

THE *lll*
YOUNG *l*
MAN *ll*
IN *lll*
MODERN
LIFE *ll*

• BEVERLEY •
• WARNER •



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THE YOUNG MAN
IN MODERN LIFE

THE YOUNG MAN IN MODERN LIFE

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in the Rationalism of the Apostles' Creed," etc.*



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DEDICATION

THERE are five youngsters in this old world to whom the author of the following pages bears a relationship of responsibility.

His own boys, Philip Beverley and John McConnell; his nephew, Lewis Frederic; his godson, Garrett B. Linderman, Jr.; and his curly-headed name-child, Beverley Warner Linderman.

To you, my dear lads, I beg to dedicate this little book with a few preliminary remarks.

I have no idea that the counsels and hints contained within these covers will be adopted as a manual of deportment by you or any one else. If I can but get you, and others like you, to ponder some of the responsibilities and privileges of your glorious youth, I will be content.

The book will not receive the unqualified endorsement of the conservative critic. He (more probably she) will discover a certain unconventionality of language and thought which may easily be taken as an indication that the writer is not grave and solemn enough to act as the adviser of youth.

Admitting, as I freely do, the many faults in which this simple message is clothed, I frankly con-

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fess that I do not much concern myself about what the elderly critic thinks, so long as I get the ears of the boys I love.

The boys will understand, I hope, that I am not writing to them as a priest laying down the law, but as a man who has not forgotten his own boyhood, and is covered all over with bruises, most of which have been the result of his own carelessness, —and, sometimes, ignorance.

I have tried to write plainly and without reserve on some important points. It would not have been worth my while to write, or yours to read, otherwise.

IN THE HOPE OF BEING READ

THIS little book is written for young men, by one not so far removed from his own young manhood as to have forgotten its dangers, its bewildering puzzles, and its pitiful mistakes.

It is an honest, however inadequate, effort to set young men thinking—before the years draw nigh when they shall say they have no pleasure in them—how inevitably their early days affect and mould their later lives, in which lies achievement—or failure.

The writer has lost so much out of life that he might perhaps have had if he had listened a little more intently to the coun-

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sels of his elders, that he does not mind the humiliation of the acknowledgment, if the dismal fact, frankly admitted, will arrest the attention of other young men — in time.

These pages do not contain a museum of copybook mottoes, but a grouping of the salient, outstanding influences in modern life which shape young manhood.

If there is some advice tendered and some counsel volunteered, it is not from any smug sense of standing on the heights and looking down upon the young man, in a professional, admonitory attitude. Rather it is offered in a sense of sympathetic brotherhood, by one who is still in the valley of struggle, where every man who is worth his salt must enter and play his part.

It is not by some miraculous vision or

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abnormal voice that the young man in modern life will be moved to thought and action.

The law and the prophets are ever with us. The plain law of duty, at whatever cost (and no one hath knowledge sometimes save the one who struggles, how *much* it costs), the clear prophetic note of the ideal as the standard of life, whether a man ploughs a rough field, or paints a deathless canvas.

These are yours, young man, always and everywhere. You must live your own life. Others may sacrifice for you and even die for you, but they can't live for you.

We who have been fighting the wild beasts at Ephesus for many years, and bear the marks in body, soul, and heart, cry out to you, not to avoid the struggle, but to bear yourselves in it as men, not

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beasts, as sons of God, not tramps on the highway.

The way of God with a man is a curious way, sometimes it seems grotesque. But the man may learn the way if he will. If these pages help one man towards that way, it will have been quite worth while.

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THE YOUNG MAN IN MODERN LIFE

I

IN THE MARKET PLACE

TO the young men about to take their places in the market place, set up their stalls, and offer their wares for sale: Greeting.

The counsel of the fathers need not always be followed, but it should always command a respectful hearing.

Most men of middle age would like to be young again and begin all over. They are shy of admitting it, because it seems like a reflection upon the use they have made of life, but down in their hearts they do admit it,—with a qualification. They would like to be

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young, plus the experience of the years. To be perfectly frank, they have no desire to fight through the battle of life on the same lines. They do not pine for the briars and brambles and stone-bruises, marks of which they still bear. Far from it! But they would like to be young again with the wisdom of middle age, with the vision of experience, with the strength and wariness which the long struggle has brought them. And knowing that this cannot be for themselves, they would like to endow their sons and their sons' sons with this equipment, which they themselves carry somewhat heavily.

This is the reason for the thousand and one books addressed to the young man. It is not because we who write have done the things we ought to have done, and left undone the things we ought not to have done, that we utter

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our preachments and deliver ourselves of Indian summer lectures,—but the contrary.

If the young man could see with our eyes for one twenty-four hours, there would be such conversions and searchings of heart as would alter the face of the earth.

When we talk of the responsibilities of the young man, it is not out of love of rhetoric, nor because of mere superiority of age or achievement over him; it is because we feel, with the old apostle, the potency of his magnificent endowment of audacious hope and faith.

This responsibility of youth is not often felt by the young man, to be either the dazzling privilege or the awful burden it really is. He takes his surroundings, his politics, his amusements, his books, his companions, as he breathes in the air or eats his

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dinner. That they go to make up his character he does not often stop to think. If he is told that he is but the sum of them, and they are all bits of his very self, he thanks you for the glittering generality, and that is all.

He knows that he can change his environment in any one of these details to-day or to-morrow if he chooses. He can cast off and take on again. What he seldom pauses long enough to reflect upon is, that the very power of change, this free will which differentiates him from a beast of the earth, is also a part of his responsibility.

So long as he feels that he can change his mind and therefore his course of action, so long he feels that he has life in his hands to mould it as he will.

I would like to have the young man realize that his responsibility is not so much for to-day as for to-morrow,—

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the to-morrow of wrinkled foreheads and gray hairs. He thinks that he can mould to-day, but he is apt to be mistaken. We, who are his elders, moulded to-day, and we are not over-proud of our achievement in some particulars.

The young man is a great deal more of to-morrow than to-day. He wonders very often, especially in commencement day orations, why this or that condition of affairs in church, in state, in society, have been suffered to exist so long in such an unsatisfactory manner. He will find out in a score or so of years. Meanwhile the elderly gentlemen, who are gravely listening on the back seats, submit meekly to the scathing rebuke.

It is so trite a thing to say—I remember it was the theme of sophomore orations twenty odd years ago—that the boys of to-day are the men of the next generation. One is almost ashamed to

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repeat it, and there is no original formula in which to deck it out. The only variation I can display is, that not only *on* the young man, but *in* the young man lies to-morrow. As you are to-day, to-morrow will be. You are modelling the churchmen, senators, poets, novelists, artists, scientists, and other puppets who will play their parts on to-morrow's stage, not so much as they would like to then, but as you prepare and direct them now.

We oldsters do not alter these things to-day, because we cannot. You will not change the world very materially, young men, a generation hence, if you wait for a generation to begin work. You may make it almost what you will, if you begin to-day.

Old men do not win the world's victories, unless, like David, they prepare for Goliath by tackling bears in the days

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of their youth. It is the young men who face problems before which mid-life shakes its head, and dare to enter where even elderly angels fear to tread.

There are some responsibilities of youth which perhaps are not often brought to your notice, or if they are you are apt to think lightly of, which seem to me worth thinking over in those quiet hours which youth ought to snatch from the cares and the pleasures of life.

One of these is joy, — plain, straightforward, honest enthusiasm for life. If your youth has it not, you are not wholesome, and you need a tonic of some sort, probably out-of-door exercise. Nourish the joy of being alive. You ought to revel in the sounds of the morning, because it is morning, and rejoice in the hush of the night, because it is night.

There are those whose motto is *nil*

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admirari; in whose shrivelled souls and wizened hearts the tide of joy and happiness never rises into realization.

Such lives are unhuman. They may plead poverty, ill health, disappointment, and ask how can there be joy in such a life. It is not worth living! This is a gross misconception of life, for it centres everything in self. But outside of our bodies, the good God gave color to the grasses, fragrance to the flowers, and laid away treasures in the depths of the earth for men to seek and be glad over.

The audacity of the youth stepping out upon this old earth with a laugh of scorn at its age-old problems, as though there were anything insoluble about them,—this must be the joy of the angels. This earth is a divine earth, and to man is given the secret of its existence, the key to all its treasures. In innocence or ignorance let the

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young man begin with this joy. It is the capital stored up for after use when the eyes are dim and the heart tired.

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But sometimes the earth beckons and its voices clamor for us to go ahead too fast. There is the responsibility, of going slowly. *Festina lente*. Each generation must do its own work in order that the next may have something solid to work upon. To-day's achievements are not often great; but if perfectly done, they are God's will for to-day, and no legitimate stretch can make them lap over into to-morrow. To-morrow may not be yours, in the sense of demanding your toil,—but another's. Terah, the father of Abraham, preceded his son in the emigration from Ur of the Chaldees. He went a day's march and camped at Haran, where he died. Abra-

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ham bided his time, and finally, after burying Terah, took up the journey. Terah gave the impulse, Abraham carried it into actuality. The pioneer seldom builds cities, but his blazed path through the virgin forest opens an easier journey for the builders who come after. If one can give an impulse to his generation towards better things, he is a part of the final triumph, and no mean part.

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There is a further responsibility laid upon the young man because of another characteristic of his youth, — his capacity for seeing visions and dreaming dreams.

We all have them, but they are richer and more frequent in the early days. That is the generous time, the trustful period, when we undoubtedly have finer thoughts and see finer things. It is

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only when we grow old that our doubts
make traitors of us,

“And make us lose the good we oft might win,
By fearing to attempt.”

His is a poor and barren young manhood, indeed, that has no dreams or visions. It is a sterile life, and one that no accumulations of the market place can enrich.

Grown-up folk are too often cruel in their treatment of these enthusiasms which I cannot do else than set down as among the solemn responsibilities of youth. They ought not to be laughed at. They should be encouraged. A warm and tender heart may easily be turned into a stone. God help the man in whose boyish bosom the passionate longings and imaginings have been smothered by the cold prudence of age.

We go to school, and then to college

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or into practical life, to achieve something. He is a poor stick who does not believe he is bound to achieve the highest and best. Why not, since one must stand at the top, and clustered about him a host of equally worthy ones? It is the vision of conquest and dream of triumph that carry men through many a morass of mediocre detail and necessary routine.

When a man finds himself, at eventide, on one of the lower rounds of the ladder of earthly success, it is for one of two reasons: either he never lifted his eyes towards the top, in the dreams and visions of hopeful youth, and so was not worthy; or else his place in the divine purpose was on a lower round, and his life is a success after all. The soldier who guards the camp equipage, or cares for the wounded at the rear, is a part of the victory, of which the flag streaming at

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the head of the army is the sign and pledge.

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I may be wrong, but I believe that the visions of higher, better, and nobler things than are, which float before the eyes of ardent youth, are the measures of their destiny and the standards by which they will be judged. A man can always climb to the heights he can see, — if he will. Very often he can do this here and now on this earth. If not, then somewhere and some time, for man was not born into a little garden to cut down tangled undergrowth for a few years. He was set in a universe, endowed with a life beyond life, which will be ours when time is old; a life whose purpose grows ever clearer as the ages grow dim, a life which, while bound up now in time, is not for time.

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Dreams are not necessarily illusions. They are man's power of rising through things as they are to things as they may be. They are not framed in the workshop of man, but are of God, and so are big with purpose and meaning.

Everything in earth and sky and sea and man, indicates a purpose the final proportions of which are not written in terms of space and time ; a purpose in the purpose of Him who bore every man in mind when the morning stars sang together and the earth was fresh from His hand.

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The young man has the responsibility of himself, not as an isolate atom, destined to fall useless on a burnt-out cinder heap, but as the member of a great family, inspired with the life of the Father God, with the duties, privileges, and responsibilities of sonship. No

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hopes are too large, no faith too deep,
no visions and dreams too extravagant,
for a son of the Highest.

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How can one find out the purpose of his life? How dares one *not* find it out? An oyster need not worry, and alligators need only flop and crawl; but a man must think, and walk erect. Hearing a variety of sounds, he must hear the one voice that calls him to his task in life. Seeing a diversity of paths before him, he must see the one path in which alone it is right for him to walk.

But this is hard? Of course it is hard. It is hard to be a man. But we do not therefore throw away life. And if we continue to exist, we must find out what purpose there is in our existence, or else be as the beasts of the field.

It is not enough to eat and drink and

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clothe one's self. If that be all, I am free to say that a tiger roaming the virgin forest, or the ape chattering from a hanging bough, has somewhat the best of us. It is character that differentiates us from the beasts of the field. There is no royal road to character, any more than to knowledge. It is not created by books, though sometimes out of books comes a word of prophecy, a note of illumination.

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To set young men thinking is the most that can be done for them by those who love them and care for them.

It is hard to think, and many shrink from the pain of it; but if a young man is dismayed at the cost of thought and turns away from it, he abdicates the throne of life. He may make a very decent and docile animal, but he will never deserve to be called a man.

II

HIS SURROUNDINGS

WE are not all in the market place on equal terms. The rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence is not to be taken too literally. Mr. Jefferson owned slaves. He meant to say that all white men were created equal and in possession of the inalienable *rights* of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Equality of right is one thing, and of opportunity quite another.

No man born of woman is absolutely free, and all men are as truly born in castes in democratic America as in aristocratic England. We recognize this truth in dogs and horses, why not in men?

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With limitations and qualifications, however, it is true that all men are free to choose what they will do to-day, and what they will be to-morrow.

But power of choice, thus modified, destroys all equality. Heredity and environment, the roots of the past, the things that stand about the present, force themselves upon our consideration.

These are big words, and they mean big things. Nevertheless they are simple enough for the average young man to grasp; and whether he believes it or doubts it, they are altogether the most powerful influences in moulding the beginnings of his young manhood.

For his heredity he has no responsibility. If his fathers ate sour grapes, his teeth are set on edge, and he must get on as best he can with the heritage. Those long-forgotten ancestors of ours, who gave little or no thought to their

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posterity, are responsible for much of both the good and the evil in us. They may have tainted us with diseases, moral or physical, or they may have poured the inspiration of noble health into our veins. It is a comfortable thought that the law of heredity set down in the Second Commandment is as merciful as it is clear. The sins of the fathers last on unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate God (that is, of them who disobey his laws), but his mercy continues its benign influence unto thousands of generations in them who love him (that is, who obey his laws).

