

Life Talks With Young Men

BY ONE OF THEMSELVES

IF you were to ask me the one thing above all else which a young man should value and which will make him a permanent, vitalizing force wherever he may be and whatever he may do, I should answer at once "Character."

Mean young men, old men, believe me, it is the richest thing you can have. Better than gold? Yes. Thirty centuries ago Solomon wrote, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." And there has never been a minute since that brave, true, conscientious men have not been verifying the statement. As long as creation lasts, as long as humanity struggles, shall the man of character dominate the world, and ever rise supreme to prove again and again that the one thing worth while, "the pearl of great price," is a manly Christian character.

You who read, believe that. You have met such men. You have felt the force of such character. You know that what I say is true, and deep down in your hearts you, too, want to become men of character.

Not of the value of character am I going to talk just now; but of what I believe is the most important factor in character building—the creative power of thought.

Character does not come to us ready-made. We cannot buy it; we must build it. We cannot inherit it; we must develop it. And the power to do this lies within, not without.

Some one has said, "In earth there is nothing great but man, in man there is nothing great but mind." Whether that be strictly true or not, we know that man is the highest manifestation of God's creative skill; that in him is the spark of the Divine, the hope of immortality. He is essentially a conscious, thinking being. Now then, stop and think. Are you a thinking being? But of what are you thinking? Thought is creative. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Pause just here. Think it over. Have you caught that idea? Do you not recognize its importance? Do you not see its possibilities? Are you not dazzled with its splendor, and do you not also realize the responsibility it places on each one?

If you are to be helped by this idea you must believe it. And believing, what a vista of possibility opens up before you. Here is growth; here is development; here is liberty if one will but take it.

Back of every word, every deed, every action, is *thought*;—back of all progress and invention. Creation was a thought in the Divine Mind before God gave it expression in life, and energy, and being. Thought is the seed; action, influence, and circumstance are the fruit.

Do you realize this, men;—that as we think, we are making life? Character is the complete sum of all our thoughts. The law of cause and effect is as undeviating in the realm of thought as it is elsewhere. What we think, we are. What we continue to think, we shall remain. Man is manacled only by himself. He alone can do himself permanent injury.

What consolation, then, and inspiration, grow out of this truth,—*thought is creative!* To realize that we may become what we will; is consolation; to know that we are masters of our destiny, is inspiration. Thought has always been making our character; careless and aimless, perhaps, it has been; misguided and

neglected it may be; but still it has been the weaver that has tirelessly woven the fabric of our real selves. What a potential force it is! None can limit its possibilities for good when we place it under conscious and intelligent direction. Let us decide what we want our lives to be, and then put uncompromising control over our thoughts, for in them is the force which will make or mar us.

I cannot repeat that too often. Until thought is linked with purpose there can be no intelligent accomplishment. Left to wander aimlessly, our thoughts will wreck us; but having them under careful supervision and ever directing them towards a fixed purpose, God alone knows what glorious results may be achieved.

What the purpose of life shall be, each individual must choose. And when one has chosen, let him marshal all his God-given power of thought, which raises him above the beasts and links him to the Divine, into an intelligent, controlled, creative force. Let us truly masters of a heavenly destiny. Make the most right and the nation will be right. National life is but the sum total of individual life. Herein is the secret and explanation of the New Jerusalem—the Heavenly City. Think! men, think! But be not content until your thoughts are pure thoughts; strong, virile thoughts; positive, constructive thoughts. Do not rest until you know that by your thoughts you are daily building a clean, wholesome, Christ-like life.

Think! men, Think! for growth, for development, for purity, for righteousness. Think of God, of yourself, of your country, of your brother man.

"Whatever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things," for

"Mind is the master power that moulds and makes,
And man is mind, and evermore he takes
The toll of thought, and, shaping what he wills,
Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills:—
He thinks in secret and it comes to pass;
Environment is but his looking-glass."



The Dialogue of the Glasses

"There sat two glasses filled to the brim,
On a rich mar's table, rim to rim;
One was ruddy and red as blood,
And one as clear as the crystal flood.

"Said the glass of wine to the paler brother:
'Let us tell the tales of the past to each other;
I can tell of banquet, and revel, and mirth,
And the proudest and grandest souls of earth
Fell under my touch as though struck by blight,
Where I was king, for I ruled in might.
From the heads of kings I have torn the crown,
From the heights of fame I have hurled men down;
I have blasted many an honored name;
I have taken virtue and given shame;
I have emptied the youth with a sip, a

That has made his future a barren waste.
Far greater than any king am I,
Or than any army beneath the sky;
I have made the arm of the driver fail.

And sent the train from the iron rail;
I have made good ships go down at sea,

And the shrieks of the lost are sweet to me;
For they said, 'Behold how great you be!'

Fame, strength, wealth, genius before you fall,
For your might and power are over all."

Ho! Ho! pale brother,' laughed the wine,
'Can you boast of deeds as great as mine?'

"Said the water glass: 'I cannot boast
Of a king dethroned or a murdered host;
But I can tell of a heart once sad
By my crystal drops made light and glad;

Of thirst I've quenched, of brows I've laved;
Of hands I have cooled and souls I have saved;

I have leaped through the valley, dashed down the mountain,
Flowed in the river and played in the fountain,

Slept in the sunshine and dropped from the sky,
And everywhere gladdened the landscape and eye.

I have eased the hot forehead of fever and pain,
I have made the parched meadows grow fertile with grain.

I can tell of the powerful wheel of the mill,
That ground out the flour and turned at my will.

I can tell of manhood, debased by you,
That I have lifted and crowned anew,
I cheer, I help, I strengthen and aid;
I gladden the heart of man and maid!

I set the chained wine-captive free,
And all are the better for knowing me!'

"These are the tales they told each other,
The glass of wine and paler brother,

As they sat together, filled to the brim,
On the rich man's table, rim to rim."

—Anon.

All the crimes on earth do not destroy so many of the human race, nor alienate so much property, as drunkenness.—Lord Bacon.