clarity and kindness that we can cement these traits into our lives. What is more beautiful than the face of a saint, and of the vast number of figures that refused to live strictly for fashion or money?

• • •

"Let any one," says Charles Kingsley, "set his heart to do what is right and nothing else, and it will not be long until his character is stamped with a heroic expression, with a noble indignation, self-restraint, great hope and optimism for all mankind."

• • •

Where certain lines in the face of Gladstone came from we learn by such incidents as that related by Sir Francis Crossley, to whom it was told by the priest of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. The priest had recently been to see a sweeper in his parish, who was ill.

"Has anyone been to see you?", said the priest.

"Yes, Mr. Gladstone."

"But how came he to visit you? " inquired the priest, who could not understand why the Chancellor, although then living in the parish, should call upon a sick sweeper.

"Well," answered the sweeper, "he had a nice word for me when he passed by me the other day, and later when I was not there he noticed my absence. He asked my mate, who had taken my place, where I was, and when he heard that I was ill he asked for my address, and put it down on paper. Then he took the time to call on me."

“And what did he do?" asked the priest.

"Why, he read to me and told me stories," was the reply.

To be loyal to the highest interests of every man, how characteristic was this of the magnanimous Gladstone! Indeed, how generous was his service to others!

• • •

So, too, there is an anecdote of Charles N. Crittendon. When his own daughter entered into the convent, he gave his life thereafter to carry the good message of peace and good-will to those who rarely heard it. And he established homes of refuge for those homeless women who sought to walk in new paths of life.

• • •

I never read the life-stories of Mrs. Judson, Mrs. Snow, Miss Brittain or Miss West, without feeling that the heroic age of our race has just begun. And let me ask what member of any church was ever more self-devoted than John, the felon? He was a man of coarse features, close-cropped hair, and of a shuffling gait. He asked for a position as a nurse in a yellow-fever epidemic at Memphis. The doctor refused him.

"I wish to nurse," persisted the stranger. "Try me for a week. If you don't like me, then dismiss me; if you do like me, pay me my wages."

"Very well," said the doctor, "I'll take you; although, to be candid, I hesitate to do so." Then he added mentally, "I 'll keep my eye on him."

But the man soon proved that he needed nobody's eye upon him. In only a few weeks he had become one of the most valuable nurses on that heroic force. He was tireless and self-denying. Wherever the pestilence raged most fiercely he worked hardest. The suffering and the dying adored him. To the neglected and the forgotten his rough face was the face of an angel.

He acted so strangely on pay-days, however, that he was followed through back streets to an obscure place, where he was

seen to put his whole week's earnings into a relief-box for the benefit of the yellow-fever sufferers. Sadly, not long afterwards he become ill and died of the plague; and when his body was prepared for its unnamed grave, for he never told anyone who he was, it was eventually discovered that John, the nurse, had been earlier branded as a convicted felon. How fitting his epitaph! — "I was sick, and ye visited me."

• • •

"There is but one pursuit in life," says Colton, "which it is in the power of all to follow and all to attain: this is the pursuit of virtue." "It is this commanding self-worth, this personal power," says Emerson, "which is honored and recognized by all." Never was there a more single instance of it, dearer to the heart of our English-speaking people, than occurred at one post-war dinner party, when the old officers were invited to write secretly upon a slip of paper the name connected with that war most likely to command the respect of all history; every paper bore the lady's name, "Florence Nightingale."

"The lady with the light" — it was she who won the highest fame in that war of the Orient. "Within only a few hours of her arrival, and of her little band of nurses," says a witness, "many hundred wounded men were brought in from the fight, and a little later thousands more from another battlefield. Nothing was ready, everything was to be done, and it was her task to bring order out of a chaos of misery. She sometimes stood, during her first week in charge, twenty consecutive hours issuing directions; and she made it a point, when matters were running in routine

order, to give her personal attention to the worst and most appalling cases."

"Her nerve," said a surgeon who worked with her, "was wonderful. I have been with her during very severe operations; she was more than equal to the task. The more awful the case, especially if it was that of a dying man, the more surely would her slight form be seen bending over him, administering to his ease in every way that was within her power, and seldom quitting his side till death released him from his anguish."

"She would speak to one and then to another, and nod and smile to as many more," said a soldier, "but she couldn't do it for everyone, you know, — we laid there by the hundreds; yet we would kiss her shadow as it fell upon us, and we could then lay our heads on the pillow, again content."

Another said, "Before she come, there was such cussin' and swearin'; and after that it was as holy as a church!"

How closely are these anecdotes related to the divine life in man, and how greatly they enhance the sacredness of life itself? It is this character in each of one of us, every man, woman and child, which has the power to set us apart from our peers. We instinctively maintain a respect toward those whose princely lives are so honored by unique acts of commitment to doing right by God and toward his fellow man.

*** It is this rigid and unquestioning adherence to duty which Mrs. Anna Jameson calls "the cement which binds the whole moral edifice together: without which all power, goodness, intellect, truth, happiness, and love itself, can have no permanence."

If a man's beliefs are of the right sort, will it not sharpen his faculties, quicken his energies, heighten his self-respect, give a solid foundation to his character, and enhance both his usefulness and his prospects of success? In the most sublime matters of the soul, love is never outgrown. And by it are we not akin to the highest beings in the universe?

