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SECCION DE ESTUDIOS HISTORICOS DE LA

UNIVERSIDAD DE NUEVO LEON

DUTY.

CHAPTER I.

DUTY—CONSCIENCE.

He walked attended
By a strong-aiding champion—Conscience.
MILTON.

Whate'er thy race or speech, thou art the same;
Before thy eyes Duty, a constant flame,
Shines always steadfast with unchanging light,
Through dark days and through bright.

The Ode of Life.

Why, O man, do you vituperate the world? The world is most beautiful, framed by the best and most perfect reason, though to you indeed it may be unclean and evil, because you are unclean and evil in a good world.—MARSILIUS FICINUS.

MAN does not live for himself alone. He lives for the good of others as well as of himself. Every one has his duties to perform—the richest as well as the poorest. To some life is pleasure, to others suffering. But the best do not live for self-enjoyment, or even for fame. Their strongest motive power is hopeful, useful work in every good cause.

Hierocles says that each one of us is a centre, circumscribed by many concentric circles. From ourselves the first circle extends—comprising parents, wife and children. The next concentrating circle comprises relations; then fellow citizens; and lastly, the whole human race.

To do our duty in this world toward God and toward man, consistently and steadily, requires the cultivation of all the faculties which God hath given us. And He has given us everything. It is the higher Will that instructs and guides our will. It is the knowledge of good and evil, the knowledge of what is right and what is wrong, that makes us responsible to man here, and to God hereafter.

The sphere of Duty is infinite. It exists in every station of life. We have it not in our choice to be rich or poor, to be happy or unhappy; but it becomes us to do the duty that everywhere surrounds us. Obedience to duty at all costs and risks, is the very essence of the highest civilized life. Great deeds must be worked for, hoped for, died for, now as in the past.

We often connect the idea of Duty with the soldier's trust. We remember the pagan sentinel at Pompeii, found dead at his post, during the burial of the city by the ashes of Vesuvius, some eighteen hundred years ago. This was the true soldier. While others fled, he stood to his post. It was his Duty. He had been set to guard the place, and he never flinched. He was suffocated by the sulphureous vapor of the falling ashes. His body was resolved to dust, but his memory survives. His helmet, lance and breastplate are still to be seen at the Museo Borbonico at Naples.

This soldier was obedient and disciplined. He did what he was appointed to do. Obedience, to the parent, to the master, to the officer, is what every one who would do right should be taught to learn. Childhood should begin with obedience. Yet age does not absolve us. We must be obedient even to the end. Duty, in its purest form, is so constraining that one never thinks, in performing it, of one's self at all. It is there. It has to be done without any thought of self-sacrifice.

To come to a much later date than that of the Roman soldier at Pompeii. When the Birkenhead went down off the coast of Africa, with her brave soldiers on board firing a *feu de joie* as they sank beneath the waves, the Duke of Wellington, after the news arrived in England, was entertained at the Banquet of the Royal Academy. Macaulay

says: "I remarked (and Mr. Lawrence, the American Minister, remarked the same thing) that in his eulogy of the poor fellows who were lost, the Duke never spoke of their courage, but always of their discipline and subordination. He repeated it several times over. The courage, I suppose, he treated as a matter of course."

Duty is self-devoted. It is not merely fearlessness. The gladiator who fought the lion with the courage of a lion was urged on by the ardor of the spectators, and never forgot himself and his prizes. Pizarro was full of hardihood. But he was actuated by his love of gold in the midst of his terrible hardships.

"Do you wish to be great?" asks St. Augustine. "Then begin by being little. Do you desire to construct a vast and lofty fabric? Think first about the foundations of humility. The higher your structure is to be, the deeper must be its foundation. Modest humility is beauty's crown."

The best kind of duty is done in secret, and without sight of men. There it does its work devotedly and nobly. It does not follow the routine of worldly-wise morality. It does not advertise itself. It adopts a larger creed and a loftier code, which to be subject to and to obey is to consider every human life, and every human action, in the light of an eternal obligation to the race. Our evil or our careless actions incur debts every day, that humanity, sooner or later, must discharge.

But how to learn to do one's duty? Can there be any difficulty here? First, there is the pervading, abiding sense of duty to God. Then follow others: Duty to one's family; duty to our neighbors; duty of masters to servants, and of servants to masters; duty to our fellow-creatures; duty to the state, which has also its duty to perform to the citizen.