A man may modify the effects of heritage. He may overcome evil, and nourish good. He may fight the moral and physical germs of disease, and either slay them altogether in himself, or so weaken them that his sons will complete the conquest. He may bloom with the

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flowers and fruits of noble ideals and righteous deeds, broadening the skirts of light from yesterday into to-morrow, or he may shrivel and dry up, and narrow the horizon in which shines the light of truth.

The important thing for the young man to see is, that he is not entirely a free and untrammelled creature, even in the dawn of his life's day; that he has to begin as he is, weighted or inspired by the past. This is the law and the prophets.

But it is also important to note, in this connection, that however crippled he may feel himself to be by his heredity, he is never justified in appealing to his limitations as an excuse for inaction or wrong action. The "could n't help it" whine is below the dignity of a sick animal. Neither is he justified in assuming toploftical airs because of the pos-

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session of powers and advantages inherited and unearned. *Noblesse oblige.*

Environment, in a certain sense, is a more important factor than heredity in the building of character, because the young man has it in his own hands after his first few years.

But during these earliest years his environment also has a powerful influence upon his development.

The young man born and nurtured amidst comfort and ease, surrounded by refined and cultivated people, breathing an intellectual atmosphere, who early becomes familiar with books, pictures, and music, who falls under the influence of gracious womanhood, — this one has a distinct advantage as he steps over the threshold dividing youth from manhood.

On the contrary, the boy born in poverty, or among ignorant and coarse people, to whom as he grows up, books

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are sealed volumes, who finds pictures blurs of color, and music a clash of unmeaning sounds; or, worse, he who is born a grade lower, among vicious people, accustomed to crime and indecency, and the crass misery of pariahdom, — is handicapped from the start.

Many a poor boy climbs out and finds a place among the seats of the mighty. Sometimes it is possible for the child of the gutter and the prison shadow to push his way upward and outward. But it is absurd to say that the boys at the two extremes have equal opportunities. I use these extremes as illustrations. When I think of life's terrible handicap in the cases of so many children, I am glad to believe that the good God has a place, and finds a use, for those items of His creation which will not balance in our humanly cast up totals.

But I am speaking of the average

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boy, at school or in college, at the desk or behind the counter; the boy who in any village, town, or city is to hold and exercise the citizen's suffrage to-morrow.

The law of heredity works in him, but he may work upon and modify it. He has the whole universe back of him and around him, if he honestly seeks the truth in theory and in practice. A lie, whether it be of a social, political, or religious nature (yes, there are "religious" lies), flourishes for a time, but it is an alien thing in God's world, and has no lasting sources of nutriment to draw upon. Lies flourish because men are temporarily interested in their fruits. They are plants of the forcing house of interest or greed. The divine order is against them. So every one who fights a lie is aligning himself with, and availing himself of, the forces by

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which the stars swing in their courses, and the seeds of the earth bear fruit after their kind. Everything is on the side of the truth-seeker. Slowly perhaps, but surely, if he will, he may overcome the effect of the sins of his fathers, which, by a law of nature, last of themselves only a generation or so. He may suffer in the process. The law of sacrifice is the sacramental sign of growth. Material pains are forewarnings of the birth pangs of truth and righteousness, struggling out of the womb of time. Man must die in order to live. But life, and not death, is the interpretation of decaying seed and bursting husk.

Potent as a young man's surroundings are, they are things after all, not powers. The man is the power. The circumstances of birth, education, companionship, are the chessmen in the game of

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human life; and you, young men, are the players. Everything that you find about you, when you come to yourself and realize something of your human potency, is to be used, worked over, moulded, as you will.

At first you are chosen for a certain environment, but presently you begin to choose. Occupation, comrades, amusements, books, as you make choice, you are forming character. The things by which you surround yourself become a mould, — they fashion you. You may thus be an oyster to merely exist, or a reptile to creep and cower, an animal to browse, or a man, erect, purposeful, transforming the world about you, instead of being conformed to it.

In all communities temptations to go wrong are manifold. In the cities, perhaps, they are most enticing. To the cities, great or small, the young man

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gravitates in these days. The old farm has lost its attraction. The old simple country life has to a great extent passed away, and is passing more rapidly every year. We may regret this, and we may be wrong in our lament, for the revelation of God about man begins with him in a garden, and utters its last note in a walled city. The world of the future is to be urban, not rural. This comes about, not by whim, but through some law of human development. It is true that God made the country, and man made the town. But it must be equally true that God intended man to build cities, as well as to till the soil. The race has the divine commission to subdue the earth. That cannot mean merely to cut down forests and to plant corn and potatoes. It means coal mining, banking, insurance, as well. It means art and culture, the Sistine Ma-

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donna and the plays of Shakespeare. For the parable of the Tower of Babel is told, not against the gathering together of people in one place, but against their massing for wrong purposes. It is barren twaddle that bids the lad to stay on the farm. The boy from the farm and the village, by way of the town and city, has been the avatar of most that is best and finest in our civilization.

“The city would have died out, rotted and exploded long ago,” says Emerson, “but that it was re-enforced from the fields. It is only country which came to town day before yesterday that is city and country to-day.”

Whether we approve or not, the evolution of civilization is marked by the dwindling of the rural and the expansion of the urban population.

The young man in the city, whether

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from the country or to the manner born, is the unsolved problem of tomorrow.

As he stands in the market place, where he is to make and sell his wares, he is surrounded by vice and folly. Sometimes they are masked, sometimes they are flaunted openly. They are often hidden under the garb of art, and music, and innocent recreation. They appeal to the surging tide of mental and physical life that rises and falls in the young man's soul, and they entice him by the subtle and seductive plea that it becomes his free manhood to see life.

It is hardly necessary to enumerate the view points.

Before the pits of moral confusion and darkness, the lights glitter and banners wave. Parents need not lay the flattering unction to their souls that their fair-faced boys do not see

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and are not enticed. It is impossible that the knowledge of evil should be kept from them.

Moreover, it is the sublimity of folly to declare to young men that there is no pleasure in evil. Pleasure forms its chief attraction. That is what the young man seeks and finds. When he fares forth to see life, he takes the journey because of the stirring of his passions and desires. He is like the prodigal, who wanted to have his own way because it was novel and exciting. The first taste of many evil things is very pleasant to the youth, and not the least attraction about it is, that he is his own master and is partaking of the fruit of his own choice.

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There are two things the young man may consider now as he dwells upon

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the pleasures of what the tempter calls "life." And even the youngest man must admit that middle age has had more experience in the world than himself.

1. He goes in for this life because it is pleasant and agreeable. I admit that it is,—to a certain part of his nature, and for a while,—but these are very important qualifications.

It is the sensual, the animal part of him that is ministered to. To say nothing of the spiritual part of a man, no one will contend that the low pleasures of "young men about town," as they are called, the pleasures that invite clean young fellows with the flattering appeal that they make him manly, have any stimulus for his intellectual life.

But the young man resents the adjective. Why "low" pleasures?

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You have a right to a fair answer. The adjective "low," in this connection, has a very definite meaning. It applies to that part of a man by which he is linked with the animal. For linked with them we are. We are all made of the dust of the earth. The beast instinct is in us all. The dominion given to man on the earth included the subjection of his lower to his higher self.

I use the adjective "low" just exactly where any honest young man would use it.

Any atmosphere that lowers the tone of the mind, that brushes the bloom from the moral life, that enfeebles the body, is low.

Any atmosphere that hinders purity of thought or cleanliness of speech is low.

And we are all sufficiently warned

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where this mephitic air abides. We need but to read the comments of the daily press, which is apt to suffer long before it speaks out, or to glance at the flaunting posters of the billboards, to know whence this sordid and unclean hell of animal passions in all their grossness are appealed to and stirred up.

In that atmosphere, where the instincts of the animal are baited for and ministered to, and where the open bid is made for the man to descend to the level of the masterless dogs that roam the street, in that atmosphere, it seems to me, the moralist finds justification for use of the word "low" in connection with the pleasures of seeing life, as that phrase is understood.

Plain words!

I mean to be plain. There is no use

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in talking generalities. We must reduce this plea of seeing life to its lowest terms to know just what is involved, if we are to handle the problem of the young man's life at all helpfully. Water gruel has its place in the economy of nature, but when the heart action is low we do not inject water gruel.

You, O mother, will resent this for your son, and if your tender lips could frame some such expression as "brutal cynic," it would doubtless be a literal translation of your thought. Your son knows better. Blessed be that beautiful mother trust in her offspring! Let us down on our knees, and kiss the hem of her garment. That trust is the one cord which, stretched to its utmost tension again and again, never quite breaks, and is often the only thread by which the

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child finds his way out of the labyrinth of evil back to the bosom on which his innocent face lay long ago, to sob out his sorrow and repentance. But, mothers, you know little indeed of that child you have brought into the world, if you think that he may not be touched by the world's evil.

Do not strive to draw a veil over what is outside the home circle, in the market place, where your boy must work out the problem of his life. He must come in contact with it. To pass through it unscathed, he must know what it is that beckons with such alluring gestures. Let him know that there is a part of him which must be kept under, or it will paralyze that part of him which is kin with God.

The surroundings he chooses will help or hinder. The law of environment is the law of formation. Nourish

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the animal and the animal grows. The fruits of the tree of disobedience are pleasant to the taste and good for food, and the serpent has a wily tongue.

In the stable we can expect nothing but stable talk and stable manners. That is law. A sane man does not wallow in the gutter for the benefit of a surf bath. So, young man, however strong you feel yourself to be, however sincere your effort towards generous manhood, you are, to say the very least, endangering that manhood by surrounding yourself with the things that appeal to your lower instincts. It is pleasant at first, and you have your reward, such as it is. But there is another limitation which only the experience of yourself or others can prove.

2. Indulgence in merely physical and animal pleasures palls after a time. It does not offer the same attractions,

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and it ceases to minister to a satiated taste.

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“ On that hard Pagan world, disgust
And secret loathing fell ;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.

“ In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay ;
He drove abroad in furious guise
Along the Appian Way.

“ He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crownèd his head with flowers ;
No easier nor no quicker passed
The impracticable hours.”

This is true of the modern Anglo-Saxon as of the ancient Roman. Many a man will recognize the picture.

Do you think that you can turn easily from this life to other and better things? You have doubtless been led by unmoralists in literature and in life to treat

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rather lightly this sowing of wild oats, as it is called. There is a flippantly accepted maxim that every young man of spirit is expected to scatter broadcast in the field of life all that is fine and precious in him, and then suddenly turn over a new leaf.

Leaves in the book of life are not turned as easily as the leaves of a novel. It is a divine law that seed springs up and bears fruit after its kind. Many a man of middle age to-day groans under the burden and quality of his harvest. With great effort and at agonizing cost he may have thrown off the habits of an ill-used youth, but the marks are upon him, and the wounds bleed afresh from time to time.

The price the young man pays for seeing life, which means low life, is that he loses his power of appreciating or assimilating the higher life. The pleas-

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ures of the intellect, refined recreation, the society of good women, — these are closed to him. The surroundings a man first chooses afterwards choose him, and when he has finally exhausted them and turns away, either in repentance or in search of some new thing, he finds that he is a slave, shackled, after the manner of an old-time punishment, to a dead body.

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And it is just as easy and just as pleasant in the beginning of life, under wise direction, to surround one's self with good as with evil. A young man may find — as many can testify — pure and joyous hours in healthy places, with clean surroundings. He may charm his animal by fine music, lead him captive by noble art, divert his strength to glorious service. There is as much legitimate

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and pleasurable excitement in the pursuit of high things as of low.

To see life with clearest vision is to know the lives of the world's heroes, leaders, saints. It is to walk and talk with the worthies of literature, and to commune with the sons of song. It is to come under the influence of gracious womanhood, and to be familiar with happy homes. This is the world a man who strives after truth should know in his youth. It is the true world. It has foundations. If, in this or any hour, you are tempted to yield to the fascinations of the under world or the half world, reflect that it is *under* and *half*, and that you are maiming, not expanding, yourself by conforming even for a time to its boundaries.

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It is far from my purpose to devote these pages to copybook mottoes, but

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the fact stares us in the face that some old saws are trite and have grown commonplace to the eye and ear because they are true. A man is known by the company he keeps. That environment which you bring up about you, or in which you are most often found, marks you in the community. You cannot keep your animal down if you feed him on the food for which his mouth is agape. The tiger growls and the ape chatters through your mind and actions, when you are past noticing it. A young man is better known by his neighbors than he ever dreams. They judge him by the sort of surroundings he chooses, the places he frequents, the comrades he consorts with, the recreations he takes.

Sometimes you wonder that you do not "get on." Other men advance faster than you. You are told that your ser-

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vices will be dispensed with. And this when, so far as you know, you are doing as good work as you are capable. You think people are down on you, and complain bitterly that you have no chance in life. Other things often bring this about, for which you are usually responsible also, but this matter of your self-chosen environment is very often the cause. Whatever a merchant or professional man, having come to years of maturity, may choose to do, he will not ordinarily run like risks with his employees. *Experientia docens*. He may bet on the races, but if he knows you frequent, however infrequently, the pool rooms, he will not trust his affairs with you. If you spend time and money in the "half world," he knows what you are seeking in exchange, and he knows also that it is a waste of his time, and reflects that at some time it may be at his ex-

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pense. That is why some young men do not get on.

During many years of contact with all sorts and conditions of young men, I have seen not a few lives go to ruin because it was thought that the broad road of yielding to every sensual desire was the only way to see life.

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Now, in your youth, you may make your surroundings what you will, helps and inspirations to a fair and noble manhood, or a slough in which the lower nature drags you down to wallow. When you reach that level and grow sick of it, your life will starve slowly out; no man gives unto you, because no man can give unto you; you have exhausted the resources of the animal.

You may get back to your own place as the prodigal son. But how do you

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know you will? And the way back is not easy, but hard.

When to-day tempts to spend your all upon to-day, remember that to-morrow is before you, and that to-morrow lasts when to-day dies.