It was during our Civil war that a young soldier lay upon his cot for what seemed an eternity. The Soldier, knowing death was certain, counted the days, then the hours, of his final release; and under his pillow was found this decree which indicated his faith in the highest form, it reads: "I give to a patient God my patient heart."

CHAPTER V

Boldness of Spirit

He's true to God who's true to man:
Wherever wrong is done
To the humblest and the weakest
'Neath the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us,
And they are slaves most base
Whose love of right is for themselves,
And not for all their race.

— Lowell

Oh, may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues!

— George Eliot

A single man, alone in the besieged castle, successfully multiplied himself in the eyes of his enemy, in effect, by shooting first from one window of the castle, then quickly running to shoot from another. When the terms of surrender were arranged, it was agreed that the man and his "battalion" would be allowed to march out with all of the honors of war. To the astonishment of all, one man, the "First Grenadier of France," came forth, and

stacked his arms proudly upon his chest as he looked his enemies straight in their eyes.

"But the whole battalion must abandon the castle!" exclaimed the Austrian chief. "Where is the rest of your battalion?"

"I am the battalion," replied La Tour proudly.

• • •

Garibaldi's power over his men was unequalled. In Rome he called for forty volunteers to go where half of them would likely be killed and the others wounded. The whole battalion rushed forward; and they had to draw straws, so eager were they all to obey.

• • •

What is every man but a magnet, to attract, or to be attracted? Every man ultimately falls into the company with which he affiliates. And the strongest is the one who draws others to himself, who creates his own company; and this is through having a positive quality — moral courage and physical prowess.

There was "Gentleman George," a young officer, of whom one of our war writers described. “He spent all his spare hours in study, and daily he read his Bible” he said. Camp life is never private, but George took the jeers of his comrades good-naturedly. In the day of battle George ran in between the firing-lines and brought off a wounded lieutenant. And after such an exhibition, the men understood clearly what George was made of; no one joked further whenever Gentleman George sat down to read his Bible.

"The greatest man," says a writer, "is the man who chooses right with the most invincible resolution; who resists the strongest temptations from within and without; who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully; who is calmest in storms and most fearless under confrontation; whose reliance upon truth, and virtue, and faith - is most unfaltering."

• • •

Is not moral courage always quick to rebuke a wrong? When Bishop Patterson was a boy at Eton he was captain of the eleven; and he had the courage to declare that he would resign his position as captain, and take no part in the rowing, if vulgar songs were sung at the annual supper. An objectionable song was sung, and he, with others, at once rose and left the room. It was not until an apology was offered that he resumed his post. So, too, Gladstone, as a boy at Eton, turned down his glass when an improper toast was proposed. "An unblemished heart is not easily impressed."

• • •

This is true always and everywhere. In Harvard University the idea of what was the manly thing was swiftly changed when Arthur Cumnock used his athletic influence to support temperance in all things, fair play, courtesy, and modesty. Moral courage always wins out in the end.

Is not a resolute spirit, one of firm ideals, just as important in the tent as it is on the battlefield? "I was sitting with General Grant one day," said Clinton B. Fisk, "when a major-general in full uniform appeared, saying: 'Boys, I have a good story to tell

since there are no ladies present.' 'No, but there are gentlemen present,' replied the commander-in-chief."

When we are called to be upright and pure and generous, we are also called to be intelligent and skillful, and strong and brave. Our Creator asks much of all men and women. Some head his call and rise to greatness, to honor, and power of spirit. Others pay no attention to their inner voice that is calling for self-discipline and an unmatched work ethic. Sadly, these people slowly sink in life, and tend to answer to those who possess a better, and more disciplined ear.

• • •

"A truly great man," says Carlyle, "is great in intellect, in courage, affection, and integrity; he is a most lovable and precious man, — great, not in a small way, but as an Alpine mountain, so simple, spontaneous, honest, not setting himself up to be great at all; he is there for quite another purpose than being great. His purpose is to be of high value, and to set a proper example for others."

CHAPTER VI

“A Fragment of the Rock of Ages”

"One ruddy drop of manly blood the surging sea out-weighs."

Last summer two young Creek braves, Watka and Deer, met at a dance; they were suitors for the same maiden, who was present. Trouble arose; there was a short fight, resulting in the death of Deer. For this homicide Watka was tried under the laws of his tribe, was found guilty of murder, and sentenced to be shot at a date early in August. Immediately on conviction the condemned man was released on parole, as others in the same circumstances had been— for this was not an infrequent tribal custom. To no one’s surprise, there was no bond, no surety of any kind, nothing but his pledge to report for execution at a certain time and date was required.

Watka could kill his rival in love in the heat of passion; but he would not violate his promise, to save his life. He married the girl on whose account he had fought and killed Deer, and when the day of execution approached he made preparations to die, making every possible provision for his widow.

But he was not to die at the first time appointed. He was a member of a famous Indian baseball team, and a number of

games in which he was needed had been scheduled. For this reason, and this alone, he was reprieved till the last day of October, so that he might fulfill his baseball engagements. The games ended and on a Sunday Watka reported to the Creek authorities (in the Indian Territory) to pay his final debt. A writer describes what followed: "Watka set out alone to the public execution grounds. In due time he arrived. The crowd was waiting. The prisoner assumed his position on bended knees, with arms tied behind, and a bandage over his eyes. The rifle was in the hands of a good marksman; there was a sharp crack, and the white spot marked for the heart was instantly discolored with blood."

