



The Simple Life

By CHARLES WAGNER

Translated From the French by Mary Louise Hendec

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CHAPTER IX.
NOTORIETY AND THE INGLORIOUS GOOD.

ONE of the chief peculiarities of our time is the love of advertisement. To emerge from obscurity, to be in the public eye, to make oneself talked of—some people are so consumed with this desire that we are justified in declaring them attacked with an itch for publicity. In their eyes obscurity is the height of ignominy, so they do their best to keep their names in every mouth. In their obscure position they look upon themselves as lost, like shipwrecked sailors whom a night of tempest has cast on some lonely rock and who have recourse to cries, volleys, fire, all the signals imaginable, to let it be known that they are there. Not content with setting off crackers and innocent rockets, many, to make themselves heard at any cost, have gone to the length of perjury and even crime. The incendiary Erostratus has made numerous disciples. How many men of today have become notorious for having destroyed something of mark, pulled down—or tried to pull down—some man's high reputation; signaled their passage, in short, by a scandal, a meanness or an atrocity!

This rage for notoriety does not surge through cracked brains alone or only in the world of adventurers, charlatans and pretenders generally. It has spread abroad in all the domains of life, spiritual and material. Politics, literature, even science, and most odious of all, philanthropy and religion are infected. Trumpets announce a good deed done, and souls must be saved with din and clamor. Pursuing its way of destruction, the rage for noise has entered places ordinarily silent, troubled spirits naturally serene and vitiated in large measure all activity for good. The abuse of showing everything, or, rather, putting everything on exhibition, the growing incapacity to appreciate that which chooses to remain hidden and the habit of estimating the value of things by the racket they make have come to corrupt the judgment of the most earnest men, and one sometimes wonders if society will not end by transforming itself into a great fair, with each one beating his drum in front of his tent.

Gladly do we quit the dust and din of like exhibitions to go and breathe peacefully in some faroff nook of the woods, all surprise that the brook is so limpid, the forest so still, the solitude so enchanting. Thank God there are yet these uninvaded corners! How ever formidable the uproar, however deafening the babel of merry andrews, it cannot carry beyond a certain limit. It grows faint and dies away. The realm of silence is vaster than the realm of noise. Herein is our consolation.

Rest a moment on the threshold of this infinite world of inglorious good, of quiet activities. Instantly we are under the charm we feel in stretches of untrodden snow, in hiding wood flowers, in disappearing pathways that seem to lead to horizons without burn. The world is so made that the engines of labor, the most active agencies, are everywhere concealed. Nature affects a sort of coquetry in masking her operations. It costs you pains to spy her out, ingenuity to surprise her, if you would see anything but results and penetrate the secrets of her laboratories. Likewise in human society the forces which move for good remain invisible, and even in our individual lives; what is best in us is incommunicable, buried in the depths of us. And the more vital are these sensibilities and intuitions, confounding themselves with the very source of our being, the less ostentatious they are. They think themselves profaned by exposure to the light of day.

There is a secret and inexpressible joy in possessing at the heart of one's being, an interior world known only to God, whence, nevertheless, come impulses, enthusiasms, the daily renewal of courage and the most powerful motives for activity among our fellow men. When this intimate life loses in intensity, when man neglects it for what is superficial, he forfeits in worth all that he gains in appearance. By a sad fatality it happens that in this way we often become less admirable in proportion as we are more admired. And we remain convinced that what is best in the world is unknown there, for only those know it who possess it, and if they speak of it in so doing they destroy its charm.

There are passionate lovers of nature whom she fascinates most in byplaces. In the cool of forests, in the clefts of gorges, everywhere that the careless lover is not admitted to her contemplation. Forgetting time and the life of the world they pass days in these inviolate stillnesses, watching a bird build its nest or brood over its young or some little groundling at its gracious play. So to seek the good within himself one must go where he no longer finds constraint or pose or "gallery" of any sort, but the simple fact of a life made up of wishing to be what it is good for it to be, without troubling about anything else.

May we be permitted to record here some observations made from life? As no names are given they cannot be considered indiscreet.

In my country of Alsace, on the solitary route whose interminable ribbon

stretches on and on under the forests of the Vosges, there is a stonebreaker whom I have seen at his work for thirty years. The first time I came upon him I was a young student setting out with swelling heart for the great city. The sight of this man did me good, for he was humming a song as he broke his stones. We exchanged a few words, and he said at the end: "Well, goodby, my boy! Good courage and good luck!" Since then I have passed and repassed along that same route, under circumstances the most diverse, painful and joyful. The student has finished his course, the breaker of stones remains what he was. He has taken a few more precautions against the seasons' storms, a rush mat protects his back, and his felt hat is drawn farther down to shield his face. But the forest is always sending back the echo of his valiant hammer. How many sudden tempests have broken over his bent back, how much adverse fate has fallen on his head, on his house, on his country! He continues to break his stones, and coming and going I find him by the roadside, smiling in spite of his age and his wrinkles, benevolent, speaking above all in dark days—those simple words of brave men, which have so much effect when they are spoken of the breaking of stones.

