



The Simple Life

By CHARLES WAGNER

Translated from the French by Mary Louise Hendee

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CHAPTER VI.
SIMPLE NEEDS.

WHEN we buy a bird of the fancier, the good man tells us briefly that is necessary for our new pensioner, and the whole thing—hygiene, food and the rest—is comprehended in a dozen words. Likewise, to sum up the necessities of most men, a few concise lines would answer. Their regime is in general of supreme simplicity, and so long as they follow it all is well with them, as with every obedient child of Mother Nature. Let them depart from it, complications arise, health fails, gaiety vanishes. Only simple and natural living can keep a body in full vigor. Instead of remembering this basic principle we fall into the strangest aberrations.

What material things does a man need to live under the best conditions? A healthful diet, simple clothing, a sanitary dwelling place, air and exercise. I am not going to enter into hygienic details, compose menus or discuss model tenements and dress reform. My aim is to point out a direction and tell what advantage would come to each of us from ordering his life in a spirit of simplicity. To know that this spirit does not rule in our society we need but watch the lives of men of all classes. Ask different people of very unlike surroundings this question: "What do you need to live?" You will see how they respond. Nothing is more instructive. For some aboriginals of the Parisian asphalt there is no life possible outside a region bounded by certain boulevards. There one finds the respirable air, the illuminating light, normal heat, classic cooking, and, in moderation, so many other things without which it would not be worth the while to promenade this round ball.

On the various rungs of the bourgeois ladder people reply to the question, "What is necessary to live?" by figures varying with the degree of their ambition or education, and by education is oftenest understood the outward customs of life, the style of house, dress, table—an education precisely skin deep. Upward from a certain income, fee or salary life becomes possible; below that it is impossible. We have seen men commit suicide because their means had fallen under a certain minimum. They preferred to disappear rather than reverse. Observe that this minimum, the cause of their despair, would have been sufficient for others of less exacting needs and enviable to men whose tastes are modest.

On lofty mountains vegetation changes with the altitude. There is the region of ordinary flora, that of the forests, that of pastures, that of bare rocks and glaciers. Above a certain zone wheat is no longer found, but the vine still prospers. The oak ceases in the low regions; the pine flourishes at considerable heights. Human life, with its needs, reminds one of these phenomena of vegetation.

At a certain altitude of fortune the financier thrives, the clubman, the society woman—all those, in short, for whom the strictly necessary includes a certain number of domestics and equipages as well as several town and country houses. Further on flourishes the rich upper middle class, with its own standards and life. In other regions we find men of ample, moderate or small means and very unlike exigencies. Then come the people, artisans, day laborers, peasants—in short, the masses—who live dense and serried like the thick, sturdy growths on the summits of the mountains, where the larger vegetation can no longer find nourishment. In all these different regions of society men live, and no matter in which particular regions they flourish, all are alike human beings, bearing the same mark. How strange that among fellows there should be such a prodigious difference in requirements! And here the analogies of our comparison fail us. Plants and animals of the same families have identical wants. In human life we observe quite the contrary. What conclusion shall we draw from this if not that with us there is a considerable elasticity in the nature and number of needs?

Is it well, is it favorable to the development of the individual and his happiness and to the development and happiness of society, that man should have a multitude of needs and bend his energies to their satisfaction? Let us return for a moment to our comparison with inferior beings. Provided that their essential wants are satisfied, they live content. Is this true of men? No. In all classes of society we find discontent.

I leave completely out of the question those who lack the necessities of life. One cannot with justice count in the number of malcontents those from whom hunger, cold and misery wring complaints. I am considering now that multitude of people who live under conditions at least supportable. Whence comes their heartburning? Why is it found not only among those of modest though sufficient means, but also under shades of ever increasing refinement, all along the ascending scale, even to opulence and the summits of social place? They talk of the contented middle classes. Who talk of them? People who, judging from without, think

soon they will be used to this luxury—rudimentary after all. Then madam will find her furniture common and her equipage mean. If this man loves his wife, and that cannot be doubted, he will migrate to the moon if there is hope of a larger stipend. In other cases the roles are reversed and the wife and children are sacrificed to the ravenous needs of the head of the family, whom an irregular life, play and countless other costly follies have robbed of all dignity. Between his appetites and his role of father he has decided for the former, and he slowly drifts toward the most abject egoism.

This forgetfulness of all responsibility, this gradual benumbing of noble feeling, is not alone to be found among pleasure seekers of the upper classes—the people also are infected. I know more than one little household which ought to be happy, where the mother has only pain and heartache day and night, the children are barefoot, and there is great ado for bread. Why? Because too much money is needed by the father. To speak only of the expenditure for alcohol, everybody knows the proportions that has reached in the last twenty years. The sums swallowed up in this gulf are fabulous—twice the indemnity of the war of 1870. How many legitimate needs could have been satisfied with that which has been thrown away on these artificial ones!