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A story not unlike this is told about Dick Johnson, in our Revolutionary war. After his arrest, upon his personal word to the sheriff, he went about his usual work, in and out; and when it was time for him to be tried for high treason he set off alone and walked through the forests to Springfield to be tried for his life. But a member of the Massachusetts council, knowing his character, rescued him from being hanged by a rope.

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Then, too, we have that old story of the Roman held captive, released so that he might advise Rome to make peace. He advised Rome not to make peace. "But, my friend, what will become of you?" he was asked. "I gave my word to return, and I will; but no matter what, do not make peace."

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Who would not pay to know such men as Damon and Pythias, the one ready to die as a substitute for his friend, and the other voluntarily ready in his place at the death block when the appointed hour struck?

"When the sacredness of one's word is matched in the attributes of his character, all that constitutes a man, then we find that there is something in a man's life greater than his occupation or his achievements; grander than acquisition or wealth; higher than genius; more enduring than fame. "The truest test of civilization," says Emerson “is not the census, nor the size of cities or of the crops; no, it is but the quality of men the country turns out.”

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"Your lordships," said Wellington in Parliament, "must all feel the high and honorable character of the late Sir Robert Peel. I was long connected with him in public life. I never knew a man in whose word I had greater confidence." Are not the characters of great men the dowry of a nation?

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A reporter said he saw "Washington only but once, yet it inspired his whole life. To Washington, Jefferson once wrote — “The confidence of the whole nation centers in you."

Of Abraham Lincoln, his great antagonist, Stephen A. Douglas said that there was safety in the very atmosphere of the man. Manhood is above all riches and overtops all titles; character is greater than any career could be. "Character must stand behind,

and back up everything, — the sermon, the poem, the picture, the play. None of them is worth a straw without character."

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"I have read," Emerson says, "that they who listened to Lord Chatham felt somehow, in some unknown way, that there was something finer inside of the man than anything about which he spoke."

It was remarked by Disraeli that "we put too much faith in systems, and look too little to men." This was also the belief of Samuel Johnson. He used to say to travelers that the seeking of good and solid men of character should be of the first importance. "Go, even more than a hundred miles to speak with one wise man or woman, rather than five miles to hear the words of an entire community."

"The prosperity of a country," says Luther, "depends not on the abundance of its revenues, nor on the strength of its borders, nor on the beauty of its public buildings; but it consists in the number of its cultivated citizens, in its men and women of education, enlightenment, and moral character."

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The value of personal integrity to the state, during a great crisis, was singularly illustrated by George Peabody. In 1837, after he moved from America to London, there came a commercial crisis in the United States. Many banks suspended special payment terms. Many stores went to the wall financially, and thousands more were in great distress. Edward Everett said, "The great sympathetic nerve of the commercial world, credit, as far as the

United States was concerned, was for the time paralyzed." Probably not half a dozen men in Europe would have been listened to, by the Bank of England, upon the subject of American securities, but George Peabody was one of them. His name was already a tower of strength in the commercial world. In those dark days his integrity stood four-square, showing certainty and determination, in every business concern.

Peabody retrieved the credit of the State of Maryland, and, it might almost be said, of the entire United States. His character was the magic wand which in many cases changed almost worthless paper into gold. Merchants on both sides of the Atlantic procured large advances from him, even before the goods consigned to him had been sold.

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"Probably no greater reverence was ever paid in Parliament to any deceased member than that of Homer. How was this attained? By rank? No, as he was the son of an Edinburgh merchant. By wealth? Neither he nor any of his relatives ever had any sort of nestegg. By office? No, he held only but one position, and that was for only a few years; was of no real influence, and paid very little by any standard. By talents? His were not impressive, and he had no real genius. Cautious and slow, his only ambition was to be right. By eloquence then? No, he spoke in calm, good taste, without any of the oratory that either terrifies or seduces. By what was it, then that earned him the utmost respect of Parliament? Merely by good sense, hard work, good principles, and a good heart, qualities for all to aspire. It was the force of his

character that raised him up; and this character was not impressed on him by nature, but formed simply of his own making. There were many in the House of Commons of far greater ability and eloquence. But no one surpassed him in these talents when paired with his moral fiber. Homer was born to show what moderate powers, aided solely by a goodness of character, may achieve, even when these powers are displayed amidst stiff competition and the politics associated with public life."

It was Homer whom Sydney Smith described as having the ten commandments stamped on his forehead.

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"Nature,"' says Thackeray, "has written a letter of credit upon some men's faces, which is honored wherever presented. You cannot help trusting such men; their very presence gives confidence. There is a 'promise to pay' in their very faces which gives trust, and you prefer it to another man's signature of endorsement."

This quality, which we sometimes characterize as "a man we can tie ourselves to," is always at a premium in a democracy. The first Alexander of Russia possessed such character and it was more than equivalent to a constitution, much more. In a free land, the stability of our institutions depends upon moral excellence embodied in the citizens. "One good, strong, sound man," said Old John Brown, of Ossawatomie, "is worth a thousand men without character in building up a state."

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"Give us a man or woman, young or old, high or low," says Dean Stanley, "on whom we know we can thoroughly depend upon, who will stand firm when others fail; the friend faithful and true, the adviser honest and fearless, the adversary just and chivalrous, — in such a man there is a fragment of the Rock of Ages."

CHAPTER VII

The Wealth of the Commonwealth

The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is — spotless Reputation: that away.
Men are but gilded loam, or painted clay.

— Shakespeare

Heart-life, soul-life, hope, joy, and love, are true riches.