It would be quite impossible to express the emotion the sight of this simple man gives me, and certainly he has no suspicion of it. I know of nothing more reassuring and at the same time more searching for the vanity which ferments in our hearts than this coming face to face with an obscure worker who does his task as the oak grows and as the good God makes his sun rise, without asking who is looking on.

I have known, too, a number of old teachers, men and women who have passed their whole life at the same occupation, making the rudiments of human knowledge and a few principles of conduct penetrate heads sometimes harder than the rocks. They have done it with their whole soul throughout the length of a hard life in which the attention of men had little place. When they lie in their unknown graves one remembers them but a few humble people like themselves, but their recompense is in their love. No one is greater than these unknown.

How many hidden virtues may one not discover—if he know how to search—among people of a class he often ridicules without perceiving that in so doing he is guilty of cruelty, ingratitude and stupidity! I mean old maids. People amuse themselves with remarking the surprising dress and ways of some of them—things of no consequence, for that matter. They persist also in reminding us that others, very selfish, take interest in nothing but their own comfort and that of some cat or canary upon which their powers of affection center, and certainly these are not outdone in egoism by the most hardened celibates of the stronger sex. But what we oftentimes forget is the amount of self sacrifice hidden modestly away in so many of these truly admirable lives. Is it nothing to be without home and its love, without future, without personal ambition? To take upon oneself that cross of solitary life so hard to bear, especially when there is added the solitude of the heart? To forget oneself and have no other interests than the care of the old, or orphans, the poor, the infirm—those whom the brutal mechanism of life casts out among its waste? Seen from without these apparently tame and lusterless lives rouse pity rather than envy. Those who approach gently sometimes divine sad secrets, great trials undergone, heavy burdens beneath which too fragile shoulders bend; but this is only the side of shadow.

We should learn to know and value this richness of heart, this pure goodness, this power to love, to console, to hope, this joyful giving up of self, this persistence in sweetness and forgiveness even toward the unworthy. Poor old maids! How many wrecked lives have you rescued, how many wounded have you healed, how many wanderers have you gently led aright, how many naked have you clothed, how many orphans have you taken in, and how many strangers who would have been alone in the world but for you—you who yourself are often remembered of no one. I mistake. Some one knows you: It is that great mysterious Pity which keeps watch over our lives and suffers in our misfortunes. Forgotten like you, often blasphemed, it has confided to you some of its heavenliest messages, and that perhaps is why above your gentle comings and goings we sometimes seem to hear the rustling wings of ministering angels.

"The good hides itself under so many different forms that one has often as much pains to discover it as to unearth the best concealed crimes. A Russian doctor who had passed ten years of his life in Siberia, condemned for political reasons to forced labor, used to find great pleasure in telling of the generosity, courage and humanity he had observed, not only among a large number of the condemned, but also among the convict guards. For the moment one is tempted to exclaim, "Where will not the good hide itself!" And, in truth, life offers here great surprises and embarrassing contrasts. There are good men, officially so recognized, quoted among their associates—I had almost said guaranteed by the government or the church—who can be reproached with nothing but dry and hard hearts, while we are astonished to encounter in certain fallen human beings the most genuine tenderness and, as it were, a thirst for self devotion.

I should like to speak next, apropos of the inglorious good, of a class that today it is thought quite fitting to treat with the utmost one-sidedness. I mean the rich. Some people think the last word is said when they have stigmatized that infamy, capital. For them, all who possess great fortunes are monsters gorged with the blood of the miserable. Others, not so declamatory, persist, however, in confounding riches with egoism and insensibility. Justice should be visited on these errors, be they involuntary or calculated. No doubt there are rich men who concern themselves with nobody else, and others who do good only with ostentation. Indeed, we know it too well. But does their inhumanity or hypocrisy take away the value of the good that they do and that they often hide with a modesty so perfect?