The reign of wants is by no means the reign of brotherhood. The more things a man desires for himself, the less he can do for his neighbor, and even for those attached to him by ties of blood.

The destruction of happiness, independence, moral fitness, even of the sentiment of common interests—such is the result of the reign of needs. A multitude of other unfortunate things might be added, of which not the least is the disturbance of the public welfare. When society has too great needs it is absorbed with the present, sacrifices to it the conquests of the past, immolates to it the future. After us the deluge! To raze the forests in order to get gold; to squander your patrimony in youth, destroying in a day the fruit of long years; to warm your house by burning your furniture; to burden the future with debts for the sake of present pleasure; to live by expedients and sow for the morrow trouble, sickness, ruin, envy and hate—the enumeration of all the misdeeds of this fatal regime has no end.

On the other hand, if we hold to simple needs we avoid all these evils and replace them by measureless good. That temperance and sobriety are the best guardians of health is an old story. They spare him who observes them many a misery that saddens existence. They insure him health, love of action, mental peace. Whether it be a question of food, dress or dwelling, simplicity of taste is also a source of independence and safety. The more simply you live the more secure is your future. You are less at the mercy of surprises and reverses. An illness or a period of idleness does not suffice to dispossess you; a change of position, even considerable, does not put you to confusion. Having simple needs, you find it less painful to accustom yourself to the hazards of fortune. You remain a man, though you lose your office or your income, because the foundation on which your life rests is not your table, your cellar, your horses, your goods and chattels or your money. In adversity you will not act like a nursing deprived of its bottle and rattle. Stronger, better armed for the struggle, presenting, like those with shaven heads, less advantage to the hands of your enemy, you will also be of more profit to your neighbor. For you will not rouse his jealousy, his base desires or his censure by your luxury, your prodigality or the spectacle of a sycophant's life, and, less absorbed in your own comfort, you will find the means of working for that of others.

CHAPTER VII.
SIMPLE PLEASURES.

DO you find life amusing in these days? For my part, on the whole, it seems rather depressing, and I fear that my opinion is not altogether personal. As I observe the lives of my contemporaries and listen to their talk I find myself unhappily confirmed in the opinion that they do not get much pleasure out of things. And certainly it is not from lack of trying. But it must be acknowledged that their success is meager. Where can the fault be?

Some accuse politics or business, others social problems or militarism. We meet only an embarrassment of choice when we start to unstring the chapter of our carking cares. Suppose we set out in pursuit of pleasure. There is too much pepper in our soup to make it palatable. Our arms are filled with a multitude of embarrassments, any one of which would be enough to spoil our temper. From morning till night, wherever we go, the people we meet are hurried, worried, preoccupied. Some have split their good blood in the miserable conflicts of petty politics; others are disheartened by the meanness and jealousy they have encountered in the world of literature or art. Commercial competition troubles the sleep of not a few. The crowded curricula of study and the exigencies of their opening careers spoil life for young men. The working classes suffer the consequences of a ceaseless struggle. It is becoming disagreeable to govern because authority is diminishing; to teach, because respect is vanishing. Wherever one turns there is matter for discontent.

(To be Continued.)

Few men can be intensely interested in anything without letting their neighbors know it.

—Binks (as snow flies)—I'm afraid, Barnes, that the train you're waiting for will be badly delayed.

Barnes—No, it won't. My mother-in-law on a Kansas City Star.

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- 630 loss of one eye.
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CENTRAL RAILROAD OF PENNA.
Condensed Time Table effective Nov. 28, 1904.

READ DOWN	STATIONS	READ UP
No. 1 No. 5 No. 3		No. 6 No. 4 No. 2
8 a. m. p. m. Lv.	BELLEFONTE	9:30 5:10 9:40
7:21 6:51 2:41	NIGHT	9:07 4:27 9:27
7:38 6:08 2:46	HECLA PARK	9:01 4:51 9:21
7:53 7:05 2:56	DUNES	8:55 4:45 9:15
7:59 7:05 2:59	DUNES	8:49 4:38 9:09
7:43 7:15 3:03	Snydertown	8:46 4:34 9:05
7:45 7:15 3:05	Nittany	8:44 4:32 9:03
7:47 7:17 3:07	Huston	8:42 4:28 9:00
7:53 7:23 3:13	Lamona	8:39 4:25 8:57
7:57 7:27 3:17	Clintondale	8:36 4:22 8:54
8:01 7:31 3:21	Mackeyville	8:32 4:18 8:51
8:07 7:37 3:27	Cedar Spring	8:28 4:14 8:46
8:10 7:42 3:30	Salona	8:20 4:05 8:38
8:15 7:47 3:35	MILL HALL	8:15 4:00 8:33

LEWISBURG & TYRONE RAILROAD.