Many of these duties are performed privately. Our public life may be well known, but in private there is that which no one sees—the inner life of the soul and spirit. We have it in our choice to be worthy or worthless. No one can kill our soul, which can perish only by its own suicide. If we can only make ourselves and each other a little better, holier, and nobler, we have perhaps done the most that we could.

Here is the manner in which an American legislator stood to his post:

An eclipse of the sun happened in New England about a century ago. The heavens became very dark, and it seemed by many that the Day of Judgment was at hand. The Legislature of Connecticut happened then to be in session, and on the darkness coming on, a member moved the adjournment of the House, on which an old Puritan legislator, Davenport of Stamford, rose up and said that if the last day had come, he desired to be found in his place and doing his duty; for which reasons he moved that candles should be brought, so that the House might proceed with its business. Waiting at the post of Duty was the maxim of the wise man, and he carried his motion.

There was a man of delicate constitution, who devoted a great deal of his time to philanthropic work. He visited the sick, he sat by them in their miserable homes, he nursed them and helped them in all ways. He was expostulated with by his friends for neglecting his business, and threatened with the illness he was sure to contract by visiting the fevered and the dying. He replied to his friends, with firmness and simplicity, "I look after my business for the sake of my wife and my children, but I hold that a man's duty to society requires him to have a care for those who are not of his own household."

These were the words of a willing servant to duty. It is not the man who gives his money that is the true benefactor of his kind, but the man who gives *himself*. The man who gives his money is advertised; the man who gives his time, strength, and soul, is beloved. The one may be remembered, while the other may be forgotten, though the good influence he has sown will never die.

But what is the foundation of Duty? Jules Simon has written a valuable work, "Le Devoir," in which he makes duty depend upon liberty. Men must be free in order to perform their public duties, as well as to build up their individual character. They are free to think; they must also be free to act. At the same time liberty may be used to do evil rather than to do good. The tyranny of a multitude is

worse than the tyranny of an individual. Thoreau, the American, says that modern freedom is only the exchange of the slavery of feudality for the slavery of opinion.

Freedom, enjoyed by all men alike, is a late idea in history.* In remote ages, men who were so-called "free" possessed the right of being served by slaves. There was slavery in the state, and also in the family. It existed in republics as well as in monarchies. The elder Cato, the greatest economist of Republican Rome, enforced the expediency of getting rid of old slaves to avoid the burden of their maintenance. The sick and infirm slaves were carried to the island of Esculapius, in the Tiber, where they were suffered to die of disease or of hunger. In Imperial Rome, the *Populus Romanus* was dependent upon charity. In England also, when slavery was abolished, and when the poor were no longer fed by the charity of the monasteries, a poor law was established, which was only a compensation for the loss of liberty.

There is a stronger word than Liberty, and that is Conscience. From the beginning of civilization the power of this word has been acknowledged. Menander, the Greek poet, who lived three hundred years before Christ, duly recognized it. "In our own breast," he said, "we have a god—our conscience." Again he says, "'Tis not to live, to

* The feeling that labor is not an honorable occupation is but a survival of the old pagan and feudal times, when the plough was left to the slaves, and only the villeins hoed the corn. The Roman definition of gentility was *gentem habent soli cuius parentis nemini servierunt*—"those only are genteel whose ancestors have never served." The idea prevalent in the North American Republic, according to which slave blood, in even the extremest branch contaminates, is decidedly of Roman origin. "Dear German peasants," says Heine, "go to America, there you will find neither princes nor nobles; all men are equals, with the exception, in truth, of a few millions who have a black or a brown skin, and are treated like dogs. He who has the least trace of negro descent, and betrays his origin no longer in color, but in the form of his features, is forced to suffer the greatest humiliations. . . . Doubtless many a noble heart may there in silence lament the universal self-seeking and unrighteousness. Would he, however, strive against it, a martyrdom awaits him which surpasses all European conception."

live for self alone. Whenever you do what is holy, be of good cheer, knowing that God himself takes part with rightful courage. The rich heart is the great thing that man wants."

Conscience is that peculiar faculty of the soul which may be called the religious instinct. It first reveals itself when we become aware of the strife between a higher and a lower nature within us—of spirit warring against flesh—of good striving for the mastery over evil. Look where you will, in the church or without the church, the same struggle is always going on—war for life or death; men and women wrung with pain because they love the good and cannot yet attain it.