III

HIS WORK

MANY a young man thinks that if he can somehow escape work, he can escape trouble and hardship. Yet, it is the experience of most of us who have been standing in the market place for years, that work is almost the only escape from trouble; the great sweetener of life's bitterness; the mystery of God's way with a man in the world, by which he transmutes sorrow into joy, tears into laughter, curses into blessings.

Labor, of one sort or another, is the only legitimate mode of man's existence on the earth, which it was his first supreme commission to subdue and dominate. An idler is worse than an

His Work

ordinary encumbrance, for of these, oftentimes, good fertilizers are made. The idler, fluttering about to escape work in the busy world, endures more hardness than the toiler, but it is not a healthful or honest hardness, besides being barren. The idler, whether spending the money which others have earned on what he calls pleasure, or tramping from place to place avoiding dogs and jails, is in the way. He shows no cause why he should exist at all.

When it dawned upon man's early consciousness that the Lord God had given him a splendid heritage of which he could only be worthy through the sweat of his brow, it was vaguely borne in upon him that the earth was endowed with divine meaning for him. Labor is the only way of appropriating and making his own this meaning. Labor is of many sorts and kinds. The brain, the

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hand, the heart, the student, the carpenter, the mother, are all drawn upon, but it is always and only labor, from the peasant digging potatoes out of the ground, to the poet interpreting the music of the spheres.

Therefore when a young man faces the world to choose his life work, let him not complain that labor is the inheritance of the sons of men. Let no blatant demagogic cant, nor envious thought, nor momentary overpressure, nor superciliousness in the mien of the wealthy or cultured, taint him with the idea that labor of any sort, if honest, can be degrading.

The dignity of labor is the dignity of living.

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Assuming that the young man realizes that in work of some sort only,

His Work

can he justify his creation, either to himself or to his creator, I will assume also that he is determined to take the highest possible rank as a laborer, to make the best of his powers. In other words, he means to succeed in life.

A young man without ambition is an anomaly. A young man who does not hope to reach the topmost round, unless hampered by conditions he cannot control, such as ill health, is not normal. Ill health, or physical limitations even, need not and do not always act as bars to manly achievements. I knew a blind man who studied medicine through others' eyes, and took a high stand on examination.

A right ambition is the salt of youth. But take heed of ambitious thoughts when unaccompanied by ambitious efforts to carry them into action. Here-

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in lies a greater danger to youth, to highly gifted youth especially.

When a farmer desires a corn harvest or a potato crop, he does not spend his springtime enlarging his bin, and barns, and swelling with pride over the fact that he is a farmer. He sows and plants and hoes and cultivates, and then reaps and digs and gathers in his harvest, — not without cost.

What would be counted folly in the farmer is often the uttermost wisdom of the young man. He would be a poet, but scorns the drudgery of the school-room; he would be an artist, and thinks it unnecessary to spend hours learning to draw lines and cubes and circles. He thinks he has it "in him" to write dramas well up to the Elizabethan standard, and paint pictures for the line of the salon, and is famous and fêted by his fellows — in his mind's eye —

His Work

long before he has done one hour's real labor with pen or brush. The farmer might as well say that it is in the ground to produce harvests, and consider it not worth while to use plough, harrow, or hoe.

Elsewhere I have maintained the cause of the dreamer of dreams. He has his place in the world and his hour in time. But every dreamer must awake. He must not linger in the sensuous pleasure of thought. Thought will rot as well as matter. Irresolution is a vicious menace to achievement. The man, like the seed germ, will only bear fruit as he lays hold upon and uses concretely his environment.

In the heart of the bulb under ground lies the dream of the stately lily, as in the heart of the true man, the faith of a splendid manhood. Both may die. Neither the earthly stains and grime of

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bursting life, nor the sweat of a man's brow, seem glorious in themselves. But without them cometh not the flower nor the man.

There are two snare words, under which lie in wait serious temptations for the young man to play the trifler with life, — "genius" and "luck."

Of course, men are gifted after different sorts. The scale of human endowment is wide and varied. It ranges from the dull heaviness below the line of the average, to the thrilling glory of the exceptional highest note of human utterance.

By a whim of human thought, we count him only the genius who sings to the stars, and we neglect the masses of men, plodding the highways and byways or delving in the bowels of the earth.

I do not mean to say that the Spirit of God does not flood some souls with

His Work

a clearer apprehension of God's law and will than others. There are selected men. St. Paul, Loyola, Cromwell! Is there any known human law for the production of a Shakespeare from his surroundings, or a Darwin at the appointed time?

I do not underrate the man of genius when I say that he is, after all, a product of the sod. But it is not the few, but the great mass of men who are gifted. Each man is gifted to do the work he is called into the world to do.

Not infrequently the young man looks with envious eyes upon his neighbor who paints a great picture, writes a great poem, or invents a great machine. He laments that others have a genius which he has not, and dreams of what fine things he would accomplish were he endowed in like fashion.

Now the process of becoming a genius

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is hidden from the eye of man. The genius who has hitched his wagon to a star cannot impart his working hypothesis, because he is unconscious of any other rule than that which the discontented looker-on despises as being common,—infinite patience, infinite pains, infinite hard work. The man who is hailed as a genius, if questioned, would not tell of long years of lying in wait for an inspiration that finally found him in some mighty moment with power to do and to be. He would rather tell of hours and days and months and years of toilsome labor, disappointing, discouraging, unrequited. And when one day he looks upon his accomplished task, and can say, "behold, it is very good," he knows, better than any one else, that his achievement is something which did not come to him from without, but something from within, which would never have taken form and shape,

His Work

but for steadfast labor of hand and brain.

The man who would wear the halo of genius must learn to serve, and suffer, and to toil. When the grateful generation crowns him amidst hosannas, it will not be the market place value, or applause, he will be thinking of, but the joy of achievement.

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Akin to the habit of pining for genius is the tendency to wait for fitting surroundings, to linger in one's limitations of time and space, to dream of opportunities, to allege that it is impossible to achieve success with the means at command.

When a young man has this idea, let him ask himself whether he does not mean, it is impossible to achieve success *easily*.

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If ease, with freedom from care, is a fair object of life, it is exemplified in Tom sitting on a cracker barrel in a country store wondering how Bill is able to go through college.

Achievement comes through struggle with, and victory over, one's surroundings. A man is set in a certain station of life, and while he occupies it he is called upon to lay all things under contribution, not to wait until all things arrange themselves in such combinations as suit his convenience. The problem of first importance for you to settle, young man, is, not how you might act under other circumstances, but how you ought to act under the circumstances which are yours, and which you are bound to believe is the condition under which you are called upon to work.

I said above that every man is gifted to do the thing he was put in the world

His Work

to do. How have you done the things at hand, "the next thyng," and have you done it to the very best of your capacity? Are you among the first in the work you found to be yours, when you came to the knowledge that you must work and not sit on a cracker barrel whittling sticks.

If you can answer sincerely in the affirmative, then you have the right to look up at the face of God and ask him to lead you on; if it is good for you and him and others that you should go on — and not otherwise.

For while men jump gaps, God bridges them. An earthly promotion does not always mean fitness, but a promotion at God's hand can mean nothing else. He, with all the treasures of the universe at command, is the great Economist.

Think it over, young man, whether you sit in the seat of the cracker barrel

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philosopher, or are dodging the drudgery of school and college routine, or measuring your work by the hands of the clock, think it over, and realize that it is better for you to discover for yourself, than that others should discover for you, that your lamentation over those more highly gifted than yourself, is merely your protest against hard work.

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Another snare word not infrequently on the lips of men is "luck." They complain of the good luck of others who succeed, and their own ill luck which keeps them down.

When a man doubts that he is part animal, and resents the Darwinian hypothesis, let him reflect quietly upon that human tendency to rejoice secretly over the failures and disasters, and to be envious over the successes and victories,

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of his fellows. He is not far removed in these unheroic moments, from the biting and snarling of the brutes which raven with tooth and claw for advantage. And when he sulks over what he calls the good luck of another and his own evil luck, he is a very foolish animal indeed.

Now there is such a thing as luck; a real bolt from the blue; a sudden and unexpected visitation of fortune. But how often are these fiery trials of temptation!

I do not mean to exaggerate, and can only give the experience of my own observations of a generation, when I say that the windfall is more of a curse than a blessing. The test of the American oil fields will, I expect, be ample proof of this statement. Few poor men can any more appreciate and use the responsibility of sudden wealth than a

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blind man, who for the first time sees, can interpret and enjoy, the gorgeous glory of a sunset. To fall up is often as disastrous as to fall down.

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Of course, young man, you may not agree with this. Even if you admit the general principle, which is hard for youth to do, you know that, in your individual case, you can take care of, and use to the best advantage, any gift that the goddess of Good Luck will bestow upon you, — at least, you are willing to run the risk. So we will concede your point of view, for the sake of bringing you face to face with another fact involved in this gospel of windfall which saps many a vigorous heart and mind.

Windfalls of good fortune are not like windfalls in an apple orchard. They are very few and far between.

His Work

Just as civilization can, on the whole, take care of its own waste, so, on the whole, can society deal with the problems involved in her "lucky" members.

But what shall be said of the habit of waiting for a stroke of luck, to begin or to carry on properly the purpose and task of life?

I am afraid that the wit of Micawber often blinds our eyes to the pitiful pathos of his hopes and dreams.

What shall be said of the young man who contents himself with poor and trifling work, disparaging the smallness and commonplaceness of his daily task, because he has fixed his fine eyes on the Africa of some great stroke of luck which is to bring money and fame and freedom from work?

It is the paralysis of life.

It is a state of utter blindness to the heavenly vision, of utter deafness to the

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heavenly voice, which summons every man on this earth to do something, or to rot back into the soil from whence he came.

If your eyes are fixed upon something which may come to-morrow, unconnected with the efforts you are or ought to be putting forth to-day, you have missed the whole meaning of life. A man is not made to possess things for himself, but to be an instrument of the Divine, in spreading his kingdom of truth, and carrying out his great purpose.

If he makes this his first and supremest work, if he enters into the meaning of his being made in the image of God, the divine joy of toil will be unmixed with any earthly dissatisfaction. He will work at his own task with a gladness in his heart that will lift him on the wings of the morning, and this whether men cry "Hosanna," or "Crucify him."

His Work

It must be admitted that the young man is sorely tempted by the gospel of windfall in these early days of the new century.

Success in life has become identified, not with the greatness of the man, but with the greatness of his fortune. A magnate in oil or steel is the model oftenest in the young man's eyes. The round of the shop and desk seems dull and sordid, and, at their best, poorly paid, in comparison with the excitement of speculation, and the fortunes lost and won on a turn in the market place.

The luck involved in speculation has a dangerous glamour because it wears the garments of legitimacy. I will not enter upon the big question of the morals of speculation. I am told by men who speak from a full knowledge of market place methods, of which I am comparatively ignorant, that speculation is the

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life of commerce, and that the buying and selling of things that do not exist is a genuine necessity in the commercial world.

I cannot combat what I know little about, and I want these pages to teach young men, among other things, that reckless characterization of men and motives and methods of which we know only by hearsay, is neither honest, fair, nor productive of the slightest good.

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But I am perfectly within my province in declaring that the speculative habit is a curse to the young man with his work to do. It unfits him for his avocation, which is to be a producer of some sort. No man has a divine call to stand in the market place waiting for something to turn up, but to turn up something.

The divine law, illustrated by ages of

His Work

human application, is that a man shall live in the sweat of his own brow, not in the sweat or the tears of his neighbor.

When the young man permits the element of luck, under any one of its specious forms, to become a factor in the accomplishment of his life work, he is crippled from that hour.

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There is a great deal of talk concerning "Napoleons" of finance and "kings" of the wheat pit, but it is significant how short their reigns are, and how swiftly the dynasties change. Yet these rocket men are often lures to the young man who sighs for his own opportunity. He scans the heavens for his lucky star. There is no such thing. The divine law of domination and increase is, that a man shall follow the order of the universe and advance from strength, to strength, by toil,

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and often at cost. Avoid the crime, for crime it is against your manhood, of trusting to luck. It will snare you in the end.

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I have spoken seriously of these impediments that you may think upon them and face the world with some idea of the temptations that are lying in wait. You will have to bruise yourself a bit in working out your own salvation, and I cannot promise that angel hands will lift you over the rough places, even though you seek the best things in the best way. It is always *per aspera ad astra*.

But there are one or two things to be added, which, if the experience of others avails anything, may be positively helpful in your vocation.

So far as choice lies open to you, choose your life work where your taste as well as your capacity lies.

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Remember that you are not an atom obeying some mechanical law of affinity, but a son of God, who has endowed you with his own life, to be lived under obedience to his higher law. Each one of us has a heavenly vision, if he can only lift his eyes from the things that fascinate his earthly vision long enough to see and understand. Desire and capacity are certain indications of power. Desire is not whim or momentary passion. Almost every boy wants to go to sea, or to go upon the stage, or to be a hermit, or something of that sort. These are usually passing phases of the imaginative faculty working through the untrained intelligence. Now and then we have an infant phenomenon who is unmistakably pointed towards his destiny from the nursery. But he is a rare child who knows the potency of his manhood.

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The desire of a youth's soul is not known even to himself until he has tasted many a mess of pottage. Home training, school discipline, acquaintance with men and books, are all necessary in most cases to bring out the real mission of the growing manhood. Parents are often unwise in their insistence upon a certain especial calling for their sons.

It is not the less unwisdom because dictated by love. The old custom of our English forefathers of sending one son into the navy, and the next into the army, and another into the church, made many a poor sailor, soldier, and parson. The fond devotion of many a mother sealing her boy to the service of the sacred ministry from his infancy is not a thing to be sneered at. Many a Hannah has so brought up many a Samuel. But while the desire of mother and son may be thus noble and lofty, they must

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look on the other side of the heavenly vision to see if Samuel has the capacity to serve. Else his fate may be the fate of the sons of Eli.

Natural capacity is as clear a message from God as the earth affords. This is the first, supremest indication of vocation. That once determined, let the choice be guided by taste and love.

Many a man learns his mistake too late in life to make a change. It is pitiful, but he is thenceforth chained like a galley slave to a task he must do, while conscious of another life in which he might have worked with buoyant heart. The keenest joy of life is to that man who gets his bread and butter in the tasks that are a delight. Almost the bitterest experience is to be forced to do the opposite.