WESTWARD	STATIONS	EASTWARD
8:00 11:00	Bellefonte	9:00 4:10
8:05 11:05	Axonville	8:55 4:15
8:10 11:10	Pleasant Gap	8:50 4:20
8:15 11:15	Peru	8:45 4:25
8:20 11:20	Lemont	8:40 4:30
8:25 11:25	Oak Hill	8:35 4:35
8:30 11:30	Linden Hill	8:30 4:40
8:35 11:35	Gregg	8:25 4:45
8:40 11:40	Centerville	8:20 4:50
8:45 11:45	Penntown	8:15 4:55
8:50 11:50	Rising Spring	8:10 5:00
8:55 11:55	Zerby	8:05 5:05
9:00 12:00	Ingleby	8:00 5:10
9:05 12:05	Ferry Mountain	7:55 5:15
9:10 12:10	Cherry Grove	7:50 5:20
9:15 12:15	Lindale	7:45 5:25
9:20 12:20	Wellert	7:40 5:30
9:25 12:25	Artes	7:35 5:35
9:30 12:30	Glen Iron	7:30 5:40
9:35 12:35	Milmont	7:25 5:45
9:40 12:40	Barber	7:20 5:50
9:45 12:45	Harrisburg	7:15 5:55
9:50 12:50	Shick	7:10 6:00
9:55 12:55	Montandon	7:05 6:05
10:00 1:00	Lebanon	7:00 6:10

LEWISBURG & TYRONE RAILROAD.

WESTWARD	UPPER END	WESTWARD
8:00 11:00	Bellefonte	9:00 4:10
8:05 11:05	Axonville	8:55 4:15
8:10 11:10	Pleasant Gap	8:50 4:20
8:15 11:15	Peru	8:45 4:25
8:20 11:20	Lemont	8:40 4:30
8:25 11:25	Oak Hill	8:35 4:35
8:30 11:30	Linden Hill	8:30 4:40
8:35 11:35	Gregg	8:25 4:45
8:40 11:40	Centerville	8:20 4:50
8:45 11:45	Penntown	8:15 4:55
8:50 11:50	Rising Spring	8:10 5:00
8:55 11:55	Zerby	8:05 5:05
9:00 12:00	Ingleby	8:00 5:10
9:05 12:05	Ferry Mountain	7:55 5:15
9:10 12:10	Cherry Grove	7:50 5:20
9:15 12:15	Lindale	7:45 5:25
9:20 12:20	Wellert	7:40 5:30
9:25 12:25	Artes	7:35 5:35
9:30 12:30	Glen Iron	7:30 5:40
9:35 12:35	Milmont	7:25 5:45
9:40 12:40	Barber	7:20 5:50
9:45 12:45	Harrisburg	7:15 5:55
9:50 12:50	Shick	7:10 6:00
9:55 12:55	Montandon	7:05 6:05
10:00 1:00	Lebanon	7:00 6:10

BELLEFONTE CENTRAL RAILROAD.
Schedule to take effect Monday, Apr. 3rd, 1899.

WESTWARD	STATIONS	EASTWARD
8:00 11:00	Bellefonte	9:00 4:10
8:05 11:05	Axonville	8:55 4:15
8:10 11:10	Pleasant Gap	8:50 4:20
8:15 11:15	Peru	8:45 4:25
8:20 11:20	Lemont	8:40 4:30
8:25 11:25	Oak Hill	8:35 4:35
8:30 11:30	Linden Hill	8:30 4:40
8:35 11:35	Gregg	8:25 4:45
8:40 11:40	Centerville	8:20 4:50
8:45 11:45	Penntown	8:15 4:55
8:50 11:50	Rising Spring	8:10 5:00
8:55 11:55	Zerby	8:05 5:05
9:00 12:00	Ingleby	8:00 5:10
9:05 12:05	Ferry Mountain	7:55 5:15
9:10 12:10	Cherry Grove	7:50 5:20
9:15 12:15	Lindale	7:45 5:25
9:20 12:20	Wellert	7:40 5:30
9:25 12:25	Artes	7:35 5:35
9:30 12:30	Glen Iron	7:30 5:40
9:35 12:35	Milmont	7:25 5:45
9:40 12:40	Barber	7:20 5:50
9:45 12:45	Harrisburg	7:15 5:55
9:50 12:50	Shick	7:10 6:00
9:55 12:55	Montandon	7:05 6:05
10:00 1:00	Lebanon	7:00 6:10

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