

may seem so when we see the low shifts, petty meannesses, shams and fals pretenses which skulk through the world like creeping things with low names ; but when we walk the mountain ranges of thought, and from those lofty heights catch glimpses of the noble deeds blazing on the bosoms of the centuries, like beacon lights illuminating the pathways of humanity, we realize the solemnity of life, its capabilities and divinity.

When in the stillness of the soul thought burst into flame, and winged as it were, with lightning speed, sweeps a universe, a sudden vision of the mystery of life oppresses the spirit, and yet exalts it and reveals the dignity of man. Excepting God Himself, what is there more wondrous than the existence of the finite amid the Infinite, than this birth of feeling, thinking, seeing, and active principle in our breasts, which but a short while since was insensate dust? Yea, what is more marvelous than this, that we are living souls abroad on the face of this beautiful world, which was once without form and void? Well might the son of the morning shout for joy when the first man stood up erect under the trees of Eden. From that day to this, life has been one long conference between man and the Deity. On our part to assume responsibilities, and to do brave and manly work; on His part to warn, counsel and instruct.

We might possibly conclude that life is worth living from the facts that men persist in sustaining life, sacrifice all their physical powers and their honest substance to conquer sickness and resist that universal inevitable death. But how trifling would be the estimate of God's greatest gift. If we would realize its true worth, we must do our part, grasp opportunities, assume responsibilities, and do brave and manly work; for it is these three acts that bring order out of chaos, that give impetus to life and reveal its dignity and divinity.

Imagine, if you please, the complete extinction of these three acts from the threshold of our existence. Now subject your prejudices, and honestly ask yourselves the question, "Would life be worth living under these circumstances?" I already anticipate your frank answer, "No."

It is these three acts that give life its true worth; that grace the centuries with the splendor of scientific achievement; that from day to day, year to year, speed civilization in a career of grandeur, eclipsing each preceding stage of human progress; that guide and direct us toward the goal of that higher life, and that ultimately make the man.

Opportunities lie on every hand,—none so obscure as not to meet with them,—none so great as to be exempt from them. The real hero of our day is he who boldly grapples with every duty as it arises, and confronts it with a resolute will to perform it. His contemporaries may sneer and scoff at him, but coming ages will build his monument. So grappled America's dead hero boldly with all duties and always accomplished the desired result; and yet his contemporaries wronged him; but the powder has all been burned once, its force is spent and Gen. Grant's name will glitter as a bright and imperishable star in the diadem of the republic, while those who have tried to tarnish it will have mouldered in forgotten graves and their memories and epitaphs will have vanished utterly,

Man is set here to live and act, not like an alien passing through an enemy's camp in disguise, where no allegiance is due, but like a citizen fixed on historic soil, pledged by honorable memories to nurse yet nobler hopes.

Every opportunity carries with it a characteristic responsibility, and it is the responsibility connected with brave and manly works that gives them weight and prominence. For the chief executive to swear that we will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of his