It is out of this experience that Religion is born—the higher law leading us up to One whom the law of conscience represents. "It is an introspection," says Canon Mosely, "on which all religion has been built. Man going into himself and seeing the struggle within him, and thence getting self-knowledge, and thence the knowledge of God." Under this influence man knows and feels what is right and wrong. He has the choice between good and evil. And because he is free to choose, he is responsible.

Whatever men may theoretically believe, none practically feel that their actions are necessary and inevitable. There is no constraint upon our volition. We know that we are not compelled, as by a spell, to obey any particular motive.

"We feel," says John Stuart Mill, "that if we wished to prove that we have the power of resisting the motive, we could do so; and it would be humiliating to our pride, and paralyzing to our desire of excellence, if we thought otherwise."

Our actions are controllable, else why do men all over the world enact laws? They are enacted in order to be obeyed, because it is the universal belief, as it is the universal fact, that men obey them or not, very much as they determine.

We feel, each one of us, that our habits and temptations are not our masters, but we of them. Even in yielding to them we know that we could resist, and that, were we desirous of throwing them off altogether, there could not be

required for that purpose a stronger desire or will than we know ourselves to be capable of feeling.

To enjoy spiritual freedom of the highest kind, the mind must have been awakened by knowledge. As the mind has become enlightened, and conscience shows its power, the responsibility of man increases. He submits himself to the influence of the Supreme Will, and acts in conformity with it—not by constraint, but cheerfully; and the law which holds him is that of Love. In the act of belief, implying knowledge and confidence, his humanity unfolds. He feels that by his own free act, his faith in and his working in conformity to the purpose of a Divine Will, he is achieving good, and securing the highest good.

"Man without religion," says Archdeacon Hare, "is the creature of circumstances; but religion is above all circumstances, and will lift him up above them." And Thomas Lynch in his *Theophilus Trinal* says, "Till fixed, we are not free. The acorn must be earthed ere the oak will develop. The man of faith is the man who has taken root—taken root in God; our works prove our heart—our heart in God." In the New Testament we find, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." And Cowper:

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside."

Where there is no such acknowledgment of Divine law, men act in obedience to sense, to passion, to selfishness. In indulging any vicious propensity, they know they are doing wrong. Their conscience condemns them. The law of nature cries out against them. They know that their act has been wilful and sinful. But their power to resist in the future has become weakened. Their will has lost power; and next time the temptation offers, the resistance will be less. Then the habit is formed. The curse of every evil deed is that, propagating still, it brings forth evil.

But conscience is not dead. We cannot dig a grave for it, and tell it to lie there. We may trample it under foot, but it still lives. Every sin or crime has at the moment of its perpetration, its own avenging angel. We cannot blind

our eyes to it, or stop our ears to it. "'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all." There comes a day of judgment even in this world, when it stands up confronting us, and warning us to return to the life of well-doing.

Conscience is permanent and universal. It is the very essence of individual character. It gives a man self-control—the power of resisting temptations and defying them. Every man is bound to develop his individuality, to endeavor to find the right way of life, and to walk in it. He has the will to do so: he has the power to be himself and not the echo of somebody else, nor the reflection of lower conditions, nor the spirit of current conventions. True manhood comes from self-control—from subjection of the lower powers to the higher conditions of our being.

The only comprehensive and sustained exercise of self-control is to be attained through the ascendancy of conscience—in the sense of duty performed. It is conscience alone which sets a man on his feet, frees him from the dominions of his own passions and propensities. It places him in relation to the best interests of his kind. The truest source of enjoyment is found in the paths of duty alone. Enjoyment will come as the unbidden sweetener of labor, and crown every right work.

At its fullest growth conscience bids men do whatever makes them happy in the highest sense, and forbear doing whatever makes them unhappy. "There are few if any among civilized people," says Herbert Spencer, "who do not agree that human well-being is in accordance with the Divine Will. The doctrine is taught by all our religious teachers; it is assumed by every writer on morality; we may therefore safely consider it an admitted truth."

Without conscience, a man can have no higher principle of action than pleasure. He does what he likes best, whether it be sensuality or even sensuous intellectual enjoyment. We are not sent into the world to follow our own bent—to indulge merely in self-satisfaction. The whole constitution of nature works against this idea of life. The mind ought never to be held in subjection to the lower parts of our nature. There can be no self-sacrifice, no self-denial,

no self-control—except what may be necessary to avoid the consequences of human law.

