

Very different is the man of energetic character inspired by a noble spirit, whose actions are governed by rectitude, and the law of whose life is duty. He is just and upright—in his business dealings, in his public action, and in his family life; justice being as essential in the government of a home as of a nation. He will be honest in all things—in his words and in his work. He will be generous and merciful to his opponents, as well as to those who are weaker than himself. It was truly said of Sheridan—who, with all his improvidence, was generous, and never gave pain—that

“His wit in the combat, as gentle as bright,
Never carried a heart-stain away on its blade.”

Such also was the character of Fox, who commanded the affection and service of others by his uniform heartiness and sympathy. He was a man who could always be most easily touched on the side of his honor. Thus the story is told of a tradesman calling upon him one day for the payment of a promissory note which he presented. Fox was engaged at the time in counting out gold. The tradesman asked to be paid from the money before him. “No,” said Fox, “I owe this money to Sheridan; it is a debt of honor; if any accident happened to me, he would have nothing to show.” “Then,” said the tradesman, “I change *my* debt into one of honor;” and he tore up the note. Fox was conquered by

abounding energy, but destitute of principle. He had the lowest opinion of his fellow-men. “Men are hogs, who feed on gold,” he once said: “well, I throw them gold, and lead them whithersoever I will.” When the Abbe de Pradt, archbishop of Malines, was setting out on his embassy to Poland in 1812, Napoleon’s parting instruction to him was, “Tenez bonne table et soignez les femmes”—of which Benjamin Constant said that such an observation, addressed to a feeble priest of sixty, shows Bonaparte’s profound contempt for the human race without distinction of nation or sex.

the act; he thanked the man for his confidence, and paid him, saying, “Then Sheridan must wait; yours is the debt of older standing.”

The man of character is conscientious. He puts his conscience into his work, into his words, into his every action. When Cromwell asked the Parliament for soldiers in lieu of the decayed serving-men and tapsters who filled the Commonwealth’s army, he required that they should be men “who made some conscience of what they did;” and such were the men of which his celebrated regiment of “Iron-sides” was composed.

The man of character is also reverential. The possession of this quality marks the noblest and highest type of manhood and womanhood; reverence for things consecrated by the homage of generations—for high objects, pure thoughts, and noble aims—for the great men of former times, and the high-minded workers among our contemporaries. Reverence is alike indispensable to the happiness of individuals, of families, and of nations. Without it there can be no trust, no faith, no confidence, either in man or God—neither social peace nor social progress. For reverence is but another word for religion, which binds men to each other, and all to God.

“The man of noble spirit,” says Sir Thomas Overbury, “converts all occurrences into experience, between which experience and his reason there is marriage, and the issue are his actions. He moves by affection, not for affection; he loves glory, scorns shame, and governeth and obeyeth with one countenance, for it comes from one consideration. Knowing reason to be no idle gift of nature, he is the steersman of his own destiny. Truth is his goddess, and he takes pains to get her, not to look like her. Unto the society of

men he is a sun, whose clearness directs their steps in a regular motion. He is the wise man's friend, the example of the indifferent, the medicine of the vicious. Thus time goeth not from him, but with him, and he feels age more by the strength of his soul than by the weakness of his body. Thus feels he no pain, but esteems all such things as friends, that desire to file off his fetters, and help him out of prison."*

Energy of will—self-originating force—is the soul of every great character. Where it is, there is life; where it is not, there is faintness, helplessness, and despondency. "The strong man and the water-fall," says the proverb, "channel their own path." The energetic leader of noble spirit not only wins a way for himself, but carries others with him. His every act has a personal significance, indicating vigor, independence, and self-reliance, and unconsciously commands respect, admiration, and homage. Such intrepidity of character characterized Luther, Cromwell, Washington, Pitt, Wellington, and all great leaders of men.

"I am convinced," said Mr. Gladstone, in describing the qualities of the late Lord Palmerston in the House of Commons, shortly after his death—"I am convinced that it was the force of will, a sense of duty, and a determination not to give in, that enabled him to make himself a model for all of us who yet remain and follow him, with feeble and unequal steps, in the discharge of our duties; it was that force of will that in point of fact did not so much struggle against the infirmities of old age, but actually repelled them and kept them at a distance. And one other quality there is, at least, that may be noticed without the smallest risk of stir-

* Condensed from Sir Thomas Overbury's "Characters" (1614)

ring in any breast a painful emotion. It is this, that Lord Palmerston had a nature incapable of enduring anger or any sentiment of wrath. This freedom from wrathful sentiment was not the result of painful effort, but the spontaneous fruit of the mind. It was a noble gift of his original nature—a gift which beyond all others it was delightful to observe, delightful also to remember in connection with him who has left us, and with whom we have no longer to do, except in endeavoring to profit by his example wherever it can lead us in the path of duty and of right, and of bestowing on him those tributes of admiration and affection which he deserves at our hands."

