

an atmosphere where this opposition is at its height, and never during life suffers abatement. The lives of many are nothing else than one long conflict of nature and circumstance. I have seen wild-flowers springing up and blossoming from under a bank of snow—the vegetable heat of growth thawing the snow, and melting a little circle through which the flower bloomed forth. There are men who are surrounded by influences as blighting as this of the snow, and yet we find among them, and not rarely, the fairest flowers of human nature. There are men who, receiving a cultivation as of thorns, yet bear fruit of grapes. The history of our fathers in Britain owes many of its proudest pages to men who cut their way out of opposing conditions. And our own Canadian names are names raised up by their bearers from positions of obscurity. Where this has been done there has first been an inconsistency between the inner man and the outer limitations of his life. And from the struggle to adjust the relations between them, the man has risen into ever-rising and ever-widening limitations. He has developed by natural course into greater growth, and is still bound to circumstances as before, only with expanded relations.

But it is not only in the case of great men that there is an inconsistency between our circumstances and our spirit—every one in the world knows by his own experience something of the matter. And what makes the struggle more harassing is, that we carry the elements of it in ourselves. The twofold nature of man results in a dualism of life. I shall stop short on this part of my subject, or I shall find myself writing a sermon; and though I have no doubt it *might* be a very good one, yet a good thing out of place is as bad as a bad thing. Should any sufficient number of my readers, however, send me a requisition to preach to them on the religious aspect of the relation between the inside and outside, I shall cheerfully comply with it; but in the meanwhile I shall act on the well-worn maxim, “a place for everything and everything in its place.”

If this maxim were only adhered to with greater strictness, mankind would gain immensely. When, for example, we see a man who has no qualifications for the office other than zeal and volubility, put into the Christian ministry, we need expect nothing but mistaken efforts. The man is not in his right place, and he will do things out of their proper place and time, and, quite unconsciously, he will create around himself antipathy and difficulties. I remember, some years ago, meeting a man of this class. I was on my way from Montreal to Toronto, on the steamer *Champion*. In the evening, after most of the passengers had gone to their berths, I sat down by myself at one end of the cabin, and, as I happened to have a Greek Testament in my pocket, I began to

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