A race so constituted, with intellect and passions such as man possesses, and without the paramount influence of conscience to govern their deeds, would soon be consigned to utter anarchy, and terminate in mutual destruction. We partly see the results already, in the mad riot in human life which has recently prevailed among the Nihilists in Germany and Russia, and the fire and destruction of the Communists' war in Paris. Such a principle prevailing throughout society can lead to nothing else than utter demoralization—individual, social, and national.

The only method left is to recall men to their sense of Duty. The task of our fathers has been to conquer right; be it the task of this generation to teach and propagate duty. Give justice also—justice, which is the splendor of virtue; and benevolence its companion. There is a sentence in the Evangelists which comes back to us without ceasing, and which ought to be written on every page of a book of morality—"Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." "In life," says Wilhelm von Humboldt, "it is worthy of special remark, that when we are not too anxious about happiness and unhappiness, but devote ourselves to the strict and unsparing performance of duty, then happiness comes of itself—nay, even springs from the midst of a life of troubles and anxieties and privations."

"What is your duty?" asks Goethe. "The carrying out of the affairs of the day that lies before you." But this is too narrow a view of duty. "What again," he asks, "is the best government? That which teaches us to govern ourselves." Plutarch said to the Emperor Trajan, "Let your government commence in your own breast, and lay the foundation of it in the command of your own passions." Here come in the words self-control, duty, and conscience. "There will come a time," said Bishop Hooker, "when three words, uttered with chastity and meekness, shall receive a far more blessed reward than three thousand volumes written with the disdainful sharpness of wit."

It is well for the soul to look on actions done for love, not

for selfish objects, but for duty, mercy, and loving-kindness. There are many things done for love which are a thousand times better than those done for money. The former inspire the spirit of heroism and self-devotion. The latter die with the giving. Duty that is bought is worth little. "I consider," said Dr. Arnold, "beyond all wealth, honor, or even health, is the attachment due to noble souls; because to become one with the good, generous, and true, is to be in a manner good, generous, and true yourself."

Every man has a service to do, to himself as an individual, and to those who are near him. In fact, life is of little value unless it be consecrated by duty. "Show those qualities, then," said Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, "which are altogether in thy power—sincerity, gravity, endurance of labor, aversion to pleasure, contentment with thy portion, and with few things, benevolence, frankness, and magnanimity."

The greatest intellectual power may exist without a particle of magnanimity. The latter comes from the highest power in man's mind—conscience, and from the highest faculty, reason, and capacity for faith—that by which man is capable of apprehending more than the senses supply. It is this which makes man a reasonable creature—more than a mere animal. Mr. Darwin has truly said "that the motives of conscience, as connected with repentance and the feelings of duty, are the most important differences which separate man from the animal."*

We are invited to believe in the all-powerful potency of matter. We are to believe only in what we can see with our eyes and touch with our hands. We are to believe in nothing that we do not understand. But how very little do we absolutely know and understand! We see only the surfaces of things, "as in a glass darkly." How can matter help us to understand the mysteries of life? We know absolutely nothing about the causes of volition, sensation, and mental action. We know that they exist, but we cannot understand them.

*"Descent of Man," vol. i. chap. ii.

When a young man declared to Dr. Parr that he would believe nothing he did not understand, "Then, sir," said the doctor, "your creed would be the shortest of any man whom I ever knew." But Sidney Smith said a better thing than this. At a dinner at Holland House a foreigner announced himself as a materialist. Presently Sidney Smith observed, "A very good soufflet this!" To which the materialist rejoined, "Oui, monsieur; il est ravissant!" "By the way," replied Smith, with his usual knock-down application, "may I ask, sir, whether you happen to believe in a cook?"

We must believe a thousand things that we do not understand. Matter and its combinations are as great a mystery as Life is. Look at those numberless far-off worlds majestically wheeling in their appointed orbits; or at this earth on which we live, performing its diurnal motion on its own axis, during its annual circle round the sun. What do we understand about the causes of such motions? What can we ever know about them beyond the fact that such things are?