The great leader attracts to himself men of kindred character, drawing them towards him as the loadstone draws iron. Thus, Sir John Moore early distinguished the three brothers Napier from the crowd of officers by whom he was surrounded, and they, on their part, repaid him by their passionate admiration. They were captivated by his courtesy, his bravery, and his lofty disinterestedness; and he became the model whom they resolved to imitate, and, if possible, to emulate. "Moore's influence," says the biographer of Sir William Napier, "had a signal effect in forming and maturing their characters; and it is no small glory to have been the hero of those three men, while his early discovery of their mental and moral qualities is a proof of Moore's own penetration and judgment of character."

There is a contagiousness in every example of energetic conduct. The brave man is an inspiration to the weak, and compels them, as it were, to follow him. Thus Napier relates that at the combat of Vera, when the Spanish centre was broken and in flight, a young officer, named Havelock, sprang forward, and, waving his hat, called upon the Span-

iards within sight to follow him. Putting spurs to his horse, he leaped the abattis which protected the French front, and went headlong against them. The Spaniards were electrified; in a moment they dashed after him, cheering for "*El chico blanco!*" (the fair boy), and with one shock they broke through the French and sent them flying down-hill.*

And so it is in ordinary life. The good and the great draw others after them; they lighten and lift up all who are within reach of their influence. They are as so many living centres of beneficent activity. Let a man of energetic and upright character be appointed to a position of trust and authority, and all who serve under him become, as it were, conscious of an increase of power. When Chatham was appointed minister, his personal influence was at once felt throughout all the ramifications of office. Every sailor who served under Nelson, and knew he was in command, shared the inspiration of the hero.

When Washington consented to act as commander-in-chief, it was felt as if the strength of the American forces had been more than doubled. Many years later, in 1798, when Washington, grown old, had withdrawn from public

* "*History of the Peninsular War*," v., 319.—Napier mentions another striking illustration of the influence of personal qualities in young Edward Freer, of the same regiment (the 43d), who, when he fell at the age of nineteen, at the battle of the Nivelle, had already seen more combats and sieges than he could count years. "So slight in person, and of such surpassing beauty, that the Spaniards often thought him a girl disguised in man's clothing, he was yet so vigorous, so active, so brave, that the most daring and experienced veterans watched his looks on the field of battle, and, implicitly following where he led, would, like children, obey his slightest sign in the most difficult situations."

life and was living in retirement at Mount Vernon, and when it seemed probable that France would declare war against the United States, President Adams wrote to him, saying, "We must have your name, if you will permit us to use it; there will be more efficacy in it than in many an army." Such was the esteem in which the great President's noble character and eminent abilities were held by his countrymen!*

An incident is related by the historian of the Peninsular War, illustrative of the personal influence exercised by a great commander over his followers. The British army lay at Sauroren, before which Soult was advancing, prepared to attack in force. Wellington was absent, and his arrival was anxiously looked for. Suddenly a single horseman was seen riding up the mountain alone. It was the Duke, about to join his troops. "One of Campbell's Portuguese battalions first descried him, and raised a joyful

* When the dissolution of the Union at one time seemed imminent, and Washington wished to retire into private life, Jefferson wrote to him, urging his continuance in office. "The confidence of the whole Union," he said, "centres in you. Your being at the helm will be more than an answer to every argument which can be used to alarm and lead the people in any quarter into violence and secession. . . . There is sometimes an eminence of character on which society has such peculiar claims as to control the predilection of the individual for a particular walk of happiness, and restrain him to that alone arising from the present and future benedictions of mankind. This seems to be your condition, and the law imposed on you by Providence in forming your character and fashioning the events on which it was to operate; and it is to motives like these, and not to personal anxieties of mine or others, who have no right to call on you for sacrifices, that I appeal from your former determination, and urge a reversal of it, on the ground of change in the aspect of things."—SPARKS'S *Life of Washington*, i., 480.

