



CHAPTER II. THE ESSENCE OF SIMPLICITY.

BEFORE considering the question of a practical return to the simplicity of which we dream, it will be necessary to define simplicity in its very essence, for in regard to it people commit the same error that we have just denounced, confounding the secondary with the essential, substance with form.

his deeds man arrives at a better knowledge of life. Its law appears to him, and the law is this: Work out your mission. He who applies himself to aught else than the realization of this end loses in living the raison d'être of life.

Sweden Will Send Her Wandering Sons. A rather remarkable agitation is under way in Sweden with the object of securing the return to that country of persons who have emigrated to the United States and there accumulated some money.

And common sense—do you not find what is designated by this name becoming as rare as the common sense customs of other days? Common sense has become an old story. We must have something new, and we create a factitious existence, a refinement of living, that the vulgar crowd has not the wherewithal to procure. It is so agreeable to be distinguished! Instead of conducting ourselves like rational beings and using the means most obviously at our command we arrive, by dint of absolute genius, at the most astonishing singularities.

Good plain sense is not, as is often imagined, the innate possession of the first chance comer, a mean and paltry equipment that has cost nothing to any one. I would compare it to those old folk songs, unfathered, but deathless, which seem to have risen out of the very heart of the people. Good sense is a fund slowly and painfully accumulated by the labor of centuries.

But let this be well understood: An appeal to common sense is not an appeal to thought that grovels, to narrow positivism which denies everything it cannot see or touch; for to wish that man should be absorbed in material sensations, to the exclusion of the high realities of the inner life, is also a want of good sense.

I despair of ever describing simplicity in any worthy fashion. All the strength of the world and all its beauty, all true joy, everything that consoles, that feeds hope or throws a ray of light along our dark paths, everything that makes us see across our poor lives a splendid goal and a boundless future, comes to us from people of simplicity, those who have made another object of their desires than the passing satisfaction of selfishness and vanity and have understood that the art of living is to know how to give one's life.

CHAPTER III. SIMPLICITY OF THOUGHT. IT is not alone among the practical manifestations of our life that there is need of making a clearing; the domain of our ideas is in the same case. Anarchy reigns in human thought. We walk in the woods without compass or sun, lost among the brambles and briars of infinite detail.

When one man has recognized the fact that he has an aim, and that this aim is to be a man, he organizes his thought accordingly. Every mode of thinking or judging which does not make him better and stronger he rejects as dangerous.

And first of all he fees the too common contrariety of amusing himself with his thought. Thought is a tool, with its own proper function; it isn't a toy. Let us take an example. Here is the studio of a painter. The implements are all in place; everything indicates that this assemblage of means is arranged with view to an end. Throw the room open to a stranger. They will climb on the benches, swing from the cords, rig themselves in draperies, coil themselves with slippers, juggle with brushes, nibble the colors and pierce the canvases to see what is behind the paint. I don't question their enjoyment. Certainly they must find this kind of exercise extremely interesting. But an atelier is not made to let monkeys loose in. No more is thought a ground for acrobatic evolutions. A man worthy of the name thinks as he is, as his tastes are; he goes about it with his whole heart, and not with that fitful and sterile curiosity which, under pretext of observing and noting everything, runs the risk of never experiencing a deep and true emotion or accomplishing a right deed.

Another habit in urgent need of correction, ordinary attendant on conventional life, is the mania for examining and analyzing oneself at every turn. I do not invite men to neglect introspection, and the examination of conscience. The endeavor to understand one's own mental attitudes and motives of conduct is an essential element of good living. But quite other is this extreme vigilance, this incessant observation of one's life and thoughts, this dissecting of oneself, like a piece of mechanism. It is a waste of time and goes wide of the mark.

Swedish-Americans in the movement contemplate a bringing about of a change in the existing condition, so that the Swedish-American will be invited back to his native country, and it is hoped that this will bring considerable money into Sweden and result in an industrial revival.

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Table with columns: Read Down, Stations, Read Up. Includes stations like Jersey Shore, Wm's Port, Phila., New York, Lve. m. p. m., New York, Lve. a. m. p. m., Philadelphia, Lve. a. m. p. m.

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Travelers Guide. PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD AND BRANCHES. Schedule in effect Nov. 27th 1904.

Table with columns: Station, Time. Includes stations like Bellefonte, Altoona, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, etc.

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