It follows that mere money getting is not the most satisfactory among life's

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occupations. A man confessed to me not long since, that he would willingly give up his wealth and all that it meant to him in the way of luxury to feel the joy of the surgeon in the successful achievement of a difficult operation. He had exactly the temperament, the steadiness, the persistence, the thirst for accuracy in the smallest details, and the love of his kind, which would have made him successful in that vocation. Circumstances had prevented his adoption of the work of his choice, when he might have availed himself of it. It was now too late. He is a successful man as the world counts success, but not in the higher way he looks at it.

Wealth is not to be despised. We do not find many men inveighing against the capitalist, if they are stockholders and have laid up bonds in bank vaults. Wealth is one of the forces of the higher

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life. But to be rich is not the best thing a man can desire.

Therefore, young men, I repeat, it is better for you to be a painter with little money, a teacher with less, or a struggling student all your life, with none at all, if your taste and capacity lie along those lines, than to be just rich. The two need not be, and, indeed, are not always divorced. Some few men are doubtless so pleasantly absorbed in money getting that it is its own reward. But to how few does this come compared with the many whose manual or intellectual occupation is a joy in itself apart from its results!

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Not infrequently, however, it is not the selection by parents, nor the choice of one's self, that finds the young man in a calling which, if he does not positively

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dislike, he can have no enthusiasm in following. Hard circumstances, limited opportunities, imperious necessity, are the arbiters of many a young man's destiny.

The bustling civilization of the twentieth century demands all sorts and conditions of task work which all have their divine meaning. The earthworm is not so brilliant as the bird of paradise, but it has its underground task to do, an important and wonderful task.

What may be said for the encouragement of the man who finds himself harnessed to a task by which he earns a competence, but which is a task and nothing more?

His is by no means a hopeless outlook. He may have a hobby.

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I hope my contention will not be thought too frivolous, when I strive to

His Work

set before you the joys and uses of hobbies. Hobbies are sometimes discredited by the unthinking. Of course, if a man neglects his work to ride a hobby, he is not a true man, and these words are not for him. But if a man has, as most of us have, some time in addition to the hours demanded for the proper performance of his daily work, let him lead out to gentle exercise the hobby of his taste.

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By a hobby I do not mean a mere ridiculous whimsy. A hobby, properly considered, is a dignified pursuit. The fundamental distinction between a hobby and an avocation is, that your avocation rides you, while you ride your hobby.

Avocation is usually bread and butter. Hobbies are appetizers. When the two are identical, and you have the supreme

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joy of earning the wages for life's needs in pursuit of the thing you like best, get another hobby.

In other words, we should have some interest in life outside the treadmill of the daily task. It is good for any man; it is vitally necessary to the man whose work is uncongenial.

Your hobby may lead you to nature; it was a country parson's hobby that gave to literature the classic "Natural History" of Selbourne. It may invite you into the realm of sport; out of the rural rambles of a London haberdasher came the "Compleat Angler." It ought to take you entirely away from your daily routine, as the great mathematician left his classroom and conic sections, to wander with Alice in Wonderland and to burble with the Boogum and the Jabberwock.

For even a hobby ought not to be

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mere play. Charles Kingsley's hobby was history, and from it came such joys to the world as "Hypatia," "Hereward," and "Westward Ho!" I do not mean, of course, that one must be a poet, a novelist, or an historian to justify his hobby riding. If it is the right sort it will not be the waste, but the enrichment of life, whether productive or not.

What is the advantage?

It prevents narrowness. The tendency of this age is more and more towards specialization. The lawyer studies one branch of the law. The physician studies one department of medicine or surgery. No one man makes a whole pin any longer. This specialization forces men into narrowness of thought, unless there be a corrective.

It is not good for a lawyer, only to read law. It is not good for the mer-

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chant to consult no books but his account books, and no literature but prices current. The man who sticks in a little corner, is not as efficient in that corner, as though he took walks abroad and breathed in a different air. The man who sees one thing only loses the capacity of wider vision. Routine, even in the occupation we love and live by, palls after a time. We grow to loathe the uninterrupted trivial round and common task. And we ought to. The corrective of this is to have some other interest.

Let it be bugs or books; fishing or photography; on land or water; to be followed in the woods, or to be pursued in the library: but let it be some occupation in which you may, from being a humble disciple, grow to become a master.

Man does not live by bread alone.

His Work

The hobby will keep you from temptation. It will infallibly broaden your life. It will sweeten hours that might else be bitter, and in its indulgence you will find fresh springs of life.

After the dust and the heat and the burden of the long day's toil, the hobby will be like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

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Akin to this is another thing I would press upon your attention. Your work in this world will never quite be the best, unless you cultivate an interest in your fellow-men and in causes that help on the world,—without the rewards of the market place.

In the market place there are things not for sale. The architecture of the buildings; the fountains sending up their streams; the statues gracing and

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lending beauty to niche and corridor, — these are for all.

So in the true man's life there are productions of hand, brain, and heart not for sale. Man is not always a merchant, nor all he carries merchandise.

Remember that a part of your earthly work must always be without earthly reward, or else you make of yourself the shrivelled slave of wages and of time. You will be called upon to give of yourself in service, to society, to the church, and to the nation, not only without compensation, but at cost.

If you would rise to the full height of your manhood, you will give this service voluntarily, cheerfully, loyally. This is patriotism. This is manhood.

By shirking it you may have more money and more time, but there will be less room in your soul to enjoy the one or use the other.

IV

HIS AMUSEMENTS

LIFE is parti-colored. Tragedy and comedy are next each other and sometimes overlap. The human demands the tonic of happiness as well as of sorrow. Mind and body need change, not in abrupt cataclysms, but in a tidal rise and fall. Dullness is not goodness. Therefore, every healthful life plan should allow for amusement and recreation, and the rational man will look upon the joyous side of life, and extract food for laughter and song, not stealthily or with apologies, but because it is his divine right.

And the hours of purest joy are those of youth. Indian summer has its com-

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pensations, and autumn its peace, but the fun that maketh glad the heart is found in the springtime. A goodly number of men fall on the evil days of the Preacher, the days of stress or routine, and say they have no pleasure in them. We need to drink of the chalice of joy while we can, ere those days come when we shall be obliged to drain the dregs of discipline.

There used to be Puritan schemes of life, and doubtless are now, — drawn up by good men who love God and, in their own way, their fellows, — which exclude pleasure as a snare and a menace to the working out of one's salvation. Such a theory of life is irrational and inhuman, impossible and unphilosophical. The notable distinction between man and the lower animals is that man prays and laughs.

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His Amusements

The amusements of a young man are both indices of character and influences of moulding power. Because they are ordinarily his own free choice, they not only mark the man as he is, but shape the man as he is to be.

Amusements conceal more temptations than work and all the rest of his environment. They should be as carefully watched and guarded as the food he eats. The devil seems to have a great many channels of approach, but for choice he probably prefers the paths that are pleasant to his victims. A young man's amusements may minister to his higher or his lower life. It is largely through his choice of them that he begins to serve God or the devil.

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In these days, not degenerate, but very different from the days of our

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fathers, when athletics (to take one form of amusement) have been exalted among the humanities, and a professor thereof adorns the faculty of arts, the first reflection which it is borne in on me to make is, that the young man needs to cultivate a sense of proportion with reference to his amusements.

They should have their due share of time and income, but they should not be allowed to draw too heavily upon either.

Fortunately for the young man who has a sane conception of life, he has not time on his hands to overindulge himself. The demands of his business, or profession, or task work of whatever sort, erect barriers between cultivated fields and waste spots. The merest everyday prudence limits one's play time. And this is evidently just. Recreation is the dessert of life, not the

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roast beef. The business of life is labor. Relaxation from labor is for the refreshment and stimulus of men, that they may perform their part of the world's work.

But there is always a tendency among young men to encroach upon the serious business of life with its lighter desires. Usually this is because he does not understand yet how serious life is, and that he is building the castle for his soul to-morrow, while he thinks he is but passing his time between daylight and dark.

I repeat, therefore, that amusements, important factor of growth as they are, should be cultivated with a degree of proportion.

Especially must this be the law of a young man whose way is yet to be made in the world, whose achievements are before him, whose castle is not built.

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Middle age and old age have earned, if they have been faithful, a greater number of hours and a larger share of the income for relaxation. The young man is a poor creature if he discounts this future.

Young men in the city, whose social position is of a certain grade, but whose incomes are limited by their years and inexperience, are sorely tempted to live beyond their means, which is the most subtle sin of the calendar and the prolific parent of many others.

The chief work of the law student is law, of the medical student is medicine. They are not often hampered by the hours that confine the business student to the store under an employer's eyes. But their sense of honor ought to stand in the place of fixed periods.

If we see A spending his afternoons on the golf links, or B with a rowing

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club, or C with a bicycle, it would not be human if we did not wish we might join them. But we must realize that if they are there honestly, they have earned the time, or some one has earned it for them. If they are there dishonestly, they are objects of pity rather than of envy. One might as well think it a hardship that one's grandfather sits on the sunny side of the gallery and smokes his pipe in ease, while one is toiling in the field and cannot afford the cost of, or time for, a pipe. It is the difference between sixteen and sixty. One has no right to the peace of sixty years, with the inexperience and vanity of sixteen.

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While I am a firm believer in the development of athletics at school and college, I think they have been devel-

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oped in late years all out of proportion. There is too much professionalism, according to my old-fashioned notions. To win is a fine thing. Every one ought to desire the laurel wreath. But to play fairly, to row gallantly, and to do one's best without jockeying, is far better than to win.

It seems to me that a great deal of our college athletics has lost the idea of sport under ordinary conditions, in a mad race to beat records. Do, but be careful not to overdo. To do the things we ought not is as bad as to leave undone the things we ought. A boy should build up his physical life, that he may be a better all-round man, not a stronger animal.

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It is of great importance, also, that young men should consider the cost of

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their amusements, to see if they can be enjoyed honestly. It is old and trite enough to be more often acted upon, this axiom of manhood, that no recreation can be honorably indulged in which one cannot afford. And this is a hard thing. It hurts. Sometimes it mortifies. Let us look at this word "hard" for a moment! Unless a man accepts hardness as a part of his life—as a necessary factor in the building of his character four square—he will be like a timid animal until he dies. Twigs in his path will be trees, molehills mountains, and the soft dash of summer rain a tempest not to be endured. I am not writing for the man who does not understand, or will not learn, that this world is a workshop, and that the workers are equipped with the tools of Adam, not with the lamp of Aladdin.

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Subdue the earth, man! dig up its treasures! span the heavens! harness the forces of the air to your noble chariots! But do not think these things can be done without hardness.

These are not rhetorical figures. A man with his work, whether it be buying or selling, binding up broken limbs or preaching the Father to broken hearts, must endure hardness, not with sullen submission to the inevitable, but with a calm acceptance of the divine order of the universe as best, even when it presses down upon him and his task.

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So it falls out that a man must begin his life with deprivations. Not in the ascetic sense of a whip of small cords for the stripes' sake, but because it is written in experience, as well as

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in books, that unless a man work neither shall he eat.

A man's pleasures can only be pleasures, if he has a right to them. He only has a right to them, if he can afford to pay for them. And this often involves the hardness of self-denial. If a man only involved himself, this need not be so difficult, if he is worth his salt at all. But the complexities of social life, especially in cities, involve us in intricate tangles with other people.

The young man resents not being able to keep up with his fellows. Young women are often unconscious and thoughtless tempters. It is a hard thing to say no to one's self; harder to say it to another, especially if that other be a woman. One would like to lay flowers, every morning, at my lady's feet. But there are offerings

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to honor, and offerings to dishonor. One would not like to give withered and decaying blossoms, and yet, when one gives what he has no right to give, because it is not properly his, his offering, of whatever sort, is tainted.

A man is not mean because he refrains from an expense beyond his honest possessions. Is he not mean if he falls into the temptation?

A young boy who smokes, against his father's wish or command, is not thereby manly. He is mean. He is not only disobedient, but meanly disobedient. Setting aside the question of health and of fitness, it is unfair for a lad to do a thing at his father's expense, of which his father disapproves. A manly boy will see this, and be ashamed when it is put to him thus.

It is the same with betting. There

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is a subtle immorality in gaining money at another's expense, without return. But a boy at school, in college, or dependent upon his father for his bread and butter, is acting unfairly and dishonorably when he risks his father's money in games of chance or in betting.

When he earns his own living, he must settle the question for himself; until he does, his father's wish should be his law.

In the market place there are grades of luxury and ease and wage earning. The man who has grown old in the buying and selling has more money to use outside the market place than the man who has just set up his stall. It is not any injustice to the latter that he has not the gold and silver of the former. These are the earned increment of the market place.

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The young man with the small wage for his efforts, which is the natural index of inexperience and youth, cannot expect, or be expected, to compete with his elders or with his contemporaries who have the doubtful advantage of inherited wealth.

Yet a great deal of the sorrowful complications of life proceed from the struggles of the man with one talent to keep up with the man with two or five.

I have alluded to the bitterness, and sometimes the crime, that follow upon debt. Yet debt, in most instances, is the child, not of the necessities of life, but of its luxuries or comforts.

One cannot get along without this or that? It is surprising with how little one can get along under the spur of necessity. We are too apt, in utter blindness, to confuse the things we need with the things we desire.

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We need bread and water; we desire cake and wine. We need shelter, and build palaces; we need clothing, and robe ourselves in embroidered garments. We think that Solomon in all his glory is better arrayed than the lilies of the field.

All recreation however innocent, all amusements however worthy, all indulgences however honest, are barred to the man of honor, for which he cannot pay down in gold all his own.

Therefore be very sure what is and what is not your own. There is no more subtle temptation in the life of a young man than that which whispers to-morrow in his ear. One of the vulgar characteristics of this day and generation is that of living on the instalment plan. It is a euphemism for living beyond one's means. It is debt dressed out in the garb of legitimacy.

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How many young men hamper themselves for six months or a year for the sake of one day's pleasures! There is a certain weakness of character in the man who thus discounts his future.

There are debts that fall out in a man's life which are perfectly honest, legitimate, and necessary, but I am very sure that such debts are never incurred in the enjoyment of pleasure. A man sometimes is forced to mortgage his crop to pay his help, but not to rent a box at the opera.