— Beecher

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost;
When health is lost, something is lost;
When character is lost, all is lost.

— Motto over the walls of a school in Germany.

We were always without a sou, but we never spoke of money, for money counted for nothing in our ambition.

— Rousseau

The answer given by Socrates to the King, who had pressed him to give up preaching in the dirty streets of Athens and come and live with him in his splendid courts was, “Your majesty, a meal here is but a halfpenny, and water I get for nothing.”

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"I don't want such things," said Epictetus to the rich Koman orator who was making light of his contempt for money and

wealth; "and besides you are poorer than I am. You have silver vessels, but unsteady principles and unhealthy appetites. My mind furnishes me with an abundant occupation despite my poor earnings. All your possessions seem small to you; mine seem great to me. Your desire is insatiable, mine is satisfied."

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"I have a rich neighbor," said Izaak Walton, "who is always so busy that he has no leisure to laugh; the whole business of his life is to get money. He is famous for repeating the phrase, 'The diligent hand maketh rich;' and it is true indeed; but he does not consider that it is not within the power of riches to make a man happy. As was once wisely said by a man of great observation, 'There may be as many miseries beyond riches as on this side of them.' The keys that hold those riches, very often hang heavily in the rich man's pocket. Let us be thankful for health and a peaceful conscience. Let us remember to be grateful for the love we have for others, and their love for us."

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"Money is not a necessity," said Professor Blackie to the young men of Edinburgh University; "power is not needed; liberty is not a requirement; even health is not the one thing that’s most important; but character alone is that which can truly save you."

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"The real leaders of mankind," says Emerson, "are the men and women who can raise their fellow-beings out of the race for money; who make them forget their bank account by interesting

them more in the development of their higher selves; who can raise mere money-getters into the intellectual realm where they will cease to measure greatness and happiness by dollars and cents. These leaders hold the key that makes men forget the hunger in their stomachs in order to feast on the banquet of the human heart and spirit."

The richest man is he who enriches his country most; in whom the people feel richest and the most proud; who gives of himself and his money; who opens the doors of opportunity widest to those about him; who is ears to the deaf, eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. Such a person makes every acre of land in his community worth more, and makes richer everyone who lives near him. On the other hand, many a millionaire has impoverished the town in which he lived, and lessened the value of every square foot of land.

"What is character but the poor man's capital? Is not character an available piece of property? Is it not moral security, the noblest of possessions? "Character is an estate in goodwill and respect. They who invest in it will find their reward, and their reputation will be fairly and honorably won."

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"Thee shall do as well by me as I do by thee," said a Quaker tanner, when he accepted an apprentice. The boy won his employer's confidence by his honesty, good nature, and industry. "Henry," said his mentor, “I think I’ll make thee a fine present when thy time is out. I cannot tell thee what it is to be; but it shall

be worth more to thee than a hundred pounds." When the apprenticeship was completed, the Quaker said to the boy alongside his father, "I will give the present I promised thee to thy father." Then, to the father, he said, "Thy son is the best boy I ever had. This is the present — a good name." Henry's golden visions vanished; but his father said, “I would rather hear you say that of my son than to see you give him all the money you are worth, for 'a good name is a better gift than all the great riches.' "It was the outcome of the lad's own efforts, the reward of his own good principles and conduct. A good name: "without it, gold has no value; birth, no distinction; position, no dignity; beauty, no charm; age, no respect."

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"Character is like stock in trade," said Dr. Hawes, of Hartford; "the more of it a man possesses the greater his capacity for making additions to it. Character is power — power is influence; it makes friends, creates income, draws loyalty and support, and opens a clear way to wealth, honor, and happiness."

How were a multitude of businessmen, who lost every dollar they had in the Chicago fire, enabled to resume business at once, some in a wholesale business, without any money? Their reputation was their bank account. The commercial agencies said they were honest 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. 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. Their integrity did not burn up with their stores. The best part of them was beyond the reach of any fire, and could not be burned.

A good character is a precious thing, above rubies, gold, crowns, or kingdoms, and the work of making it solid and whole, is the noblest labor on earth. Money-getting has properly been called unhealthy when it impoverishes the mind, or dries up the resources of the spiritual life; when it extinguishes the sense of beauty, and makes one indifferent to the wonders of nature and art; when visions of money dulls the moral senses, and confuses the distinction between right and wrong: when it stifles spirituality, and blots all thoughts of divinity from the soul.

It is just as important to set aside time for the development of our character as for cultivating the money-making instinct. A man cannot live by bread alone. His higher life demands the satisfaction of growth and development. The mind and soul in a well-developed man or woman are incomparable assets.

Character is perpetual wealth. The millionaire without a solid character seems no better than a simple pauper. Without character, what value are houses and lands, stocks or bonds?

Plain living, rich thought, and grand effort – these are real riches.

Neither a man's means, nor his worth, are measurable by his money. If he has a fat purse and a lean heart, a broad estate and a narrow understanding, what will his "money" do for him — what will his monetary "worth" gain him? What sadder sight is

there than an old man who has spent his whole life getting money, instead of growing his soul? If he has piled up only books and paintings with his wealth, he may be a stranger amongst these great works. How poor he is if his soul has shriveled to that of a miser, and if all his nobler instincts are dead!

Do you call the man or woman successful who wears a bulldog expression that exposes to all how it was that his or her fortune was gained, by always taking but never giving back?