I knew a man to whom every misfortune had come which can strike us in our affections. He had lost a beloved wife, had seen all his children buried one after another. But he had a great fortune, the result of his own labor. Living in the utmost simplicity, almost without personal wants, he spent his time in searching for opportunities to do good and profiting by them. How many people he surprised in flagrant poverty, what means he combined for relieving distress and lighting up dark lives, with what kindly thoughtfulness he took his friends unawares, no one can imagine. He liked to do good to others and enjoy their surprise when they did not know whence the relief came. It pleased him to repair the injustices of fortune, to bring tears of happiness in families pursued by mischance. He was continually plotting, contriving, scheming in the dark, with a childish fear of being caught with his hand in the bag. The greater part of these fine deeds were not known till after his death; the whole of them we shall never know.

He was a socialist of the right sort, for there are two kinds of them. Those who aspire to appropriate to themselves a part of the goods of others are numerous and commonplace. To belong to their order it suffices to have a big appetite. Those who are hungering to divide their own goods with men who have none are rare and precious, for to enter this choice company there is need of a brave and noble heart free from selfishness and sensitive to both the happiness and unhappiness of its fellows. Fortunately the race of these socialists is not extinct, and I feel an unalloyed satisfaction in offering them a tribute they never claim.

I must be pardoned for dwelling upon this. It does one good to offset the bitterness of so many infamies, so many calumnies, so much charlatanism, by resting the eyes upon something more beautiful, breathing the perfume of these stray corners where simple goodness flowers.

A lady, a foreigner, doubtless little used to Parisian life, just now told me with what horror the things she sees here inspire her—these vile posters, these "yellow" journals, these women with bleached hair, this crowd rushing to the races, to dance halls, to roulette tables, to corruption—the whole flood of superficial and mundane life. She did not speak the word Babylon, but doubtless it was out of pity for one of the inhabitants of this city of perdition.

"Alas, yes, madam; these things are sad, but you have not seen all."

"Heaven preserve me from that!"

"On the contrary, I wish you could see everything, for, if the dark side is very ugly, there is so much to atone for it. And, believe me, madam, you have simply to change your quarter or observe it at another hour. For instance, take the Paris of early morning. It will offer much to correct your impressions of the Paris of the night. Go see, among so many other working people, the street sweepers, who come out at the hour when the revelers and malefactors go in. Observe beneath these rags those carry-attid bodies, those austere faces! How serious they are at their work of sweeping away the refuse of the night's revelry! One might liken them to the prophets at Ahasuerus' gates. There are women among them, many old people. When the air is cold they stop to blow their fingers and then go at it again. So it is every day. And they, too, are inhabitants of Paris.

"Go next to the faubourgs, to the factories, especially the smaller ones, where the children or the employers labor with the men. Watch the army of workers marching to their tasks. How ready and willing these young girls seem as they come gayly down from their distant quarters to the shops and stores and offices of the city! Then visit the homes from which they come. See the woman of the people at her work. Her husband's wages are modest, their dwelling is cramped, the children are many, the father is often harsh. Make a collection of the biographies of lowly people, budgets of modest family life; look at them attentively and long.

"After that go see the students. Those who have scandalized you in the streets are numerous, but those who labor hard are legion, only they stay at home and are not talked about. If you knew the toil and dig of the Latin quarter! You find the papers full of the rumpus made by a certain set of youths who call themselves students. The papers say enough of those who break windows, but why do they make no mention of those who spend their nights toiling over problems? Because it wouldn't interest the public. Yes, when now and then one of them, a medical student perhaps, dies a victim

Travelers Guide.

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

VIA TYRONE—WESTWARD.
 Leave Bellefonte, 9:55 a. m., arrive at Tyrone 11:05 a. m., at Altoona, 1:00 p. m., at Pittsburg, 5:50 p. m.
 Leave Bellefonte 1:05 p. m., arrive at Tyrone, 2:15 p. m., at Altoona, 5:10 p. m., at Pittsburg, 6:55 p. m.

VIA TYRONE—EASTWARD.
 Leave Bellefonte, 9:55 a. m., arrive at Tyrone, 11:05 a. m., at Altoona, 1:00 p. m., at Philadelphia, 5:47 p. m.
 Leave Bellefonte, 1:05 p. m., arrive at Tyrone, 2:15 p. m., at Altoona, 5:10 p. m., at Philadelphia, 10:47 p. m.

VIA LOCK HAVEN—WESTWARD.
 Leave Bellefonte, 1:25 p. m., arrive at Lock Haven, 2:10 p. m., at Buffalo, 7:40 p. m.

VIA LOCK HAVEN—EASTWARD.
 Leave Bellefonte, 9:55 a. m., arrive at Lock Haven, 10:30 a. m., leave Williamsport, 12:35 p. m., arrive at Harrisburg, 5:00 p. m., Philadelphia at 6:52 p. m.