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I have been dealing so far with the innocent and legitimate amusements of young men. Let us now assume that you have both time and money to use and spend pretty much as you will; and yet there is something to be said regarding the choice you are entitled to make.

His Amusements

A great city, or even an ordinary town, offers a wide diversity of choice. Some mention of these has been made in a former chapter.

There are amusements that rest and stimulate both body and mind, and there are those that inevitably debase. It is not always an easy task to distinguish between them.

The theatre, for instance, is at once a noble handmaid of the higher life, and the shameless betrayer of innocence and purity.

The English drama was nursed in the bosom of the church, and the first actors were parsons and clerks. The sublime mysteries of Redemption were brought home to the intelligence of the simplest peasant by means of the rude germs out of which grew in time the immortal dramas of the Elizabethan cycle. The church, very early, recognized the power

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and inspiration of dramatic form. But the drama appeals to the common passions as well as to the higher instincts. The stage may uplift, but it does, here and there, drag down.

I warn you against the vulture instinct which seeks the offal and finds it. The decadent tone of the stage at the dawn of the twentieth century is recognized both by patron and player. The sad thing about it is that such a mass of patrons would have it so.

It is a sorrowful thing that immorality dressed out in fascinating guise draws the culture, the intelligence, the fashion of our great cities as almost nothing else.

It is a still more sorrowful fact that certain plays are witnessed by young men and women, side by side both the language and action of which are foul with evil suggestion. Young women are usually innocent of the evil. But are

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the young men? And is it well that young women should breathe such an atmosphere? How long will they remain innocent?

Art for art's sake!

Of all the cant that ever was canted, this is the worst. I do not mean that young people are criminals, or always conscious of the degradation of the standards demanded by decent people in dramatic representations. In my boyhood there were spectacular pieces and certain theatres which were recognized as off color. Men went to them who would not dream of taking wife, sister, mother, or daughter. In less than a generation it has fallen out that the allurements then stigmatized by respectable people have become almost the chief stock in trade of the stage, and family parties witness them without fear and without reproach.

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I would not be misunderstood as standing out for the steeple-hatted, sad-colored life of extreme Puritanism. I like the theatre, indeed, and value its ethical possibilities. I think we ought to have not only Shakespeare, but the musical glasses. Only, the glasses should be clean. I sympathize with the man who goes to the theatre to be entertained and amused. I laugh now as I think of the old-time minstrels with two end men and the interlocutor in his seedy dress coat. But fun and filth are not synonymous terms. There are ten commandments, all told. But our modern playwrights seem to think their mission is confined to the exploitation of one only, and the trifling with that.

Choose your play as you ought to choose your books,—of which more anon,—or your friends.

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There are other and grosser amusements to which young men turn themselves. I will not try your patience further than to say that the average young man's conscience and upbringing are as good guides as he can have. Until he dulls the inner voice which says "thou ought," or "thou oughtest not," by inattention or neglect, it will always sound the warning and give the counsel that is of God.

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Just one other form of amusement, however, needs must be touched upon, for it has the double lure of excitement and gain,—gambling.

There is a good deal to be said on both sides, I must frankly admit. So much that I am inclined to waive, just here, the question as to whether gambling is a sin or not. Some will cry out in hor-

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ror at this, I know. But facts are facts, and a very large number of respectable and sanely religious people would be appalled at the accusation of being sinners because they stake a small sum at cards or billiards.

I am not dealing with the elders, but with the youngsters. But I want the sympathy of the father when I speak to the son; and whatever he thinks or does, I know I have his moral backing in what I am about to say.

Waiving the question of betting and gambling as a general proposition open to argument, I urge very strongly that it is an amusement which no young man can afford to follow.

First, it is demoralizing to his best life, because, if he wins, the vicious view grows upon him that money gained without its equivalent given is a legitimate possession. If he loses, he is apt to fall

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into the habit of paying debts of so-called honor at the expense of his debts of real honor; and, at the least, he has wasted his substance for naught. He has buried his Lord's talent, not only in sand, but in quicksand.

Second, it is in a real sense debasing his finer instincts, because it encourages covetousness, the root of all evil, from which spring the dark shoots of crime.

Third, it leads to extravagance; easy come, easy go; or it brings to despair; and it occupies time that no young man has the right to give at the expense of his physical and intellectual life. The pool room and the card table have brought more young men to ruin than the wine-cup.

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Few of us need to be urged to the adoption of amusements in the pro-

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gramme of life. But there are some who neglect all-round development in the competitions and struggles of the market place.

In an industrial community it is often necessary to recall men to the fact that the body and mind are as important as the purse. We can't carry our gains with us by sewing a pocket in our shrouds. No man has a right to go about this world in a wizened body if he can prevent it. The body is a trust to be administered, not a bandage to be thrown aside. The mind is a talent to be used, not crystallized. This most pathetic testimony of Charles Darwin ought to be treasured up by every young man:—

“My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts; but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the

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brain alone on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive . . . and if I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once a week. . . . The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

Books, music, art, all beckon. Time? Make time! What are you living for? The most barren, hopeless, and sordid life on earth, the one fullest of self-disgust and unrest, is that life that crawls perpetually in the dust of the earth, feeding, drinking, and seeking cover.

Open up the avenues of the divine inpouring. Rejoice and be glad in the fields, in a boat, on a wheel, at tennis, golf, or football, as lookers on if too stiff or awkward to take a hand, — this is to rejoice in the Lord.

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Then instead of the old pessimist's prophecy of the evil days drawing nigh when we shall have no pleasure in them, the older prophet's word will come true in our lives, and the longer one lives the truer the word will be, "they shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

V

HIS BOOKS AND READING

THE most important concerns of a young man, as has been said more than once in these pages, are those that make for the building up of his life beyond life. Threescore and ten years look a long time to "sweet and twenty," but they pass. And we may not shut our eyes to what is on the other side of the psalmist's time limit.

Of course, everything that concerns a man at all, in a broad way of speaking, has an influence on the spiritual life, — the life held in leash by the flesh bonds to-day. But there are differences of power.

While we are in the flesh we must consider its demands and needs. All that

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ministers to it, gives form and color to the character, and the character is the man as he must one day stand, without the body, before God whom he shall see for himself and not another.

The work a man finds to do, the recreations he seeks for rest, the associations he makes his own, these all have to do with character, as I have been trying to point out.

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One day he will stand up and move away from his body, but as a part of his spiritual existence he will certainly bear with him his mind, his intellect. It concerns a young man what sort of a mind he possesses. We are taught on the highest authority to serve the Lord God with heart and soul and mind. This being so, a man has no more right to neglect his mind than to waste his

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body. A drunkard and a self-made fool are not far apart in the great heap of human wreckage.

After the school-days are over you will be left largely to yourself, for with the coming of manhood comes also the honorable privileges of self-reliance. Your pastors and masters may teach you the rudiments, and the good God may give you a mind. No one on earth or in heaven can force you to use the one or keep you from abusing the other.

A man need not be a scholar or an expert in 'isms and 'ologies to have an alert, active, and productive mind. But if he means to take any care of his mind at all, or if he wishes to meet men or women who are worth knowing, on equal terms in this world, and consort with the heroes and kings of literature, science, and art in the world to come,

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he must know books, and must cultivate the reading habit.

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In parenthesis, let me explain the latter part of that last sentence. In looking forward to entering the many mansions, I suppose each one of us has some vague idea of what the state we call the spiritual life is like.

We do not know anything about it.

The authority to whom Christian men refer spiritual questions — the Man of Nazareth — said very little of it in detail. St. Paul — if it was the spiritual existence he saw in his vision — came back with a message to men that the things he saw and heard were impossible of human utterance.

But we have our thoughts and visions and dreams. The All-glorious Person whose now vanished Hand we will seek

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to touch, whose now hushed Voice we will strain to hear, He, of course, will be first.

But after Him will there not be those about whom we will have a great curiosity, and with whom we will hope to talk and walk, or whatever corresponds in the spiritual world to talking and walking?

Next to the joy of seeing Him face to face, will there not be the joy of seeing the great souls who have been His mouthpieces for one word or another through the ages? Will not intellect foregather with intellect in the spiritual life and be satisfied? Will there not be those to whom we will be glad to say, "You helped me more than once on that old Earth. You were a potent influence in making me see what I was and what I ought to be?"

For myself, there are two or three

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people who long since have passed within the veil, to whom I shall want to say these words.

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None of us will have any finer or higher mental calibre as we go to our own place, than we lay down with in the last earthly sleep. Whatever there is to be in the way of development, we must begin where we leave off. No one will see or perhaps know what kind of a poor battered body we have emerged from, but the mind of a man seems to be a part of that eternal existence which lasts through the wreck of the temporal. The intellectual life of a man in the world is a sort of adumbration of what the spiritual life is to be. Mind is a facet of the divine image. Therefore the intellect may not be trifled with here, if it is to mean anything here-

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after. We cannot serve God with all our mind, unless we use it, care for it, strengthen it, continually.

As we deal with men and affairs here, we know that it is not the strength of the body, except in the prize fight, but the cunning or the wisdom of the mind that wins the world's victories. In the great ages of the world the thinker has been imperator. The hand and arm have their victories, but only as things, not as powers; as instruments, not as energies. The difference is that between the artisan who lays the stone, and the architect who has the whole beautiful temple in his mind.

Now to the average man about his life work, arises the same distinction in the way he carries on that work. One gets along as best he may, following patterns, a good mimic, and the other uses his mind and invents patterns.

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The thinking workman (whatever the work be, theology, law, merchandise, art) is a better man, even though the other kind of a man occasionally makes more money. It is not a question of good and evil in morals. The difference I am trying to illustrate is that between the man who learns a language so as to enter into the spirit of its literature, and the man who learns a few words so as to purchase a railroad ticket or order his dinner.

Some people — a great many — practically do nothing else with their mother tongue than to make it a medium for the bread and butter necessities.

In whatever vocation you may be embarked, young man, you may use or disuse your mind. In using it you may prostitute and enfeeble it, or ennoble and strengthen its powers.

More than any other agency, the habit

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of reading and the choice of books must shape this intellectual development.

It is an old subject and a trite one. But as I have had occasion to remark before, subjects grow old and trite in proportion to their intrinsic value. We do not spend breath on themes barren of reality. Precisely because such themes as this are trite, do men grow careless of their vital importance.

In spite of what appears to be the contrary, this age is not given to books. It is too much given to "booklets," newspapers, and magazines. It is too much addicted to "manuals" on every possible and impossible subject, from gardening to gravitation. Every man his own this, that, or the other, is the favorite motto.

The introduction of modern systems of teaching, from the kindergarten up, while it has cleared the path of the learner of a great deal of useless rub-

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bish, has by no means annulled the fiat of that old copybook motto, there is no royal road to learning.

Infinite patience and infinite pains still meet with their rich and peculiar rewards. 'Cross lots is not the shortest, much less the surest, road to culture and knowledge.

I do not mean to speak disrespectfully of newspapers. The press of this country is, on the whole, clean, moral, and upright. The exceptions exist, but as exceptions, not the rule. Its greatest fault, in my judgment, is its indiscriminate partisanship, but this is slowly passing. I do not advocate a neutral, colorless press. But whenever it is muzzled, either by its political leanings or by the market place morality of expediency, from uttering the truth on public questions, it loses both opportunity and influence.

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It is not against the newspaper I warn young men, but against the newspaper habit. We must have the news, but headlines and telegraph despatches need a corrective, which is not found in the magazines, useful as they are in their sphere.

They are longer bits and snatches, but bits and snatches still. A man's reading must be systematic, and on subjects both for knowledge and culture. For this you must have recourse to books and cultivate habits of reading and study.

I know what many of you will object to this, because I lost five or six years of my life uttering the same nonsense. Again it is *experientia docens*.

You think you have no time for the training of the intellectual life, to read steadily and with a purpose. You might as well say you have no time

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to eat or sleep. You take time for these, because your body will else fail you. Well, the best part of your life will fail you unless you take time to read; unless you prefer to exist with the oyster, or creep and slide from food to shelter like the alligator.

I venture to say that no one whose eyes fall upon this page but can find one or two good hours every day of his life to devote to books and study, without injury to his day's work. You can if you will. You cannot if you put golf, or tennis, or billiards, or dancing, or cards first, after your task work.

When a man, under the ordinary circumstances of life, excuses himself from doing something because he has not the time, he really means that it is not of sufficient interest or importance for him to find the time.

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His Books and Reading

But there is a far more subtle difficulty lying half acknowledged in your mind than that of time.

You are honestly of the opinion that you have not intellect enough to read anything heavier than a novel, and some of you shy at Scott and Thackeray because you suppose them to be beyond you.

It is possible for you to so atrophy your minds that nothing will stimulate them or feed them beyond the continued stories of the weekly press.

But this is usually the fault of parents or teachers in not training the first years aright.

I do not mean to exclude fiction from your reading — far from it. There are noble writers, masters of the craft, whom you cannot afford to pass by. But among novels choose the best. It is just as easy as to batten on the worst.

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And I venture to say that any novel deserving of the name great will be a mental stimulus, and suggestive of reading on other lines.

The man who reads novels only, however, weakens his intellectual life. It is worse than a purely vegetarian diet for the body. When you invite the test, you will be surprised to realize that your intellectual capacity is far in excess of your own first estimate of it. There comes a time in the development of the average young man's mind when he realizes that he can think for himself, and draw conclusions independent of others. This exquisite experience is led up to by the cultivated habit of reading. One needs contact with other minds to generate thought of his own. Let your reading be systematic, and on a subject, the one most interesting to you. The taste develops with use, and

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with a rapidity that will seem amazing.
Then beware how you use it!

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There are two varieties of literature against which the young man needs to be warned: the nasty, decadent novel, which came into such vogue in the last days of the nineteenth century, contemporary with a drama of the same sort; and the pessimistic story or essay (or sermon, for that matter), which teaches, openly or by implication, that this is a poor sort of world and mankind a poor sort of creature. What has been said under the head of amusements concerning the drama needs to be emphasized in reference to books. The young man of good instincts does not choose his friends because of their bad morals. But how often is he not invited to choose his books because they have

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the flavor of evil suggestion about them?