Can you not read in that unfulfilled, browbeating face the sad realities of their family members who might as well be referred to as widows and orphans?

Do you call him a self-made man who has unmade others to make himself — who tears others down to build himself up? Can a man be really rich who makes others poorer?

Can he be truly happy when he is plainly seen as having an insatiable hunger for money, as if he were a hungry wolf? How seldom do we see the serene, satisfied, beautiful faces on men who have been labeled as very successful; at least as most of the business world rates success.

The wisest of men pity those who possess meanness, through which much of his fortune is obtained. Instead, they applaud the one who can be counted on to love and comfort you, hold you up, and never quit you, — the man of character will open to you the kingdom of thought, and protect you from cruelty, and injustice, — he will help to make your motives habitually great and honorable, and he will swiftly rebel at the very thought of dishonesty or fraud.

"Character before wealth," was the motto of our Boston merchant Amos Lawrence, who inscribed on his pocketbook, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

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"Do you know, sir,' asked a devotee of Mammon, in speaking to John Bright, "that I am worth a million sterling?" "Yes," said the irritated but calm-spirited respondent, "I do; and I know also that that is about all that you are worth."

"Life is constantly weighing us with very sensitive scales," says Lowell, "and telling every one of us precisely what his real weight is, to the very last grain of dust."

"I ought not to allow any man, simply because he has vast landholdings to feel rich in my presence," said Emerson. "I ought to make him feel that I can do without his riches, that I cannot be bought, — neither by comfort or pride, — and although I may be utterly penniless, and receiving bread from him, he is the poorest man between us." "What do we mean," asked Henry Ward Beecher, "when we say that a man 'is made'? Is it when he has such great control over his lower instincts, they serve only as fuel to his higher nature? Is it when his affections are like vines, full of blossoms and fruit? Is it when his tastes are so cultivated that all the finer things speak to him, and bring to him their bounty? Is a man “made” once his understanding is broad and open, so much so that he walks through every hall of knowledge, and gathers its treasures? Is it when his moral feelings are so well developed that it appears as though he holds regular court with

the divine? Unfortunately, none of these things are required when we award the title of “a made man”. Instead, society tends to award the title based solely on the person’s ability to make money, even though his heart, mind and soul be cold and dead. Only his passion for money is alive! How sad.

"And when we say a man is 'ruined.' Does this mean his wife and children are dead? Uh, no. Have they had a major quarrel, and are they headed for divorce? Hmm, no. Has he lost his reputation as a result of a criminal act? No. Is his mind and his ability to reason gone? Oh, no; it is as sound as ever. Is the ruined man struck down with disease? No. So you say he is ruined only because he has lost his property? Really you consider that to be ruined! "When shall we learn that a man's life consists of much more than the material things which he possesses?"

A bankrupt merchant, returning home one night, said to his 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?" "Well, no." "Will the sheriff sell me?" "Ah, don’t be silly." "Will he sell the children?" "Of course not." "Then do not say we have lost everything my dear. All that is most valuable has remained with us. Together, we can make another fortune." What power can poverty have over a home where there are loving hearts?

A rich mind and noble spirit will cast over the humblest home a radiance of beauty which the most talented upholsterer and decorator can never attempt to match. Who would not prefer to

be a millionaire of character, and peace of mind, rather than possess nothing but gold coins? Whoever uplifts civilization is eternally rich, even though he may die penniless; and future generations will erect a monument in appreciation for his good works.

Some people are rich in health, they are constantly cheerful, they possess a masterful temperament which propels them over any troubles and trials, which might very well sink an entire shipload of ordinary men. Others are rich in disposition, family, and friends. There are some men so amiable that everybody loves them; some so cheerful that they carry an atmosphere of joy all about them. Some are rich in integrity and character.

Brooks. Whittier, Thoreau, Audubon, Emerson and Beecher were each rich without money. They saw the splendor in the flower, the glory in the grass, they saw novels in the running brooks, sermons in the stones, and good in everything.

They knew that the man who owns the landscape is seldom the one who pays the taxes on it. They sucked in power and wealth at first hand from the meadows and fields, birds, brooks, mountains, and forests, as the bee sucks honey from the flowers. Every natural object seemed to bring to these men a special message of gratitude and appreciation for what God has made for all the world to enjoy.

To such rare souls every natural object is touched with power and beauty; and their thirsty souls drink it in as a traveler coming in from a long journey in the desert. To extract power and spiritual wealth from the world around them, and then to pour it out onto others, seems to be their life-mission. "What is the measure

of a nation's true success?" asked Lowell "It is the amount it has contributed to the thought, the moral energy, the intellectual happiness, the spiritual hope and optimism of all mankind."

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Thrift

If only we could assume that every human being has been well trained in early life (when irrevocable habits are formed) in the fundamental laws of thrift. All of the following has been said as to the nature of true wealth and the discipline of thrift: daily labor; earning a fair and honest living; saving enough for monetary independence in days of sickness and old age; avoidance of debt; giving and readiness to help others; and all of these wholesome divine rules of frugal self-preservation are to be rigidly learned and obeyed.

Assuming the above disciplines are adopted, 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 products and goods 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 value properly, not the apparent value but the real value of every thing presented to him. Quick and easy wealth will flaunt her banner before his eyes, and make claims of supremacy over everything else. A thousand schemes will be thrust into his face. Every occupation and vocation will have influence and produce its share of temptations. The youth who would succeed must not allow himself to be deceived. He or she

must learn to place the right emphasis of right and wrong into his or her daily life.