VIA TYRONE—EASTWARD.
 Leave Bellefonte, 1:25 p. m., arrive at Lock Haven, 2:10 p. m., leave Williamsport, at 2:55 p. m., arrive at Harrisburg, 5:00 p. m., Philadelphia at 6:52 p. m.

VIA TYRONE—EASTWARD.
 Leave Bellefonte, 8:16 p. m., arrive at Lock Haven, 9:15 p. m., leave Williamsport, 1:35 a. m., arrive at Harrisburg, 4:15 a. m., arrive at Philadelphia at 7:17 a. m.

VIA TYRONE—EASTWARD.
 Leave Bellefonte, at 6:40 a. m., arrive at Lewisburg, at 9:05 a. m., Montandou, 9:15, Harrisburg, 11:30 a. m., Philadelphia, 5:17 p. m.
 Leave Bellefonte, 2:00 p. m., arrive at Lewisburg, 4:25 p. m., at Harrisburg, 6:50 p. m., Philadelphia at 10:47 p. m.

For full information, time tables, etc., call on ticket agent, or address Thos. E. Watt, Passenger Agent Western District, No. 500 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburg.

TYRONE AND CLEARFIELD, E. R.

| NORTHWARD | | SOUTHWARD | |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| DAY | MAIL | DAY | MAIL |
| 8:50 | 9:15 | 8:50 | 9:15 |
| 9:55 | 10:20 | 9:55 | 10:20 |
| 11:05 | 11:30 | 11:05 | 11:30 |
| 12:15 | 12:40 | 12:15 | 12:40 |
| 1:25 | 1:50 | 1:25 | 1:50 |
| 2:35 | 3:00 | 2:35 | 3:00 |
| 3:45 | 4:10 | 3:45 | 4:10 |
| 4:55 | 5:20 | 4:55 | 5:20 |
| 6:05 | 6:30 | 6:05 | 6:30 |
| 7:15 | 7:40 | 7:15 | 7:40 |
| 8:25 | 8:50 | 8:25 | 8:50 |
| 9:35 | 10:00 | 9:35 | 10:00 |
| 10:45 | 11:10 | 10:45 | 11:10 |
| 11:55 | 12:20 | 11:55 | 12:20 |
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| 2:15 | 2:40 | 2:15 | 2:40 |
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| 5:45 | 6:10 | 5:45 | 6:10 |
| 6:55 | 7:20 | 6:55 | 7:20 |
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| 9:15 | 9:40 | 9:15 | 9:40 |
| 10:25 | 10:50 | 10:25 | 10:50 |
| 11:35 | 12:00 | 11:35 | 12:00 |
| 12:45 | 1:10 | 12:45 | 1:10 |
| 1:55 | 2:20 | 1:55 | 2:20 |
| 3:05 | 3:30 | 3:05 | 3:30 |
| 4:15 | 4:40 | 4:15 | 4:40 |
| 5:25 | 5:50 | 5:25 | 5:50 |
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| 7:45 | 8:10 | 7:45 | 8:10 |
| 8:55 | 9:20 | 8:55 | 9:20 |
| 10:05 | 10:30 | 10:05 | 10:30 |
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| 11:35 | 12:00 | 11:35 | 12:00 |
| 12:45 | 1:10 | 12:45 | 1:10 |

THE PREFERRED ACCIDENT INSURANCE CO.

THE \$5,000 TRAVEL POLICY

Benefits:

- \$5,000 death by accident.
- 5,000 loss of both feet.
- 5,000 loss of both hands.
- 5,000 loss of one hand and one foot.
- 2,500 loss of either hand.
- 2,500 loss of either foot.
- 630 loss of one eye.

25¢ per week, total disability; (limit 52 weeks).

10¢ per week, partial disability; (limit 26 weeks).

PREMIUM \$12 PER YEAR.
 payable quarterly if desired.

Larger or smaller amounts in proportion. Any person, male or female engaged in a preferred occupation, including house-keeping, over eighteen years of age of good moral and physical condition may insure under this policy.

LEWISBURG & TYRONE RAILROAD.

| EASTWARD | | WESTWARD | |
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| MAIL | EXP. | MAIL | EXP. |
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CENTRAL RAILROAD OF PENNA.
 Condensed Time Table effective Nov. 28, 1904.

| READ DOWN | | STATIONS | | READ UP | |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|---------|-------|
| No. 1 | No. 3 | No. 2 | No. 4 | No. 1 | No. 3 |
| 8:00 | 8:15 | 8:00 | 8:15 | 8:00 | 8:15 |
| 9:00 | 9:15 | 9:00 | 9:15 | 9:00 | 9:15 |
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