From the standpoint of only a generation ago, how bold, brazen, unblushing a certain school of novelists has become! We can no longer trust to the imprint of publishers, with a few rare exceptions. I am aware of the sneering comment that is made by the ultra refined art critic. He thinks the young person, as he calls him, is too much consulted by the censor of morals in literature and art. He loftily says that because such and such a book is not for the young person is no reason why it should not be written. He clamors for art. The young person is naturally offended, and chooses for himself. He does not wish to be accused of lack of culture and breadth.

But the young man may listen respectfully and without shame to us who

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love him and wish him well ; and some of us will tell him that these lovers of pure art and their disciples, but insult his intelligence when they prate of a culture that is only to be acquired through a dissection of courtesan morals, and in the analysis of the beast side of human nature. They might as well claim that a man must eat rotten apples to appreciate the art of fruit growing.

Avoid the nasty books of the decadent school in your cultivation of the intellectual life, young man. Do not fear that you will become warped or narrow, because you prefer the highway to the gutter.

I regard the novel as a valuable factor in moulding the higher life of man, by leading him, in his hour of recreation as of toil, through noble walks and inspiring paths. The novel appeals to human nature in such a fashion that it

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may be said to meet a righteous demand and supply a legitimate need. We do not narrow the scope or limit the field of the writer of fiction when we ask for plain decency.

The plain speaking of the Elizabethan dramatists, and the coarse language of the Queen Anne novelists, are preferable even to the thinly disguised licentiousness, the utterly needless (for purposes of art) dissection of the animal passions which greet us from the book counter, or grin hideously at us from the stage.

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How shall a young man know what to read?

There will always be some one to help you in choice of books,—the schoolmaster, the parson, the parents perhaps. But in order to read with a

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purpose — and for culture one must read with a purpose — one's real aim must be, not books, but subjects.

If you have a bias you will (and ought to) follow it. Many young men, perhaps most, have no special bias, and thrash aimlessly here, there, and everywhere, until they fall into the poor habit of desultory reading. It is true that Dr. Johnson's remark, "Read anything five hours daily and you will soon become learned," has some truth at the bottom, but it is not the whole truth, and may be a very dangerous course to follow.

Have a subject!

And to begin with, read history. It will introduce you to everything else worth reading. It is the path of God through the years. It is his eloquent message to man. It is not only the story of yesterday, but the

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interpretation of to-day, and the foretaste of to-morrow. Do not begin with a history of the world, nor even of a nation! Dig into a period. Take the flowering period of Elizabethan history and literature. You will be with most noble company. You will not only revel in the most eloquent writers and poets, but explore new lands with the sturdiest pioneers. You will witness the rebirth of a great nation from religious and political thralldom to the large life of freedom.

I mention this one period by way of illustration. There are others in the list which you may find more to your taste. History is not a narrow study. You cannot know one period or one nation well, without knowing equally of others. To know Elizabeth, for instance, you must know Philip II. of

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Spain, Louis of France, William the Silent, and other glorious names, some to honor and some to dishonor; but all parts of that brilliant sixteenth century cycle, when as Motley says, "The constellations which have for centuries been shining in the English firmament were then human creatures, walking English earth," Shakespeare and Spenser, Ben Jonson and Bacon!

Your history will be accompanied by biography. Perhaps you will be easiest led into history by way of the charm and fascination that cluster about personal reminiscences of men. A good biography is the most stimulating reading a man can have put to his hands. You cannot understand entirely the history of a generation, unless you know something of the men who were the conspicuous forces in making its history. Nor can you

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fully understand men, unless you know something of the heredity and environment that fashioned them.

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Read the Bible!

Wise men do not pass it by, though some poor fools do. Merely as a proper culture, the young man must know his Bible. If we were to extract it — its letter and spirit — from English literature, we would have little more than paper rags left. Aside from any theory of inspiration, about which we know so little that silence is better than speech, the Bible inspires. It finds men, as Coleridge said. It goes down to the depths and rises to the heights of all human experience. It reflects every mood, it stimulates every thought, it comforts every sorrow.

But do not use it, as some people

His Books and Reading

wear amulets and blessed images and relics. It has no sort of virtue as a fetich. Bibliolatry is as much a falling away from true ideas of worship, as Mariolatry is from the true idea of womanhood. The words of the Bible are not sacred things in themselves. The book of the Chronicles is not a message to your soul, as are the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of St. John's Gospel.

Discriminate in the Bible, as you would in any other book. Homer's catalogue of the ships is not stimulating; neither are the genealogies of the Jews.

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Finally, as to the use of books and the habit of reading, let me speak of them as we feel when the Indian summer steals over us, and we begin to look for shorter and fewer days.

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The day will come when the refuge of books will be the only refuge from the cares, the anxieties, the sorrows that accumulate with the flying years.

It does not yet appear what he will be, to the young man. But one day, and many days, you will grow tired with routine, and, beyond a very few, people will worry you. It is not right that this should be the normal state of even old age. But it is certain to happen occasionally, and if you can retire with a book in your hand, and be for a time with the world's noblest and best, you will emerge refreshed and cheerful, to bear your own part again among others in the world.

You may lift yourself out of the dust of the highway into starry pathways looking toward the delectable

His Books and Reading

city. You may have the companionship of the gods.

Learn to read and to live with books, and you will have a foretaste of the life eternal.

VI

HIS MARRIAGE

ALL other events of a man's life fade off into the neutral tints of insignificance compared with his marriage, as an influence in moulding character, as a factor in the noble or ignoble use of life.

Marriage will lift him to the heights, or drag him in the depths, or condemn him to mental and moral listlessness.

He may escape from or dominate the forces of heredity; he may begin his life work over again, if he discovers that he has made a mistake. But his marriage is the one abiding fact which cannot be altered or trifled with, until death parts the twain.

His Marriage

And this is wise and just. Marriage should be indissoluble. Because of the human necessity and the divine meaning, it can be broken but by the one sin. The civil law does not and cannot deal with hearts and souls, only with bodies. The divine law goes deeper than this. Therefore, the only excuse for divorce to the Christian man or woman is the one allowed by Christ.

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Was this a whim of His?

It was the acknowledgment of a great fact, that the family life is the basis of human society. We are not isolate atoms, but members one of another. The unit of life in this world is not man, but man with a helpmeet for him. Man cannot even sin by himself without affecting others. It is not written that Eve was banished from Eden, but

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when the gates closed upon the man, and angels waved their threatening swords against his return, Eve went with him, hand in hand.

The stability of the family is the mor-dant of civilization. Are there no ex-ceptions? Yes, God help our weakness and sin, there are. Sometimes separa-tion is the only way to prevent further shame and degradation. But separation, not divorce. Man and woman must suffer the penalties they invite. No young man thinks of this as possible on his wedding day; and it is well he does not. In his marriage, as in no other event of his life, should he reflect that he is taking an irrevocable step. "For better, for worse," is an awful and sol-emn charge. It cannot be made too awful or too solemn.

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His Marriage

Now, young man, are you old enough to marry?

It is not alone the years that count, but well used years *ought* to count. We do not expect experience without age, knowledge without experience. Do you know yourself? If you have not yourself well in hand, under control, you are not fit to undertake the life that marriage involves. Are you capable of understanding more than the surface existence of her whom you are asking to be your wife? Are you beyond the age when a man is apt to be fickle and changeable in his likes and dislikes? Have you known many good women? Have you weighed your own temper in the balance? Are you willing, nay, glad, to make sacrifices, real sacrifices, for one woman? You can express your love now by gifts of books and flowers. But do you know yourself well enough

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to guarantee that you could express it by restraint upon your temper and tongue and selfish whims, when she no longer possesses the attraction of novelty, when you are no longer the suitor, but (as you will find, and she too) sought?

Are you what she thinks you to be? Not altogether, for somehow women are like moles when they love; with now and then a rare exception, they do not see. But men ought to see for them. It is the *noblesse oblige* of man who seeks to mate with woman.

If you are not on the pedestal where she has put you, — and you undoubtedly are not, young man, — are you striving for it? Are you really a man all eager to assume responsibility, or just a boy, who wants something, and therefore thinks he ought to have it?

It is not necessary, in your individual

His Marriage

case, that you should ever marry. The world will get along if you are left in single blessedness. If you can take in that thought, then question yourself as to whether there is enough in you, at present, to warrant your becoming the centre of a new set of responsibilities and privileges? I do not mean to discourage you, young man, and I can just imagine the curl of your lip at these unpleasant suggestions. With your parents' consent, the law of man will permit you to marry before you have reached years of maturity, but you must have a higher permission than that.

Youthful fancies and wayward desires may be very venial sins in the unmarried man, but they rise into vast importance when he is forging lifelong ties. Have you the decent soberness a man ought to have when he plunges into an unknown experience which touches others?

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If you know yourself, do you know her? A man may be in the Indian summer of life and know very little indeed of a girl with the flush of the dawn on her cheek, and the light of the morning dancing in her eyes.

She is pretty, of course — to you. And you wonder how she has so far escaped the eyes of men. She has doubtless been waiting for you. She is attractive, possesses the accomplishments that society demands, and is perhaps admired of others. All these attract you.

But what else do you know? Marriage ties formed of such strands only are apt to become marriage bonds.

Beauty has its midsummer and its autumn as well as spring. It ages a great deal faster than your appreciation of it. Smart sallies of wit and graceful turns of compliment have a way of getting threadbare — with some people. There

His Marriage

are three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. Looking across the same table at the same face, on three separate occasions of these separate days, will pall, unless you discern something beneath the skin and behind the eyes that dazzle during the honeymoon.

What is the entity, the real self, back of these admirable charms?

What is her capacity for discipline, for sorrow, for pain? for poverty, perhaps? (I know that you smile at these things as though they cannot come unto your life, but you will be a notable exception to the human race if you escape them.)

Has she any mind? Does she read anything beyond the novels of the day? Has she an independent personality? By which I mean, does she possess some opinions that were not her parents', and are not yours? A man with even a ru-

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dimentary intellect cannot live by echoes alone.

Has she anything apart from you which is her own, and which may be a purpose in her life, giving her dignity and stability of character?

I do not mean mere accomplishments. A woman should have a purpose in life as well as a man, and, I am heretic enough to say, apart from a man, even her husband. Her personality is as distinct an entity as his. Marriage should not kill this, but develop it.

It is a long journey, young man, is matrimony, and you ought not to be overhasty in choosing a companion for the pilgrimage. It is blithe enough as you fare forth hand in hand from the threshold of youth. But to-morrow! It is not all joy and laughter. The song need not die out of the heart, nor the laughter from the soul, but it very often does.

His Marriage

Know her, then, as well as yourself. She is to be a comrade. If she goes faster than you, you are a shamed man. When a woman is forced — even in her heart, secretly — to look down upon her husband, he will find it out, and his step will get slower, and they will grow further apart. If she lags behind, it is almost as bad. Then you will either accommodate your pace to hers, and the high and lofty ambition of your manhood will die out, or you will be alone at your task. And that is the most miserable thing that can happen. The true man will take up that burden and carry it, but he is never the same man.

Choose a wife like Eve. She had her faults, poor Eve. But she had the clear qualities of noble womanhood. Every woman is an Eve so far as the faults are concerned; but every woman does not share Adam's sorrows, or take her mat-

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tock in hand to help him hew at the tangled undergrowth of the world they are commissioned, in common, to subdue.

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Can you afford to marry? By this is not meant that you and she ought to begin life on the income of middle age, nor with its luxuries. Love in a cottage is a very charming dream. It has elements of possibility — in dreams. Once this writer saw real love in a real cottage. The joy and beauty of that ideal companionship — it was middle-aged companionship too — form a beautiful picture in memory. I do not say it is impossible; I would suggest that it is perhaps infrequent. But the practical details of love in a cottage are so important that it is wisdom for the youngest couple, with the most infallible knowledge of life, to sit down and count the cost of it.

His Marriage

When a man takes unto himself a wife, he is obeying divine law, all other things being equal. It is an unsentimental question, but can you afford to marry? You may have a reasonable salary, or be settled in the beginnings of your profession. But are you settled on reasonably sure foundations? Have you anything laid away for the unexpected that you must expect? Is your life so ranged that you may fairly expect to increase your income with increasing responsibilities? Can you afford to insure your life for the benefit of your family? Of course, you look forward to many years, and are apt to scoff at the precautions of cold-blooded counsel. But you may be needed to fit into the divine plan somewhere else, and the romance of your young manhood may be cut short. Can you afford that, for her?

Perhaps so for to-day. But there is

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to-morrow, and to-morrows after. No man is morally justified in marrying so long as he does not see his way clearly to the maintenance in honorable independence, of a family.

Love is no excuse. This is not orthodox, but it is better, it is common sense. One might as well plead his love of jewels as a reason for stealing diamonds. You are stealing something from a girl which neither you nor she can ever replace, for which you can never make up, if you marry her before you are well rooted in your life work and bearing fruit. You are stealing the joy of her girlhood.

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There is another consideration. Granted that every other condition is fulfilled, there is one which is, perhaps, most important of all.

His Marriage

Have you a moral right to marry at all? Does there lurk in your blood any inherited or inheritable disease? Have the sins of your fathers or your own excesses tainted your physical life? If so, you are as much vowed to celibacy as though you heard a divine command to that effect. Indeed, I am not sure but that the command is implied in the Second Commandment, "the sins of the fathers."

Are you willing to undertake the awful responsibility of transmitting life that must always be under the shadows, or send a taint tingling to the finger tips of another generation. Because she is willing is no excuse for you. When she loves, she seldom has room, at first, for any other thought. Blessed be God for the faith and hope of a loving woman! But dare you take that advantage and run the risk?

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If you dare, then there should be a place where the suffrage of your fellow-citizens should confine you within walls. You have not moral responsibility enough to be at large. Think of this.

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Let us take for granted that you are married, and, despite these cold cautions, it is the sincerest and heartiest wish we have for the young that they may mate honorably and happily.

There are some further reflections for you to ponder.

Your marriage is for good and all. The reason has been already given. The family is the unit of society, the source of its best life. As it is honored and ennobled, so is the nation lifted up. As it is degraded or lightly esteemed, the people live on a lower plane.