Is it any wonder that our children start out with wrong ideals of life, with so many incorrect ideas of what constitutes success? The child is "urged to get on," to "rise in the world," to "make money." Yet 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 do without what is popularly and falsely associated as being “success”.

I hope and pray that more of our youth begin to learn that a worthy life is the best success; whether it is attended by wealth or poverty. They must understand that the most preferable condition is that of possessing the trait of modest competency and upright character. Pure living and steady devotion to principle are the surest foundations of any success worth having.

"No success in life," says Frances E. Willard, "is anything but an absolute failure, unless its purpose is to increase the total sum of human good and happiness."

All honor is to be bestowed upon the comparative few in every walk of life who, amid the strong materialistic tendencies of our age, still speak and act earnestly, inspired by rewards other than gold or popular favor! These are our truly great men and women. They labor in their ordinary vocations with no less zeal or enthusiasm because they know who they are and what they are about. They give time and thought to higher things. "If you know the true power of character," says Emerson, "then you would understand just how much you would impoverish the

world if you could take clean out of our history the lives of Milton, Shakespeare, and Plato, — these three masters of integrity."

Ask yourself, are you tender, loving, self-denying, and honest? Do you attempt to fashion your life after that of great and noble men and women? If you are, then even though your pockets may often be empty, you will enjoy an inheritance which is overwhelmingly happy and fulfilled.

An unnamed poet once wrote:

> "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 met."

CHAPTER VIII

The Apollo Belvedere and the Venus di Milo

These statues stand for symmetry — for an ideal. Is not every character to be formed upon a uniquely personal ideal? And is not every man a law unto himself, in making for himself a well-proportioned character?

> "I wonder if ever a song was sung
> But the singer's heart sang sweeter!
> I wonder if ever a hymn was rung,
> But the thought surpassed the meter!
> I wonder if ever a sculptor wrought,
> Till the cold stone echoed his ardent thought!
> Or if ever a painter, with light and shade,
> The dream of his inmost heart portrayed!"

"Yet the aim of every man," said Humboldt, "should be to secure the highest and most harmonious development of his mental and physical powers to the point he is perceived by all as a complete and consistent being."

This aim is sought out by our aspiring youth, who are yet unable, perhaps, to analyze character in its fullest; but they make good decisions, do right things and live on the straight and narrow, and develop a singular beauty of life without noting its stages of growth or the laws associated with it.

In every painting of the masters there is one idea or figure which stands out boldly; everything else is subordinate, and finds its real significance not in itself, but in pointing to the central idea. So, in the universe of God, every object of creation is but a guide, with an index finger pointing to the central figure — Man. Man, at his finest, is the one truly great thing in all the universe.

Is not human life itself a fine art, and more difficult than sculpture, painting, music, architecture, or the creations of poetry? Do we not need to learn how to live?

Apelles hunted over Greece for many years, studying the fairest points of beautiful women, getting here an eye, there a forehead, 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 too, your future self, will be a composite — many things brought into one. You must be careful not to absorb into yourself the harmful weaknesses. Allow in only the strengths and the virtues of other, more highly enlightened men and women. In so doing, you will become a man or woman raised to your highest power. You will be self-assured, poised, and ever-after the master of yourself. Your sensibility will not be blunted by the weakness of others. Your whole character will be impressive, and will proactively respond to the needs of those less fortunate in your midst.

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"Did you ever watch a sculptor slowly fashioning a human figure?" asks a modern teacher. "It is not molded at once. It is not

struck out at a single blow. It is a work of time; but at last the full likeness comes out and stands fixed and unchanging in the solid marble. So does a man carve out his own moral likeness. Every day he adds something to the final work."

"I cannot see that you have made any progress since my last visit," said a critic to Michael Angelo. "But," said the sculptor, "I have retouched this part, polished that, softened this feature, brought out that muscle, given some expression to this lip, more energy to that limb." "Ah, but these are trifles!" "It may be so, 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, makes all the difference between success and failure. Success is in the finest details, so it is in building ones character. Investing the time to make it right, says volumes about the man.

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A man took a large, beautiful onyx to a noted artist to see what he could do to cover up a tinge of iron rust, which seemed to make the stone almost worthless. The artist engraved out of the blemish the figure of a lovely goddess. In the same vein, so does all successful men turn the most common events, the homeliest things, into that which is beautiful in his life. Let youth be taught to look for beauty in all they see, and to embody beauty in all they do, and the imagination will be active and healthy. If one loves beauty and looks for it, he will see it everywhere. If there is music in his soul, he will hear it everywhere; every object in nature will

sing to him. Life will neither be drudgery nor a dream, but will become full of life, love and contentment.

If you infuse into your life's purpose, the appreciation of beauty, pleasure, and harmony, you are transformed at once from an artisan to an artist. Any discontent you feel with the work you are compelled to do comes from your own choosing to do such work with a sense of drudgery. Do it in the spirit of a master, with a perception of the grace and beauty which is inherent in all honest work, and the drudgery will quickly disappear. "It is the spirit in which we work, not the work itself, which lends dignity to our labor. Many a field has been ploughed, many a house has been built, by a common man possessing a grander spirit than one might witness at a royal wedding, or an event attended by many nations"

How sad it is that so few, even in this magnificent life-gallery we call Earth, see anything of value except dollars and merchandise! As Emerson says, the farmer sees his bushel and his cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the mindset of being a simple farmer, instead of a highly blessed man experiencing the many gifts seen only on a beautiful farm.