"The circuit of the sun in the heavens," says Pascal, "vast as it is, is itself only a delicate point when compared with the vaster circuit that is accomplished by the stars. Beyond the range of sight, this universe is but a spot in the ample bosom of nature. We can only imagine of atoms as compared with the reality, which is an infinite sphere, of which the centre is everywhere, the circumference nowhere. What is man in the midst of this infinite? But there is another prospect not less astounding; it is the Infinite beneath him. Let him look to the smallest of the things which come under his notice—a mite. It has limbs, veins, blood circulating in them, globules in that blood, humors, and serum. Within the inclosure of this atom I will show you not merely the visible universe, but the very immensity of Nature. Whoever gives his mind to thoughts such as this will be terrified at himself—trembling where Nature has placed him—suspended, as it were, between infinity and nothingness. The Author of these wonders comprehends them; none but He can do so."

Confucius taught his disciples to believe that Conduct is three fourths of life. "Ponder righteousness, and practise virtue. Knowledge, magnanimity, and energy, are universally binding. Gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness, constitute perfect virtue." These words come to us as the far-off echo of the great teacher of ten thousand ages, as his disciples called him—the holy and prescient sage Confucius.

But all these virtues come from the innate monitor Conscience. From this first principle all rules of behavior are drawn. It bids us do what we call right, and forbids us doing what we call wrong. At its fullest growth it bids us do what makes others happy, and forbids us doing what makes others unhappy. The great lesson to be learned is that man must strengthen himself to perform his duty and do what is right, seeking his happiness and inward peace in objects that cannot be taken away from him. Conscience is the conflict by which we get the mastery over our own failings. It is a silent working of the inner man, by which he proves his peculiar power of the will and spirit of God.

We have also something to learn from the noble old Greeks as to the virtue of Duty. Socrates is considered by some as the founder of Greek philosophy. It was his belief that he was specially charged by the Deity to awaken moral consciousness in men. He was born at Athens 468 years before Christ. He received the best education which an Athenian could obtain. He first learned sculpture, in which he acquired some reputation. He then served his country as a soldier, according to the duty of all Athenian citizens. The oath which he took, in common with all other youths, was as follows: "I will not disgrace the sacred arms intrusted to me by my country; nor will I desert the place committed to me to defend."

He displayed much fortitude and valor in all the expeditions in which he was engaged. In one of the engagements which took place before Potidæa, Alcibiades fell wounded in the midst of the enemy. Socrates rushed forward to rescue him, and carried him back, together with his arms. For this gallant performance he was awarded the civic crown

as the prize of valor—the Victoria Cross of those days. His second campaign was no less honorable. At the disastrous battle of Delium, he saved the life of Xenophon, whom he carried from the field on his shoulder, fighting his way as he went. He served in another campaign, after which he devoted himself for a time to the civil service of his country.

He was as brave as a senator as he had been as a soldier. He possessed that high moral courage which can brave not only death but adverse opinion. He could defy a tyrant, as well as a tyrannical mob. When the admirals were tried after the battle of Arginusæ, for not having rescued the bodies of the slain, Socrates stood alone in defending them. The mob were furious. He was dismissed from the Council, and the admirals were condemned.

Socrates then devoted himself to teaching. He stood in the market-places, entered the work-shops, and visited the schools, in order to teach the people his ideas respecting the scope and value of human speculation and action. He appeared during a time of utter scepticism. He endeavored to withdraw men from their metaphysical speculation about nature, which had led them into the inextricable confusion of doubt. "Is life worth living?" was a matter of as much speculation in those days as it is in ours. Socrates bade them look inward. While men were propitiating the gods, he insisted upon moral conduct as alone guiding man to happiness here and hereafter.

Socrates went about teaching. Wise men and pupils followed him. Aristippus offered him a large sum of money, but the offer was at once declined. Socrates did not teach for money, but to propagate wisdom. He declared that the highest reward he could enjoy was to see mankind benefiting by his labors.

He did not expound from books; he merely argued. "Books," he said, "cannot be interrogated, cannot answer, therefore they cannot teach. We can only learn from them what we knew before." He endeavored to reduce things to their first elements, and to arrive at certainty as the only standard of truth. He believed in the unity of virtue, and averred that it was teachable as a matter of science. He

was of opinion that the only valuable philosophy is that which teaches us our moral duties and religious hopes. He hated injustice and folly of all kinds, and never lost an occasion of exposing them. He expressed his contempt for the capacity for government assumed by all men. He held that only the wise were fit to govern, and that they were the few.