You will presently see that the rose

His Marriage

color is of a darker shade than you thought; that some days are dim and gray. You will be disillusioned of many things. But if you have a happy marriage, a real union of lives as well as hands, something better will have taken the place of your illusions. You will see by your side, not merely a pretty girl to be toyed with and petted and indulged. You will discover a comrade, loyal, tender, and true; a spur to the best work that lies in you; an inspiration to your high ambitions; one whose approval will be worth more to you than the applause of all others. She will share in the joy of your victories, and be a solace in your temporary or final defeats. She will not shrink from sharing your travail pains when duty calls you to make sacrifices. Her first thought will not be of the earthly wages of the market-place. She will under-

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stand that a man's honor, and his sense of *noblesse oblige*, often lead him where misunderstandings thicken and even personal risk is involved.

She will not be an angel, though, if she is all this to you. She will have her vagaries, and humors, and moods, just as you will, and oftener than she will ever admit to you. But they will play upon the surface of her life and yours, and she will be the best friend you have in the world, the centre of a home, from which you will go forth with courage, to which you will return with joy.

The love of the early days, not being abused or misunderstood to be something else, will deepen and ripen, and if it pleases God to spare you together, old age will find you side by side and content.

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His Marriage

But your marriage may not be of this ideal sort. Yet it need not be all tragedy.

The tragic in life is sometimes the exaggeration of its comedy. Be warned against making mountains of molehills in the beginning. The sweet, new atmosphere of marriage makes great demands, strange and unaccustomed demands upon both.

Do not mistake ruffles on the surface for a raging tumult beneath; do not think that hasty complaints and criticism come from lack of love deep down. Sometimes the sting of the tongue is the result of an anxiety proceeding from deepest love. You may see a man sometimes fall into impatience at the cries of a sick child. His impatience is the outward expression of anguish because the child suffers. If he could relieve it, then there would be another story.

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There are necessary jars and mental friction in the adjustment of two lives about a common unfamiliar centre. Be patient. A man must bear for others as well as himself. A good heart and an honest purpose will tide over many a long waste of troubled waters and bring you into the haven of peace.

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But there is still the marriage that is genuinely unhappy. It is the outward union of two souls with fundamentally nothing in common. It follows upon many causes,—hasty marriage, marriage *de convenance*, for position, for money, or just the desire—the woman's oftenest—to emancipate herself from unhappy or unpleasant environment. Parents are as often to blame for unhappy marriages as the son and daughter. I repeat with emphasis, take

His Marriage

the time before marriage to sit down and count the cost of it.

What can be said of such an unhappy marriage? That is always a tragedy, and the problem is ultimately in the good God's hands to solve.

But the human factors may still do something. When there can no longer be the joy of home and the loyal comradeship of two souls growing closer together, there may always be mutual tolerance and even respect. When life is filled with regret and pain over a step that can never be retraced, there may always be good manners, and a silent recognition that it is equally hard for both. In all human probability there has been a fault on both sides. But I warn the man to take to himself the greater blame. He is bound in everlasting honor to shield and protect, when he no longer loves. A woman trusted

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him once whom he swore to cherish until death parted them. When he took her from the natural protection of her father's house, he put himself in the stead of father and brother.

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I venture here upon a delicate subject which would need only to be alluded to, but for the fact that the stage and the novel of the day give it such prominence.

Men and women (mostly men) seek to relieve the strain of domestic misery in unlawful ways.

We hear much talk of "affinities" and "kindred souls," and all sorts of everlasting immoral mush of the same sort. The name and the reality of friendship between the sexes have been so smirched by the reckless sensualist that it is almost impossible for a man and a

His Marriage

woman to hold cordial intercourse without being misunderstood or maligned. Narrow and shallow and unhappy minds cannot conceive of such a friendship as not involving wrong.

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But as to "affinities," young man or old man, avoid that rot. You can afford to be unhappy, but you cannot afford to be a knave. If you have dipped your soul in that pitch, or burned your finger at the flame, and escaped so as by fire, you will understand that it merely adds misery to misery. The misery of domestic unhappiness you may lay before your heavenly Father, but this unhal-
lowed misery!

Your case is not peculiar. You think there is no sorrow quite like your sorrow. So did Jeremiah ages ago, and millions since. It is no harder in itself or to

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bear, than that of many whose lips are closed upon their grief, and who fight the battle alone under a mask of calm. Never think that the wretchedness, however deep, has a way of escape through a deeper pit.

For better, for worse! These words are not mere forms hallowed by centuries of use. They are a message to you to count the cost before you build the castle of life. If you could not face the possibility of "worse" you had no right to enter on a hope of the "better." You cannot say that you have not been sufficiently warned. The marriage service is perfectly and abundantly explicit, and it admonishes you that you are not to enter upon that new and blessed relationship "unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God."

But it is too late to think the matter

His Marriage

over, when one stands at the altar and hears these awful words.

If marriage presents itself to the young man as a desirable state, he should at least study to find out what it involves before the irrevocable step is taken. The marriage service is as solemn as the burial service. It ought to be. It is the death of boyhood and girlhood, in the hope of the resurrection of a larger manhood and womanhood.

A man usually reads a document before he signs his name assenting to its propositions. It is a very remarkable fact that many a man stands before the clergyman hand in hand with the woman he has chosen to be his helpmeet, without once looking at the vows and promises he is to take, save perhaps the day before in a hurried way to see when his "answers" come in; and this for the solemn act of life with which is bound

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up the lives and the happiness of others.

Beware how you take it, but stand by the oath of the marriage service once vowed. If it has brought unexpected unhappiness, it becomes the *noblesse oblige* of manhood to keep it unsullied.

There is a silver lining to the cloud of an unhappy marriage which may be seen even by those who abide within its pale. Honestly striving to make the best of it, if there are children caring for and nourishing them as pledges given to God for this life and the life to come, God may some day send light. Perhaps in this curious world where He is so often frustrated by our devious ways, He may bring sundered lives together. But the light in the night of this sorrow is that He must have some divine and awful meaning in suffering men and women to suffer. Trust in Him, that

His Marriage

pain and heart misery are not ends in themselves, toys with which the gods sport, but are means which a Father uses in his loving wisdom to bring His children to a knowledge of themselves. Get near to Him, and He, when no one else and nothing else, He will bring it to pass.

VII

HIS RELIGION

THE man in the market-place cannot isolate himself from other concerns.

“Insulate man and you destroy him,” says Emerson; “he cannot live without a world.”

The physical life of a man demands that he shall have fields in which to play and plant, mines in which to dig, stuff of which to build, an objective world upon which he can lay his hand.

The mental life of a man demands an intellectual world; it demands other minds to stimulate his, flint against which his will strike. No man can think independently of the thought of others.

His Religion

And so the spiritual man must reach out and feel the existence of a spiritual world. There are journeys of the soul that find no resting place in terms of place and time. The thirst for righteousness is an outreaching through things as they are, in quest of things as they should be.

The sense of sin is a comparison with standards not set up on earth. Hence it comes that a man as naturally gropes after God in prayer and worship, through rites and in spite of them, as he sinks a shaft in the earth for treasure, or steepes himself in the literature of the ages.

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Nevertheless, many young men shirk the responsibility of settling what they call the religious question. This arises in a variety of causes which I need not particularize.

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Let us consider some of the facts in the case.

The prime fact is God, for I am not speaking to the fool who says in his heart there is no God. There will be few indeed who glance over these pages who have not some sort of a belief in God.

When I say that men believe after some fashion in God, I do not mean that their faith comes easily, or that they hold it without struggle, and doubt, and fightings, and fears.

Some men, doubtless, have no tremors and no heart searchings at all. They are easy-going, phlegmatic by nature, into whose souls the iron has never entered. They accept God as they accept the succession of the seasons. Or perhaps they are naturally religious-minded from childhood. They go on from strength to strength. In joy and

His Religion

sorrow, in wealth and poverty, alike they feel underneath the touch of the everlasting arms.

Other men are not so. The more serious and thoughtful they are, the more desirous of doing the right rather than the expedient thing, the greater difficulty do they find in ranging themselves towards God. They hold Him in solution as it were. Honest-minded, not naturally religious in the formal sense of the term, they find themselves troubled by many questions, tangled up in many problems; and if they find peace in any rational relationship with God, it is only after long, perhaps life-long struggle.

I wish to say something to the young man who is beginning to think about God, or who has been thinking for a long time, and has arrived at no conclusion satisfactory to himself.

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We are justified in speaking of God to you whose work and amusements, whose moral and intellectual life, interest us, because your idea of God is the touchstone by which all these other concerns are eventually tested.

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I beg to clear the ground before us by calling attention to the very significant fact that many of the puzzles of life which cause men often to react from God's law and grace as though they were not, proceed from man's misconception of life.

It falls out that men arraign God in the presence of failure, trouble, or disaster, and from arraignment fling themselves into an attitude of denial.

The laborer, whose lines are in hard places, curses the capital by which he is employed, and cries aloud that God is

His Religion

unjust in permitting the inequalities of life.

What has God to do with it, save as the tilling of his vineyard demands men of one, two, and five talents? Let a man examine himself, when he complains that he is unfairly treated, and see how far unthrift, laziness, violence, and dissatisfaction with small things, have entered into the formation of his conditions and surroundings.

A child dies of fever or pneumonia or what you will, and parents piteously and bitterly say, why does God punish me so? There is no connection between the death of a child and a punishment of God, unless the child is the victim of broken law. God is not a whimsical demon, planting the darts of an immoral displeasure hither and thither. But if the sickness that proved fatal came from bad drainage

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or imprudence, how can the blame be laid upon Him? One might as well charge God with punishing us arbitrarily for putting our hand in the fire. His punishments are always moral and retributive. His laws bring with them their own penalties for breakage.

A man fails in business. Why does God treat me so? It is not God. It is human bad management, dishonesty, incompetence of employer or employee; it is the misuse of talents, or the endeavor to perform five-talent tasks with one-talent capital. But it is not God. A weak and fragile man might as well complain that God is to blame because he cannot lift a thousand pounds.

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I am assuming that God is, that He was in the beginning of things, and

His Religion

that He will be forever, the source from which, the end toward which, man is moving:

I am justified in assuming this from the history of the human race. If I say that there is no God, I am setting myself outside of all human experience and thought. It is not an inference, but a fact, that God has been, under whatever image, the fact of eminent domain in human affairs. A black stone falling from heaven; a shining image of noble beauty; an ark of the covenant with hovering cherubim, — under all these forms man has stretched groping hands and laid hold upon the garments of God. He has burned himself in the fire, and drenched himself in water. He has poured forth tuns of wine and oil, and offered up holocausts of goats and calves. And God has accepted it all, because,

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through it, he saw men reaching up to Him.

Man was growing all this time.

One day there stood on the earth a Man who said, when ye pray, say our Father. God is Father. I and my Father are one. Know me and you will know my Father, who is your God and my God.

The Man entered human history, and became its turning point. Know me, he said, and you will know yourselves. Follow me, and you will know me. I am the Truth (in human terms) of God. I am the Life of God manifested in human flesh. I am the Way, therefore, to God.

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Now if a man has felt the dead and clammy touch of what is called agnosticism, and says, "We may like to

His Religion

think and believe all this, but we cannot know it," I say to him, you may know Jesus of Nazareth. He is not a theological proposition, nor an ecclesiastical assumption. He stands out in the open. History touches his person at Bethlehem, in Jerusalem. Cæsar and Pilate came in contact with him.

His life, or the short period of which we have any details, is a science of manhood.

The student soldier studies the lives and campaigns of great soldiers. The student at law delves into the character and methods and decisions of great jurists. The student of medicine walks the hospital where the great physicians touch the sick bodies of humanity.

It is only the fool who would achieve knowledge without sitting at the feet of the masters of knowledge.

You, young man, under whatever

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earth mask, are striving for manhood. Are you not bound to study the great Man, the conspicuously great Man of all history?

Smart and witty men sometimes talk about the blindness of superstitions and the slavery of creeds, meaning the faith of a religious man and the belief of a Christian.

But common sense can hardly fall under their scornful ban. And it is surely common sense that a man should seek a master for the things he desires to know.

Is not Jesus such a Master for the man who wants to know the meaning of God and man in this world?

We see him touching every salient point of human experience; he did not shut himself up in a cell or hide away in a desert to pray for himself and others.

His Religion

He hungered and thirsted and was tired. He was tempted and worried and harassed. He was misunderstood and betrayed. He died the victim of intolerance, ignorance, and fanaticism.

We have the story of it all. He was not impassive. Tears fell from his eyes. He was heavy with grief. But as we read the story, we feel that he met these experiences in such a fashion as to be the victor over them. He was human, as human as we are. But his humanity did not break down under pressure. He lived his life to the bitter end. He shrank from the agony as you and I would, but he endured the cross, even despising the shame.

Why? How? This is the secret he was always trying to impart to man.

Into every life comes the same round of sorrowful puzzle and pain. It is a condition of the divine in man, shaping

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and transfiguring the animal. The perfect man emerges, not in spite of the blows beating upon him, but because of them. Christ entered not into his joy, but first he suffered pain, not for the stripes' sake, but for his own sake.

The secret he imparted by his life was, that struggle and sacrifice are the law of human expansion from childhood to manhood; that the apparent decay and shattering of the human husk are the culture of finer and higher life; that unless a man die he cannot live.

When the young man realizes the meaning of this, he has read the secret, and found the power of the Cross of Christ.

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As you study the Man of Nazareth you will find yourself constantly referred in one way or another to God; not by

His Religion

way of definition, and certainly not in the way of theological argument.

You misunderstand your needs when you say you must have proof of God's existence. What you need is the *sense* of God.

What would be proof of the being of God, after the fashion of mathematical proof? Can you think of anything that would be equivalent?

"Hands cannot touch him," this God. "He does not exist in terms like that. The agnostic stands mute before a mystery, but — a mystery to the physical laboratory. The spirit of a man transcends the laboratory, as a mother's tear transcends the physical salts that image them. It acknowledges the same mystery, but while declaring that God is unknowable in some terms, it feels that he is knowable in others."

One can feel the influence of a great

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poem, or the power of a great musical opus. We would not think of "proving" then in terms.

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Two things affect man with a sense of the being of God, as could no angelic blare of trumpets, nor a great figure swinging himself down from star to star, and finally standing upon the earth.

Sin is one of them. If you find yourself breaking the law of the universe, with results, you know yourself to be sinning against God. If your experience is the same as that of men through all the ages, you will seek a readjustment. You find it but in God.

