

The Human Heart

The heart is a wonderful double pump, through the action of which the blood stream is kept sweeping round and round through the body at the rate of seven miles an hour. "Remember this, that our bodies will not stand the strain of over-work without good, pure blood any more than the engine can run smoothly without oil." After many years of study in the active practice of medicine, Dr. R. V. Pierce found that when the stomach was out of order, the blood impure and there were symptoms of general breakdown, a tonic made of the glyceric extract of certain roots was the best corrective. This he called



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said the Doctor with an indulgent smile. "Well, then, what does he inherit? That disease has dogged that family for a hundred years."

"That may be; but it is not the disease which has been handed down. Probably our friend has inherited a diminished power of resistance to that particular variety of germ, and is therefore more susceptible; but the germs of disease are not transmitted from sire to son."

How that remark flashes the lime light upon the problem of education! Are there not children who seem to have inherited a diminished resistance to ideas? They learn quickly and retain tenaciously. And, alas, are there not others who have received from generations of shiftless ancestors an increasing resistance to information? With each succeeding generation the brain cells have become less responsive; ideas can hardly penetrate their wooden heads. The most acrid truth, the most moving vision of beauty drifts between the stubbed branches of their brains like smoke and steam through leafless trees. How different the teachers of Ralph Waldo Emerson must have found him! "Eight generations of cultured, conscientious and practical ministers preceded him. In each generation they held the most advanced positions in religious thought." He was no more the physical child of his Puritan ancestors than he was their spiritual and intellectual child. He inherited a constantly diminishing resistance to both human and divine wisdom. No wonder he is pre-eminent for spirituality and culture.

These two much misused words denote the highest human attainments. Spirituality names an attitude of mind which has become habitual. Culture a state of mind the result of many habitual activities. Spirituality and culture cannot be attained in a moment. One may "get religion" at a "protracted meeting," but to be "spiritually minded" is quite another matter. One may imitate people of culture in points of dress, and in manner of life, but everybody knows the "yellow rich" — All is not gold that glitters.

The spiritually minded man asks himself not "What do I like?" but "What is best for me?" not "Am I noticed?" but "Am I useful?" not "Am I getting a rich bank account?" but "Am I growing a ripe character?" The man of culture is best described by Emerson himself:

He must be musical, tremulous impersonal.
Alive to gentle influence of landscape and of sky,
And tender to the spirit touch of man's or maiden's eye:
But to his native centre fast,
Shall into future fuse the past
And the world's flowing fates
In his own work recast.

During their early years almost all children show occasional gleam of spirituality, all have moments when they desire to do right, when they stand for justice, when they will to do the will of one wiser than they. During these same years they have hours when they respond to the very finest things, are sensitive to kindness, imitate gracious acts, follow the divinest impulse. To multiply these transient experiences, to cultivate these intermittent perceptions, to make habitual the response to the highest, this is the exacting task of parents, a task so great that it demands all their powers and all the helps they can manage to enlist.

Of course parents must accept themselves as the only immediate ancestors their children are likely to have, and make the best of it. They will remember that no matter how small their own capacity for spiritual insight may be, it can be increased; that no matter how crude their own natural reactions may be, they can be more perfectly adjusted by taking thought. And they will be encouraged to self discipline by the knowledge that their longings for the finer life, their effort to attain it, their perpetual example of well ordered living will make it easier for their children to attain a ripper character. Nor will ambitious parents forget

that for themselves and for their children books as healthful companions and wise teachers are of supreme importance. And in the quest for spirituality and culture books by the poetseers of the race lead all others in helpfulness. A poet-seer is more than a rhymester. The rhymester is master of the

"... Jingling serenader's art
Or tinkle of piano strings."

The poet-seer

"Can make the wild blood start
In its mystic springs."

for he is the man of insight and the master of moving speech. He sees the world and all it contains as the garment of the Invisible. He presents what he perceives, the deeper truth and beauty and goodness, in a captivating and enduring form. His lines are composed of what Homer called "winged words;" they penetrate the innermost citadel of the mind and remain there unforgettable, leavening the whole life. Napoleon had this fact in mind when he wished that he might make the songs of the nation. He realized the truth expressed so happily by the poet O'Shaughnessy:

We are the music makers
And we the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea breakers
And sitting by desolate streams.
World losers and world forsakers
On whom the pale moon gleams;
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world, forever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an Empire's glory.
One man with a dream, at a pleasure
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a Kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing
And Babel itself in our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying
Or one that is coming to birth.

This claims so much for the poet that at first one is inclined to discount it; but as he examines his own life and realizes how potent poetic words have been in transforming his ideals and in shaping his character, he will be more inclined to take the poet's claim at face value.

The reading of poetry enables us to acquire a richer vocabulary, for the poets have thrown to each fact a tuneful name. The study of poetry leads to finer discriminations, and to a nicer adjustment of words to ideas, for the poets are past masters in the art of expression. And all this re-acts upon the character and promotes spirituality and culture.

We Halt Not on the Roadside.

George Klinge.

The days are full of echoes—the music of some word;
The music of a snatch of song, returning to be heard;
The whisper caught and lost again — love's whisper, or its sighs;
Oh, days are full of echoes of a voice that drifteth by!
There is no place for silence, though quiet be the day;
Though not a footfall soundeth there are echoes all the way,
And the past becomes the present, but we dare not wait to dream,
Or to stop to catch the music of the past day, or its gleam.
Still onward, ever onward, to touch on either side
Some empty hand that reacheth, or some staying foot to guide.
We halt not on the roadside, but Despair's cold hand defy.
Though hearing still the music of the echoes drifting by.



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