In his seventy-second year he was brought before the judges. The accusers stated their charge as follows: Socrates is an evil-doer, and corrupter of the youth: he does not receive the gods whom the state receives, but introduces new divinities. He was tried on these grounds, and condemned to die. He was taken to his prison, and for thirty days he conversed with his friends on his favorite topics. Crito provided for him the means of escaping from prison, but he would not avail himself of the opportunity. He conversed about the immortality, of the soul,* about courage and virtue and temperance, about absolute beauty and absolute good, and about his wife and children.

He consoled his weeping friends, and gently upbraided them for their complaints about the injustice of his sentence. He was about to die. Why should they complain? He was far advanced in years. Had they waited a short time, the thing would have happened in the course of nature. No man ever welcomed death as a new birth to a higher state of being with greater faith. The time at length came when the jailer presented him with the cup of hemlock. He drank it with courage, and died in complete calmness. "Such was the end," said Phædo, "of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest and justest and best of all the men whom I have ever known."

* "If death," he said, "had only been the end of all, the wicked would have had a good bargain in dying, for they would have been happily quit, not only of their bodies, but of their own evil, together with their souls. But now, inasmuch as the soul is manifestly immortal, there is no release or salvation from evil, except the attainment of the highest virtue and wisdom."—JOWETT'S "Dialogues of Plato," i. 488.

"After ages have cherished the memory of his virtues and of his fate," says Mr. Lewes; "but without profiting much by his example, and without learning tolerance from his story. His name has become a moral thesis for school-boys and rhetoricians. Would that it could become a Moral Influence!"*

Socrates wrote no books. Nearly all that we know of him is derived from his illustrious disciples, Plato and Xenophon, who have embalmed the memory of his actions, lessons, wrongs, and death. Plato lived with him for ten years, and afterward expounded his views in the famous "Dialogues;" but in these dialogues it is difficult to know which is Plato and which is Socrates. After they had been separated by death. Plato, in his fortieth year, travelled into Sicily. He there became acquainted with Dionysius I., the Tyrant of Syracuse. Owing to a difference of opinion about politics, for Plato was bold and free in his expressions about liberty, the tyrant threatened his life. Dion, his brother, interceded for him, and his life was saved; but he was ordered to be sold as a slave. He was bought by a friend, and immediately set at liberty.

Plato returned to Athens, and began to teach. Like his master, he taught without money and without price. It is not necessary to follow his history. Suffice it to say, that he devoted himself to the inculcation of truth, morality, and duty. He divided the four cardinal virtues into (1) Prudence and wisdom; (2) Courage, constancy, and fortitude; (3) Temperance, discretion, and self-control; and (4) Justice and righteousness. He assumed this division of virtue as the basis of his moral philosophy. "Let men of all ranks," he said, "whether they are successful or unsuccessful, whether they triumph or not—let them do their duty, and rest satisfied." What a lesson for future ages lies in these words!

Plato devoted the end of his days to the calm retirement of his Academy. The composition of the "Dialogues," which have been the admiration of posterity, was the cheering solace of his life, and especially of his declining years.

* "Biographical History of Philosophy," i. 213 (first edition).

He has been called the Divine Plato. His soul panted for truth. This alone, he said, should be man's great object. Like his master, he connected with Supreme Intelligence the attributes of goodness, justice, and wisdom, and the idea of direct interposition in human affairs. He disliked poetry as much as Carlyle.* The only poetry he ever praises is moral poetry, which is in truth verified philosophy. Let it be remarked that he lived about four hundred years before Christ. Coleridge speaks of him as the genuine prophet of the Christian Era; and Count de Maistre was accustomed to say of him, "Let us never leave a great question without having consulted Plato."

The New Testament gives a glorified ideal of a possible human life; but hard are his labors who endeavors to keep that ideal uppermost in his mind. We feel that there is something else that we would like to do, much better than the thing that is incumbent upon us. But the Duty is there, and it must be done, without dreaming or idling. How much of the philosophy of moral health and happiness is involved in the injunction, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." He that does his best, whatever his lot may be, is on the sure road of advancement.

* Carlyle says, "If you have anything profitable to communicate to men, why *sing it*?" That a man has to bring out his gift in *words* of any kind, and not in silent divine *actions*, which alone are fit to express it well, seems to me a great misfortune for him. It is one of my constant regrets in this generation, that men to whom the gods have given a genius (which means a light of intelligence, of courage, and all manfulness, or else means nothing) will insist, in such an earnest time as ours has grown, in bringing out their Divine gift in the shape of *verse*, which now no man reads entirely in earnest." On the other hand, Mr. Matthew Arnold, in his Introduction to "The English Poets," says that our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay in *Poetry*. "There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact, it has attached its emotions to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion."

