

Few men are heroic enough to covet the success of high failure, and most of us must therefore move forward to duty under the inspiration of a hope which after results do not always justify. If nothing were undertaken save what proved successful after human standards of success, the world would be much poorer than it is. It has been seen again and again that occasions arise when nothing succeeds like failure. But if we could know how cold is the Jordan of temporary failure that lies between us and the Canaan of eternal success, many of us might refrain from the necessary plunge. Character is developed through suffering, which, foreknown, would drive some of us from the highway of duty.

It may seem paradoxical to add that the blessedness of not knowing must be rooted in knowledge. Ignorance of the future would be a small benefit if we knew nothing of the character of Him to whom there is no to-morrow. It is because we know whom we have believed, that we can trust ourselves upon the trackless ocean of unknown to-morrows, not with fortitude so much as with peace. In lines often quoted but always fresh and inspiring, Whittier gives expression to this truth :—

“I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

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I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.”

S. P. Rose.