cry; then the shrill clamor, caught up by the next regiment, soon swelled as it ran along the line into that appalling shout which the British soldier is wont to give upon the edge of battle, and which no enemy ever heard unmoved. Suddenly he stopped at a conspicuous point, for he desired both armies should know he was there, and a double spy who was present pointed out Soult, who was so near that his features could be distinguished. Attentively Wellington fixed his eyes on that formidable man, and, as if speaking to himself, he said: "Yonder is a great commander; but he is cautious, and will delay his attack to ascertain the cause of those cheers; that will give time for the Sixth Division to arrive, and I shall beat him"—which he did.*

In some cases, personal character acts by a kind of talismanic influence, as if certain men were the organs of a sort of supernatural force. "If I but stamp on the ground in Italy," said Pompey, "an army will appear." At the voice of Peter the Hermit, as described by the historian, "Europe arose, and precipitated itself upon Asia." It was said of the Caliph Omar that his walking-stick struck more terror into those who saw it than another man's sword. The very names of some men are like the sound of a trumpet. When the Douglas lay mortally wounded on the field of Otterburn, he ordered his name to be shouted still louder than before, saying there was a tradition in his family that a dead Douglas should win a battle. His followers, inspired by the sound, gathered fresh courage, rallied, and conquered; and thus, in the words of the Scottish poet:

"The Douglas dead, his name hath won the field." †

There have been some men whose greatest conquests

* "Napier's History of the Peninsular War," v. 226.

† Sir W. Scott's "History of Scotland," vol. i., chap. xvi.

have been achieved after they themselves were dead. "Never," says Michelet, was Cæsar more alive, more powerful, more terrible, than when his old and wornout body, his withered corpse, lay pierced with blows; he appeared then purified, redeemed—that which he had been, despite his many stains—the man of humanity.* Never did the great character of William of Orange, surnamed the Silent, exercise greater power over his countrymen than after his assassination at Delft by the emissary of the Jesuits. On the very day of his murder the Estates of Holland resolved "to maintain the good cause, with God's help, to the uttermost, without sparing gold or blood;" and they kept their word.

The same illustration applies to all history and morals. The career of a great man remains an enduring monument of human energy. The man dies and disappears; but his thoughts and acts survive, and leave an indelible stamp upon his race. And thus the spirit of his life is prolonged and perpetuated, moulding the thought and will, and thereby contributing to form the character of the future. It is the men that advance in the highest and best directions who are the true beacons of human progress. They are as lights set upon a hill, illumining the moral atmosphere around them; and the light of their spirit continues to shine upon all succeeding generations.

It is natural to admire and revere really great men. They hallow the nation to which they belong, and lift up not only all who live in their time, but those who live after them. Their great example becomes the common heritage of their race; and their great deeds and great thoughts are the most

* Michelet's "History of Rome," p. 374.

glorious of legacies to mankind. They connect the present with the past, and help on the increasing purpose of the future; holding aloft the standard of principle, maintaining the dignity of human character, and filling the mind with traditions and instincts of all that is most worthy and noble in life.

Character embodied in thought and deed, is of the nature of immortality. The solitary thought of a great thinker will dwell in the minds of men for centuries, until at length it works itself into their daily life and practice. It lives on through the ages, speaking as a voice from the dead, and influencing minds living thousands of years apart. Thus, Moses and David and Solomon, Plato and Socrates and Xenophon, Seneca and Cicero and Epictetus, still speak to us as from their tombs. They still arrest the attention, and exercise an influence upon character, though their thoughts be conveyed in languages unspoken by them, and in their time unknown. Theodore Parker has said that a single man like Socrates was worth more to a country than many such States as South Carolina; that if that State went out of the world to-day, she would not have done so much for the world as Socrates.*

Great workers and great thinkers are the true makers of history, which is but continuous humanity influenced by men of character—by great leaders, kings, priests, philosophers, statesmen, and patriots—the true aristocracy of man. Indeed, Mr. Carlyle has broadly stated that Universal History is, at bottom, but the history of Great Men. They

* Erasmus so revered the character of Socrates that he said, when he considered his life and doctrines he was inclined to put him in the calendar of saints, and to exclaim, "*Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis!*" (Holy Socrates, pray for us!)

certainly mark and designate the epochs of national life. Their influence is active, as well as reactive. Though their mind is, in a measure, the product of their age, the public mind is also, to a great extent, their creation. Their individual action identifies the cause—the institution. They think great thoughts, cast them abroad, and the thoughts make events. Thus the early Reformers initiated the Reformation, and with it the liberation of modern thought. Emerson has said that every institution is to be regarded as but the lengthened shadow of some great man: as Islamism of Mohammed, Puritanism of Calvin, Jesuitism of Loyola, Quakerism of Fox, Methodism of Wesley, Abolitionism of Clarkson.