It is related of one, who in the depths of his despair cried, "It is of no use to be good, for you cannot be good, and if you were, it would do you no good." It is hopeless, truthless, and faithless, thus to speak of the goodness of word and work. Each one of us can do a little good in our own sphere of life. If we can do it, we are bound to do it. We have no more right to render ourselves useless than to destroy ourselves.

We have to be faithful in small things as well as in great. We are required to make as good a use of our one talent as of the many talents that have been conferred upon us. We can follow the dictates of our conscience, and walk, though alone, in the paths of duty. We can be honest, truthful, diligent, were it only out of respect for one's self. We have to be faithful even to the end. Who is not struck with the answer of the slave who, when asked by an intending purchaser, "Wilt thou be faithful if I buy thee?" "Yes," said the slave, "whether you buy me or not."

In the description of a sermon preached to the working classes by the late Dr. Macleod, in the Barony Church of Glasgow, it is said that he made a grand stand for Character. From the highest to the lowest that was the grand aim to be made. He said that "the most valuable thing that Prince Albert had left was Character. He knew perfectly well that many very poor people thought it was impossible for them to have a character. It was not true; he would not hear of it. There was not a man or woman before him, however poor they might be, but had it in their power, by the grace of God, to leave behind them the grandest thing on earth, Character; and their children might rise up after them and thank God that their mother was a pious woman, or their father a pious man."

Character is made up of small duties faithfully performed—of self-denials, of self-sacrifices, of kindly acts of love and duty. The backbone of character is laid at home; and whether the constitutional tendencies be good or bad, home influences will as a rule fan them into activity. "He that is faithful in little is faithful in much; and he that is unfaithful in little is unfaithful also in much." Kindness begets kind-

ness, and truth and trust will bear a rich harvest of truth and trust. There are many little trivial acts of kindness which teach us more about a man's character than many vague phrases. These are easy to acquire, and their effects will last much longer than this very temporary life.

For no good thing is ever lost. Nothing dies, not even life, which gives up one form only to resume another. No good action, no good example dies. It lives forever in our race. While the frame moulders and disappears, the deed leaves an indelible stamp, and moulds the very thought and will of future generations. Time is not the measure of a noble work; the coming age will share our joy. A single virtuous action has elevated a whole village, a whole city, a whole nation. "The present moment," says Goethe, "is a powerful deity." Man's best products are his happy and sanctifying thoughts, which, when once formed and put in practice, extend their fertilizing influence for thousands of years, and from generation to generation. It is from small seeds dropped into the ground that the finest productions grow; and it is from the inborn dictates of Conscience, and the inspired principle of Duty that the finest growths of Character have arisen. Thus sings Wordsworth of Duty:

"Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know I anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face;
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens are through thee fresh and strong."

CHAPTER II.

DUTY IN ACTION.

Put thou thy trust in God,
In duty's path go on;
Fix on His Word thy steadfast eye,
So shall thy work be done. LUTHER.

Do noble things, not dream them, all day long,
And so make life, death, and that vast forever, one grand sweet
song. CHARLES KINGSLEY.

O worker of the world! to whose young arm
The brute earth yields, and wrong, as to a charm;
Young seaman, soldier, student, toiler at the plough,
Or loom, or forge, or mine, a kingly growth art thou!
Where'er thou art, though earthy oft and coarse,
Thou bearest with thee hidden springs of force,
Creative power, the flower, the fruitful strife,
The germ, the potency of life. *The Ode of Life.*

HE who has well considered his duty will at once carry his convictions into action. Our acts are the only things that are in our power. They not only form the sum of our habits, but of our character.

At the same time, the course of duty is not always the easy course. It has many oppositions and difficulties to surmount. We may have the sagacity to see, but not the strength of purpose to do. To the irresolute there is many a lion in the way. He thinks and moralizes and dreams, but does nothing. "There is little to see," said a hard-worker, "and little to do; it is only to do it."

There must not only be a conquest over likings and dislikings; but, what is harder to attain, a triumph over adverse repute. The man whose first question, after a right course of action has presented itself, is "What will people