

HOPE.

The true rank of hope among the variform principles which blend in the undercurrent of man's career, is perhaps seldom fully recognized.

"— heavenly Genius in thy course divine,
Hope is thy star, her light is over thine,"

says Campbell, and it does not demand a logician's skill to show that if Hope had never existed, the sap of Genius had dried up within the stalk. Hope is the first impulse of ambition—the power which bursts the trammels of sloth from latent talent. For if there were no earnest and confident expectation of success, who would attempt to overcome the difficulties which encompass our designs? Consider the discovery of electricity. Benjamin Franklin viewed the crashing, flaring tumult of a thunder storm, and wondered much what terrific force could occasion this mighty uproar; but so had his predecessors of every generation wondered. Why, then, did this same marvellous agency of electricity remain all through the progress of history unknown to man until its revelation by Franklin? Among all his forefathers in learning, was there not a single intellect capable of solving the mystery? If we affirm that there was not, we must accord to Franklin a mind more powerful than any that had wrought in the vineyards of science previous to his time. But can we admit an explanation which would class such names as Newton, Galileo, Harvey, or Kepler subordinate to the talented American colonist? Doubtless if any one of these illustrious men had grappled resolutely with the problem, the electric cable had girded our sphere long before Franklin's famous kite floated amid the turmoil of the heavens. But his enquiring mind was not satisfied simply to behold the elemental warfare, and idly wonder at the hidden power which could with equal facility consume a haystack or shiver to splinters the solid oak. His restless brain toiled to discover the origin and method of this same irresistible force. This is why facts which had so long been concealed from his mental equals, and even superiors, were finally ascertained by him. Others, amazed, indeed, and awed, by the aerial commotion, yet never conceived the faintest hope of expounding its causes. Of all the world's great thinkers who might have penetrated the secret, he alone, incited by hope, attempted and achieved that disclosure which has proved a priceless treasure to mankind.

A marine passage through the Isthmus of Suez, though universally acknowledged to be a most desirable accession to the apparatus of nautical trade, had been considered beyond hope, and consequently its construction had never been undertaken. But De Lesseps hoped to accomplish this vast work, and having carefully inspected the ground, was overjoyed to find the project by no means impracticable. Accordingly, the enterprise was soon in progress, and ere long that standing triumph of modern engineering was complete. And once again, as the liquid band mingled the waters of Occident and Orient, and rendered to their commerce a service unparalleled since the application of steam as a naval motor, hope and her offspring, resolution, had vanquished every obstacle, and vindicated the might of human intellect.

Though all the plagues of Pandora's box harass him, that man in whose spirit the pulse of hope, faint and wavering it may be, still throbs, may yet escape each peril, and triumph o'er every barrier.

It was hope, engendered by pious enthusiasm, which prompted the patriots of the Protestant Netherlands to attempt their release from the most formidable tyranny of that age, combined with all the horrors of absolute and merciless fanaticism. What with the terrible Spanish inquisition spreading its fatal tendrils all over the groaning land; what with the servitors of Spanish oppression, supreme in the national tribunals, and Spanish soldiers rioting in every home, and eager by every form of atrocity and outrage to convince the trembling populace that King Philip's sentence of death upon all Netherlanders was indeed no jest; what with all these, the outlook of freedom seemed gloomy enough. Nevertheless, hope foretold deliverance, and after nearly a century of bloody strife, the Republic of the United Netherlands was established, and deliverance was secured. Again, Frederic the Great, the dauntless Prussian warrior, in youth as timorous as an invalid maiden, was taunted by his associates as a confirmed poltroon. But hope in the craven's breast promised the mastery over this mortifying weakness, and perseverance soon banished every trace of cowardice from his temperament.

Yet hope is not useful solely as aiding the execution of human purposes, for often she bestows her highest benefits where her prospects are never attained. How many a man, happy in the hope of a prosperous issue for some long-cherished scheme, is abruptly