Therefore effort towards readjustment is the other mode of apprehending Him. In right seeking and truth seeking, you feel yourself to be in harmony with that

His Religion

supreme will which governs the stars in their courses, God.

I do not advance these as self-evident propositions. To some they are. To many they are not. To the man who has been led to think that he cannot know God, I suggest that he question himself as to just what he means by knowledge, and to reflect that he is putting himself outside of all human experience.

The fact is that the man to whom God is merely a figure of speech, or an irresponsible force, has allowed the dust of the earth life to blind him to the reality of the life beyond earth life. He has thought that threescore and ten years, more or less, among men is the beginning and the end, and that unless those years on this earth can interpret himself to himself, there is no interpretation.

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The bird in the egg has not plumbed all the depths or scaled all the heights of existence.

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How shall a man, who is honestly confused and troubled, clear the atmosphere? I charge you, young man, that you have no right to rest in some merely nominal and vague acknowledgment of the existence of One you call God, because you have been taught that this is right. I charge you, on the other side, that you have no right to throw over the experience of the human race all through the ages, because it leans on God, whom you say you do not know. It is laid upon a man with will and conscience to seek after God, if, haply, he may find him. How?

How do you go about any other serious and important quest? How do you

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learn anything? By going to sources of knowledge.

There are facts at your hand. Earth and man, to go no further.

What has man said about God? what has he thought of the origin and destiny of his race which he feels — he cannot prove — transcends the dog and the ape?

You will come upon two things as the outcome of man's quest about self. He believes there is a purpose to the creation, of which he is a part, with which his life is bound up; and he learns that a Man once lived and left records and institutions behind him which throw light upon that purpose.

Go to those records and inquire of these institutions. You have failed, and others have failed? You may not have tried. You have no right to say that you have tried all things, sought all

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ways, until your last earthly breath is drawn. The quest of God is not a thing of a day. You will find Him.

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All this is old and trite! Men have tried and failed, and tried again, through the centuries. Who am I that I should succeed when others, abler and better and stronger than I, have not?

It is old in one sense, but new in another.

You are a new problem. There never was one like you. There never will be another. When God made you in his own image, there must have been in his mind as clear and distinct a purpose as in the creation of the world.

Now, have you tried to find out why you are in the world? Have you really tried, agonized, struggled over it? Have you fought against the evil of your en-

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vironment? Have you striven against the subtle temptation to let well enough alone, and to be satisfied with the standards of your generation?

Having tried, and being conscious — in your own thought — of failure, can you not realize that your day of struggle is not yet over?

Remember that the broken fragments of an earthly failure are often the conditions of a heavenly success. Shackles on the wrist do not make a slave, except to the eyes of the world. Shackles on the soul lead captive the victims of many an earthly triumph. Judas had his thirty pieces of silver. Jesus had his cross.

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Together with the great fact of the idea of God affecting a man's source and destiny, there is another fact which

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the honest man must take into account. Above the babble of the market-place, he hears the voice of the Christian Church. Against the sky line of his horizon, he sees the Cross of Christ, alternating with the chimneys of commerce.

Other things speak to man of God, but the Christian Church has the message as its very *raison d'être*.

A man's environment, inherited or self-chosen, makes certain demands upon him. The Christian Church has created the Christian civilization, of which man is a part, under the privileges of which we live. Christianity, as held, taught, and propagated through the centuries, in the sacraments and preaching of the Church, is far too large a factor of modern life to be ignored, even amid the bustle and clamor of the market-place.

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To the young man who is indifferent to, or impatient of, the claims of the Christian Church (the one Church of Christ, under its various names, the whole company of faithful people), I have this to say:—

You are guaranteed your rights in the market place, in your property, in your very life, in the pursuit of happiness, and your liberty to choose, by the spirit of Christianity, and this spirit has been preserved, handed down, and spread abroad by the Christian Church.

Do you doubt this? Compare the nations of the earth which are Christian with those which are not. I do not mean to pick out individuals here and there, but to note the tide of human progress.

Then compare the nations of a finer and purer type of Christianity with those which have not yet entirely

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emerged from the semi-pagan domination of the middle ages.

Which civilization is preferable? Which commends itself, I will not say to the spiritual man, but to the man of keen eyes and busy brain in the market place, England or China? German principalities or the African tribes? Australia at the present day or before it was colonized?

Ask yourself this question.

If the positive influence of Christianity, which can only be administered through institutions, were withdrawn from modern life, what would follow? There would be a long afterglow, but the light unfed would flicker and in the end die out. Men would inevitably go back to the blanket of savagery, or rot slowly into the muck heap of a civilization like that that died the death in Rome.

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But you will say, however it has come, we have this spirit of civilization, and can very well get on without the Church.

But you know surely that the influence or spirit of Christianity was from the very first connected with propagating institutions, as all life is. Did you ever hear of a harvest of wheat coming from the spirit of wheat in the air? Life of all sorts manifests itself under conditions. The burden of proof lies somewhat heavily on the man who thinks that the spirit of Christ would be in our civilization, as its very salt to-day, without the institutions of Christ.

Young man, you owe a debt to the institutions which have made your civilization Christian instead of heathen. You owe such support as you are able to give to the Church, which is the only organized institution for the purpose

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of maintaining this civilization on broad foundations. If you doubt this, just turn over the pages of history, and see what would be left of modern civilization if Christ were withdrawn from its past, and had naught to do with its present.

In those pages you will find stains and oppressions and strangled thought, and a host of other stumbling-blocks to progress, for which men believing and calling themselves Christians have been responsible. Platforms ring with the recital of them. Books are compiled from the record of them. They are there.

But are they the influence and teaching of Christ? You know better. Here and there a dirty quack practises on the credulity of men and carries misery from house to house. Do you lay that pitiful little atomy to the influence of

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medicine and surgery? You are not such a fool.

I know about the inquisition, and the witch burning, and the persecutions, Roman, Anglican, and Puritan, for conscience' sake.

But was it Christ, or a perversion of Christ's teaching by narrow little fanaticisms that sometimes lay hold of the souls of holy men? You know. You know also that this fair and glorious Republic of ours contains all sorts of parties, and cliques, and patriots, without number, who has each his panacea for the needs of the body politic. You know how we are always discussing (through the newspaper press and the partisan pamphlets) treasons and shames and corruptions, and how we are always going down to destruction if the other side wins. Do you believe it? Do you have less faith in the constitution, or the

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flag, or in the future of our national life?

Not if you are an American. And yet there are traitors, and corruptionists, and tricksters, who train under the starry standard of this land.

Now it is well to get down below the surface of life and see the realities. The Church has steadily maintained through all the ages the rights of man to rest from his daily labor. One of the institutions of Christianity is Sunday. The world needs its Sabbath. You know that.

But the forces of civilization that are not Christian are straining every nerve to break it down. The Church does not say, "cease work that you may go to church," but "cease work that your human powers may not be frayed and worn out before their time."

The Christian Church and the Chris-

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tian Sunday are the only barriers against a secularism that would else engulf the man and woman who work for their daily bread.

Therefore, young man, the Church has a claim on you on merely humanitarian grounds, whether you be an agnostic or a Turk, an infidel or a heretic. You may choose to play golf on Sunday morning. Remember that others choose to worship God after the fashion of the ages. Your legal rights in most communities are equal. But neither one of you would be able to carry your desires into effect, were it not for the spirit of Christ brooding through the years, in hallowed temples of prayer and sacraments, and taught, however imperfectly and unworthily, from chancel and pulpit.

Some people fondly delude themselves with what they call worshipping God in

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the woods and fields, all days and all hours, and talk lightly of the superstitions of consecrated places and days.

There is a truth in this. It lies close to the very heart of Jesus' teaching. But it is not all of the truth nor the whole of his teaching. If it had not been qualified and limited, that sort of worship would consist to-day even as it did of old. You may read in any ancient history of the worship of the groves. The man of the twentieth century need not think himself less of a beast than his ancestors who cut themselves before altars, offered their children in the fire, and did other "religious" acts, of which it is a shame to write or speak.

He is a more self-centred animal to-day. He knows himself; and a part of this knowledge is that he is a son of God as well as a child of the earth, and that his kinship with God is the part of him

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most worth development. He knows that the earth relationship is temporal, the heavenly eternal. He knows that a man is better than a dog. He has beaten down or transformed the lower nature under a sense of responsibility for his existence. And he knows these things from the Christ of the gospels, as set forth in the Church.

He has some duties arising from the rights granted him by a Christian civilization. Let him seek out these duties.

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But there is another and, I am constrained to believe, a larger class of men who have quite the opposite attitude towards the Church.

They say and think that they are not good enough to belong to it, to share in its promises, and to partake of its privileges.

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What do you mean exactly, young man, when you say you are not good enough? I have talked with a great many of you on that point, and no single one of you has ever justified the statement, when he understood more than the superficial letter of it.

If you mean that you are conscious of being a sinner, weak, unworthy, liable to fall under temptation, it is very likely.

What is your desire, your wish, in regard to these things? Do you wish to grow stronger, to be worthy, to free yourself from the snares of temptation; to live a clean life, as becomes a son of the highest? Then the Church is open to you. It is your rightful place. It demands that repentance which turns away from sin and a serious and honest striving to be by your own free act what you are by your divine inheritance, a son of God.

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The Church is not a club for good people. It is not a mutual admiration society for the elect. Communion at its altar is not a badge of having reached a certain stage of piety. The Church is a hospital for sick souls, a school for the childish and ignorant.

It is because you are not "good enough" that you are fit for the Church, if you are sincere. Only your own habits can stand in the way, habits of thought and of action. Such habits demand strenuous effort to throw off. You need all the help you can get. The institutions of Christianity have no other reason for their existence than this, to help you to that manhood of which the type is Jesus of Nazareth.

One thing more. Do not be discouraged.

Every patriot does not win every battle, but every patriot follows the flag

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and tries to win every battle. He does not turn traitor nor coward, does not leave the battlefield and shrink from it, because of weakness, defeats, tremors of fear. You, young man, and such as you, have been the channels of that influence and spirit of Christ of which we have spoken. Divine treasure has always been handed down in earthen vessels. The Church needs you also. Evil is incorporated in a hundred forms. The Church, whatever failings may be discerned in its individual membership, is incorporated good. The young man thinks that he can be just as good a man outside the Church. But that is not the whole duty of a man. He is bound to do good for others. The soldier serves his cause better in the ranks of the army than as an irresponsible guerilla.

The Church does not ask of a man

His Religion

more than a sincere man should ask of himself; but it helps him to achieve his standard.

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As the years lengthen out, and the first enthusiasm of service with the Master dies away, there will come reaction. The cares of life, the disappointments, the failure to realize hopes, the responsibilities of success, all these will spring up in the field. Your profession and calling will seem to be in abeyance. Nominally Christian, the joy in His service will have been displaced by the world's service. Year by year you will go less frequently to the Memorial he laid as a charge and privilege upon all his disciples. The Church will perhaps grow to be merely an adjunct of respectable citizenship. If you look into your life, under some pressure, you

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will be forced to ask the question, "How do I differ from my neighbor who never made any profession? Am I not a hypocrite even as I go to church and sit through the service?"

This state of mind is not uncommon. Now, little as you think it, there *is* a difference between you and the unvowed man; a very grave difference, that of responsibility. The vows you once made are just as solemn obligations upon you now as in the hour you made them. They do not require you to be an archangel, but to be a man. Your carelessness or neglect has not released you in one jot or tittle.

The *noblesse oblige* of the baptismal vow to be "Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto life's end," that is the difference between you and the man who has not ratified that vow in his own person.

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And you are not a hypocrite, my good friend, even if you feel coldness and lack of spiritual receptiveness now and then at the Holy Communion. Do not ask yourself, what did I get in the feast? There is something else.

“I came away,” said a child of faith once to me, “feeling as though I had not taken part; as though it was something I had seen far, far away; as though my eyes had been there, but not my mind or heart.”

The answer was, “You were obeying the Lord’s will in going. You gave something by your hour of worship; therefore whether you were conscious of it or not, you received something.”

You are not a hypocrite, young man, because you are not always aflame with devotion.

You are never a hypocrite so long as you are, honestly, to the best of your

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light, trying to keep your heart pure, your body undefiled, and your soul open towards God.

When you feel that you have broken the vow of Christian manhood, you are not a hypocrite if, on the other hand, you seek in either prayer or sacrament for His blessed help to do better. You know whether you are any better or happier for striving to have your own way, or for adjusting your way to His purpose, which includes you and the whole universe beside.

But, is there nothing else? Suppose my faith has been shattered; suppose the creed seems unreal; suppose I cannot pray because somehow I have lost my belief in prayer. How am I to get the help of Christ in his Church, if I no longer see clearly that he is my Saviour?

Has the Christian Church any mes-

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sage for a man who, having once knelt at her altars, now sees no reason in an altar?

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Those are dark days for a sincere man when the ground of his childhood's faith in God and Christ seems to be slipping away. Even then the Church has a message, however, and would be very unlike her Founder if she had not.

Her first word to such a soul is, stand fast in the things you do believe. Goodness is goodness, apart from intellectual acceptance of even the simplest facts of theology.

When the dust of the earth's struggles and trials hides the vision of God from you, do the next thing you ought to do, as honestly and worthily as you can, and bide his time. He does not measure things as we do. He often sees a heart

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of gold, when we carry a lump of lead.

Two men long ago were involved in the same wreck and disaster of earthly plans and hopes.

One escaped from the tottering walls of a falling cause, snatching thirty pieces of silver in exchange for honor, as he fled, and he went to his own place.

The other started to fly, — it was very human, — he tried three times in succession to escape his doom, but he was an honest man at heart, and he went back to stand by the Man who had taught him that men may die while manhood remains. So Peter became a knight of God.

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A man's intellectual faith may be shaken by one cause or another, but the will of God remains to be done, that

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will of which every man has a vision, in the state of life where it pleased God to call him. These things of which I have been speaking in these pages, the things that make up the details of a man's life work, play, companionship, are earthly instruments by which the divine will of the Father is to be done. It is as certain as that a man lives that, if he uses these instruments faithfully and honestly, he will know, some time and somewhere, what further his heavenly Father desires of him.

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