Great men stamp their mind upon their age and nation— as Luther did upon modern Germany, and Knox upon Scotland.* And if there be one man more than another

* "Honor to all the brave and true; everlasting honor to John Knox, one of the truest of the true! That, in the moment while he and his cause, amid civil broils, in convulsion and confusion, were still but struggling for life, he sent the school-master forth to all corners, and said, 'Let the people be taught;' this is but one, and, indeed, an inevitable and comparatively inconsiderable item in his great message to men. This message, in its true compass, was, 'Let men know that they are men; created by God, responsible to God; who work in any meanest moment of time what will last through eternity.' . . . This great message Knox did deliver, with a man's voice and strength, and found a people to believe him. Of such an achievement, were it to be made once only, the results are immense. Thought, in such a country, may change its form, but cannot go out; the country has attained *majority*; thought, and a certain spiritual manhood, ready for all work that man can do; endures there. . . . The Scotch national character originated in many circumstances; first of all, in the Saxon stuff there was to work on; but next, and beyond all else except that, is the Presbyterian Gospel of John Knox."—CARLYLE'S *Miscellanies*, iv., 118.

that stamped his mind on modern Italy, it was Dante. During the long centuries of Italian degradation his burning words were as a watch-fire and a beacon to all true men. He was the herald of his nation's liberty—braving persecution, exile, and death for the love of it. He was always the most national of the Italian poets, the most loved, the most read. From the time of his death all educated Italians had his best passages by heart; and the sentiments they enshrined inspired their lives, and eventually influenced the history of their nation. "The Italians," wrote Byron in 1821, "talk Dante, write Dante, and think and dream Dante, at this moment, to an excess which would be ridiculous, but that he deserves their admiration."*

A succession of variously gifted men in different ages—extending from Alfred to Albert—has in like manner contributed, by their life and example, to shape the multiform character of England. Of these, probably the most influential were the men of the Elizabethan and Cromwellian,

* Moore's "Life of Byron," 8vo ed., p. 484.—Dante was a religious as well as a political reformer. He was a reformer three hundred years before the Reformation, advocating the separation of the spiritual from the civil power, and declaring the temporal government of the Pope to be an usurpation. The following memorable words were written over five hundred and sixty years ago, while Dante was still a member of the Roman Catholic Church: "Every Divine law is found in one or other of the two Testaments; but in neither can I find that the care of temporal matters was given to the priesthood. On the contrary, I find that the first priests were removed from them by law, and the later priests by command of Christ to his disciples."—*De Monarchia*, lib. iii., cap. xi. Dante also, still clinging to "the Church he wished to reform," thus anticipated the fundamental doctrine of the Reformation: "Before the Church are the Old and New Testaments; after the Church are traditions. It follows, then, that the authority of the Church depends, not on traditions, but traditions on the Church."

and the intermediate periods—among which we find the great names of Shakspeare, Raleigh, Burleigh, Sidney, Bacon, Milton, Herbert, Hampden, Pym, Eliot, Vane, Cromwell, and many more—some of them men of great force, and others of great dignity and purity of character. The lives of such men have become part of the public life of England, and their deeds and thoughts are regarded as among the most cherished bequeathments from the past.

So Washington left behind him, as one of the greatest treasures of his country, the example of a stainless life—of a great, honest, pure, and noble character—a model for his nation to form themselves by in all time to come. And in the case of Washington, as in so many other great leaders of men, his greatness did not so much consist in his intellect, his skill, and his genius, as in his honor, his integrity, his truthfulness, his high and controlling sense of duty—in a word, in his genuine nobility of character.

Men such as these are the true life-blood of the country to which they belong. They elevate and uphold it, fortify and ennoble it, and shed a glory over it by the example of life and character which they have bequeathed. "The names and memories of great men," says an able writer, "are the dowry of a nation. Widowhood, overthrow, desertion, even slavery, cannot take away from her this sacred inheritance. . . . Whenever national life begins to quicken . . . the dead heroes rise in the memories of men, and appear to the living to stand by in solemn spectatorship and approval. No country can be lost which feels herself overlooked by such glorious witnesses. They are the salt of the earth, in death as well as in life. What they did once, their descendants have still and always a right to do after them; and their example lives in their country, a continual stim-