Life is not mean, it is grand; if it appears to be mean, it is the observer who makes it so. God made it glorious. It is paved with diamonds; its banks He fringed with flowers. He overarched it with stars. Around it He spread the glory of the physical universe, — suns, moons, worlds, constellations and systems, — all that is magnificent in motion, sublime in magnitude, and grand in order and obedience. God would not have painted life with

such a broad stroke of grandeur if it was not meant for something.

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Ruskin tells us that the earth we walk upon is composed of clay and sand and soot and water; and he tells us that, if Nature has her perfect way with these materials, the clay will become porcelain, and may be painted upon and placed in the king's palace; then, again, the clay may become clear and hard and white, and have the power of drawing to itself the colors of the blue, red, green and purple rays of the sunlight, to become an opal. The sand will become very hard and white, and have the power of drawing to itself the blue rays of the sunlight, to become a sapphire. The soot will become the hardest and whitest substance known, and be changed into a diamond. The water in the summer is a dewdrop, and in the winter crystallizes into a star. Even so the homeliest lives, by drawing to themselves the coloring of truth, sincerity, charity, and faith, may become crystals and gems "of the most purest form."

Every thought which enters the mind, every word we utter, every deed we perform, makes its impression upon the innermost fiber of our being, and the result of these impressions is our character. The study of books, of music, or of the fine arts is not essential to possess a lofty character. It rests with the workman whether a simple piece of marble shall be made into a paperweight or carved into an Apollo, or a Venus di Milo.

"The power of great thoughts and grand sentiments to refine the face and manner of us all, to lift man above his surroundings,

is marvelous. We see this illustrated in the faces of great scientists, great reformers, and great statesmen." The body is but a servant of the mind. A well-balanced, cultured, and well-disciplined intellect reacts very powerfully upon the physique, and tends to bring it into harmony with itself. On the other hand, a weak, vacillating, one-sided, unsteady, and ignorant mind will ultimately bring the body downward. Every pure and uplifting thought, every noble aspiration for the good and the true, every longing of the heart for a higher and better life, every lofty purpose and unselfish endeavor, reacts upon the body, makes it stronger, more harmonious, and more beautiful.

The influence of artistic work depicting character, in sculpture or painting, comes down to us from remote ages. We are never bored or become weary of the impressive and antique forms of perfected beauty. Is Michael Angelo dead? Ask the millions whose gaze has been captured by his timeless works. In how many lives since his own death has he continued to live and reign supreme!

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"There is," says Dr. J. R.. Miller, "always something pouring out from our lives, like heat from a flame or perfume from a flower. Many ambitions have been awakened by a simple vision of beauty, an impressive speech or by the witnessing of a noble act. Every human soul is impressed and empowered by the noblest of glimpses it has of things that are good, right, true and of a noble nature that is seen in others."

There are men and women in every country who conquer before they speak, and who exert an influence on others that is completely out of proportion to their true ability; and people wonder what the secret of their power is over other men. It is natural for all classes to believe in and to follow those with character, for character is power.

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"When Raphael was a boy of seventeen he went to study with a well known artist. It was discovered, some time afterwards, that soon after the apprenticeship of Raphael began, the style of his teacher changed. The man's work was sharpened by an unexpected tenderness of feeling and candor of expression; his color acquired a brightness and sweetness unknown to him before, and this change occurred all because a boy had come to be taught by him, and had so influenced the life his teacher. The young apprentice instinctually wrapped his gifts around his master's heart."

Everyone, however humble his circumstance may be, is daily and hourly altering and molding the character of all with whom he mingles. He exerts a power that will reproduce itself through countless generations.

Our manners, our expression, our very presence, tells the story of our lives and each life story is a contribution to the great book of mankind.

Has not every man that ever lived contributed something, however small, toward making me what and who I am? Has not

each life contained the power of a chisel upon every other member of society in some way? We each are bound to contribute one unique blow to create a statue that depicts the true value of all human life.

"If we work upon marble, it will perish," said Webster; "if upon brass, time will efface it; if we raise temples, they will eventually crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal minds, — if we insert them with high principles, with the just fear of God and love of our fellowmen,— we engrave on those tablets something which will brighten the human spirit through all eternity."

CHAPTER IX

Cultivating the Growth of Man-Timber

"God give to 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."

— Holland

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 one's self a man? Nothing harder, if one knows not how to will it; nothing easier, if one wills it.

— Alexandre Dumas

As there is nothing in the world great but man, there is nothing truly great in man but character.

— W. M. Evarts

Life is a leaf of paper white,
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two, and then comes night.
Greatly begin! Though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime,—
Not failure, but low aim, is crime.

— Lowell

And I smiled to think God's greatness
Flowed around my incompleteness;
Round my restlessness, his rest.

— Elizabeth Barrett Browning

When dying upon his bed, Charles Sumner said with firm resolve, "Character is everything."

"First of all," said President Garfield, when still just a boy, "I must make myself a man; if I do not succeed in that I can succeed in nothing."

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"According to the order of nature, man's common vocation is the profession of humanity," says Rousseau, in his celebrated essay on Education. "And whoever is well educated to discharge the duty of a man will be well prepared to fill any of those offices that may summon him for duty. It matters little to me whether my pupil is designed for the army, the pulpit, or the bar. Nature has destined us to the offices of human life. To live rightly, is the profession I would teach him. When I am done with him, it is true he will be neither a soldier, a lawyer, nor a clergyman. L ET HIM FIRST BE A MA N. Fortune may remove him from one rank to another as she pleases; he will always be found in his place." We are, therefore, to remember, as Dr. Moxon has told us, that the main business of life is not so much to do a thing, but rather to become someone of integrity; and that action itself has its finest and most enduring fruit in the molding of our character.

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John Stuart Mill has addressed this matter clearly: "Character should be to the individual of paramount importance. Possessing a nobleness of character, in any abundance, would go further toward making human life happy. Character pulls away a humble sense of pleasure and freedom from pain or adversity."

“And this thing known as character-building”, says Mill, “every man is to work at.” Though our character is formed by the way in which we deal with all circumstances, our own desires and personal choices can do much to shape those circumstances. Knowing the role we play clearly from the beginning, allows us to take ownership of our present and our future.

Our own free will, our conviction that we have real power over the formation of our character; our will, by virtue of influencing our circumstances, being able to modify and build for our future – provides the tool of personal empowerment we need in order to take charge of our lives.

How is character made up, except by our choices and our refusals? We select from life what we choose. In this way we resemble insects which assume the color of the leaves and plants they feed upon. Sooner or later we become like the food of our minds, like the creatures that live in our hearts. Every act of our lives, every word, every association, is written with an iron pen upon the very texture of our being.

• • •

"There is dew in one flower and not in another," said Beecher, "because one opens its cup and takes it in, while the other closes itself and the drop runs off." What will our future be but what we

make it? Our purpose will give it character. One's resolution is one's prophecy. There is no bright hope, no great outlook, for the man who is not inspired by a resolute purpose.

"There is not in even the lowest depths of our hearts," said Robertson, "a mere desire for happiness, but rather we each possess a craving, as natural to us as the desire for food,— the craving for a nobler, higher life." To satisfy this craving is, quite simply, a good business to be in.

If a youth were to start out in the world with the fixed determination that he will make no statement but the exact truth; that every promise made shall be honored; that every appointment shall be kept with high regard for other men's time, and he should hold his reputation as a priceless treasure; if every man and woman will take such a stand at the outset, — he or she will come to possess unlimited confidence and self-assuredness.

What we are to be really, we are now potentially. As the future oak lies folded in the acorn, so in the present lies our future. Our success will be, can be, like that of a natural tree, developed from the seed of our own sowing; the fragrance of its blossoms and the richness of its fruit will depend upon the quality of the nourishment absorbed from our past and present.

The first requisite of all education and discipline should be what we call MAN - TIMBER. Tough timber must come from well-grown, sturdy trees. Such wood can be turned into timeless treasures, 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 solid mental, moral, and physical timber. The only real success worthy of the name is that which comes from a consciousness of growing wider, deeper, higher, in mental and moral power, as the years go on. To feel the faculties of the mind and heart ever expanding and unfolding — this is the life worth living.

When Mendelssohn once went to see the great Freiburg organ, the custodian, not knowing who he was, would not let him touch it. After much persuasion he allowed the persistent youth to touch a few notes. The old man stood entranced; he had never heard such melody before. At length he asked the great player his name; and, when he learned the name, he stood humiliated and self-condemned. A greater musician than Mendelssohn, was unknown to him.

And what a grace it is to come into contact with one's Creator. I have read of a girl whose wonderful grace and purity of character charmed every one who knew her. One day a friend touched the spring of a little gold locket which she always wore on her neck, and in it were these words: "Whom, not having seen, I love."

How beautiful it is, after all our blunders and the high aspirations of our youth, and the struggles of our adulthood, if life's natural discipline has brought us nearer and nearer to God and the ideal life! "What are our yearnings," asks Beecher, "but homesickness for heaven? Our heavy sighs are longings for our higher power, just as children cry themselves asleep away from

home, and sob in their slumber, not knowing that they sob for their parents. The human soul's inarticulate moanings are simply our own aspiration for joy and peace of mind and heart."

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Do you not remember the legend, how the inhabitants of an ancient hamlet proposed to welcome their king, when it was announced that he would honor them with his presence? Early in the morning and late into the evening they toiled to beautify their village, to make their homes pleasing in his sight. Working at length, their utmost efforts made, they rested on the eve of their sovereign's coming. But lo, in the night, while they slept, the angels came down and transformed all their work. The morning sunlight unfolded a scene of radiant splendor. On the sites of lowly cottages stately mansions had risen. Snow-white marble gleamed where simply wood had been. Golden pinnacles shone aloft in the bright sunlight. Fountains sent forth their wealth of refreshing mist. Palm trees, in graceful loveliness, stood around their village green. Although only a fable, this story is substantially true; since it is thus that God, with the smile of approval, enriches, ennobles, and beautifies the labors of those who love Him, and out of love serve Him.

When, at the evening of our little day here on earth, He comes to us, or sends His messenger to bid us to come home, it will not be the great things we have done that God will smile at. Rather, it will be the quality of our stewardship and the faithfulness we possessed in doing all the little duties that he has placed upon our hands; this will be what will ultimately win His approval.

"Follow the Star! It may not lead thy feet
Through pleasant vales where bloom and fragrance trail;
Nor may it lead thee to those mountain heights
Where worldly fame and honor hold their state;
Yet follow thou! Forget not 'tis the Star!
And it shall lead to no one less than God,
And it shall lead to God, though God be far."

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