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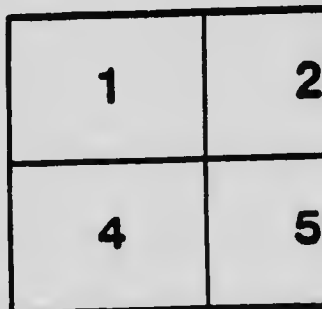
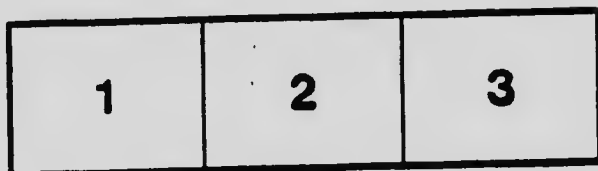
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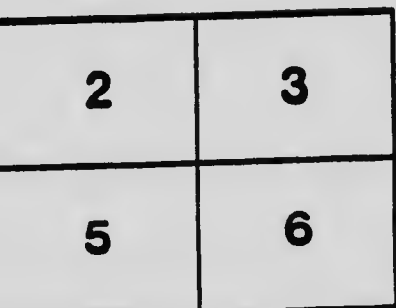
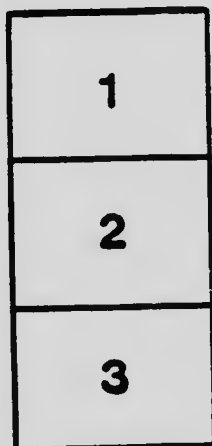
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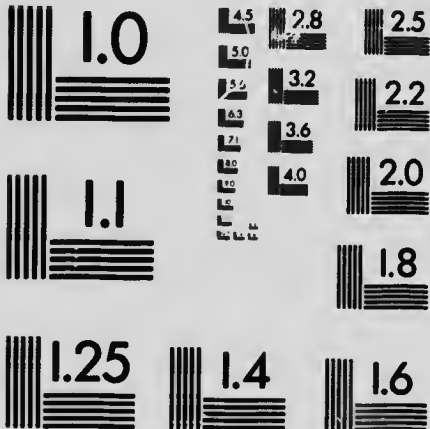
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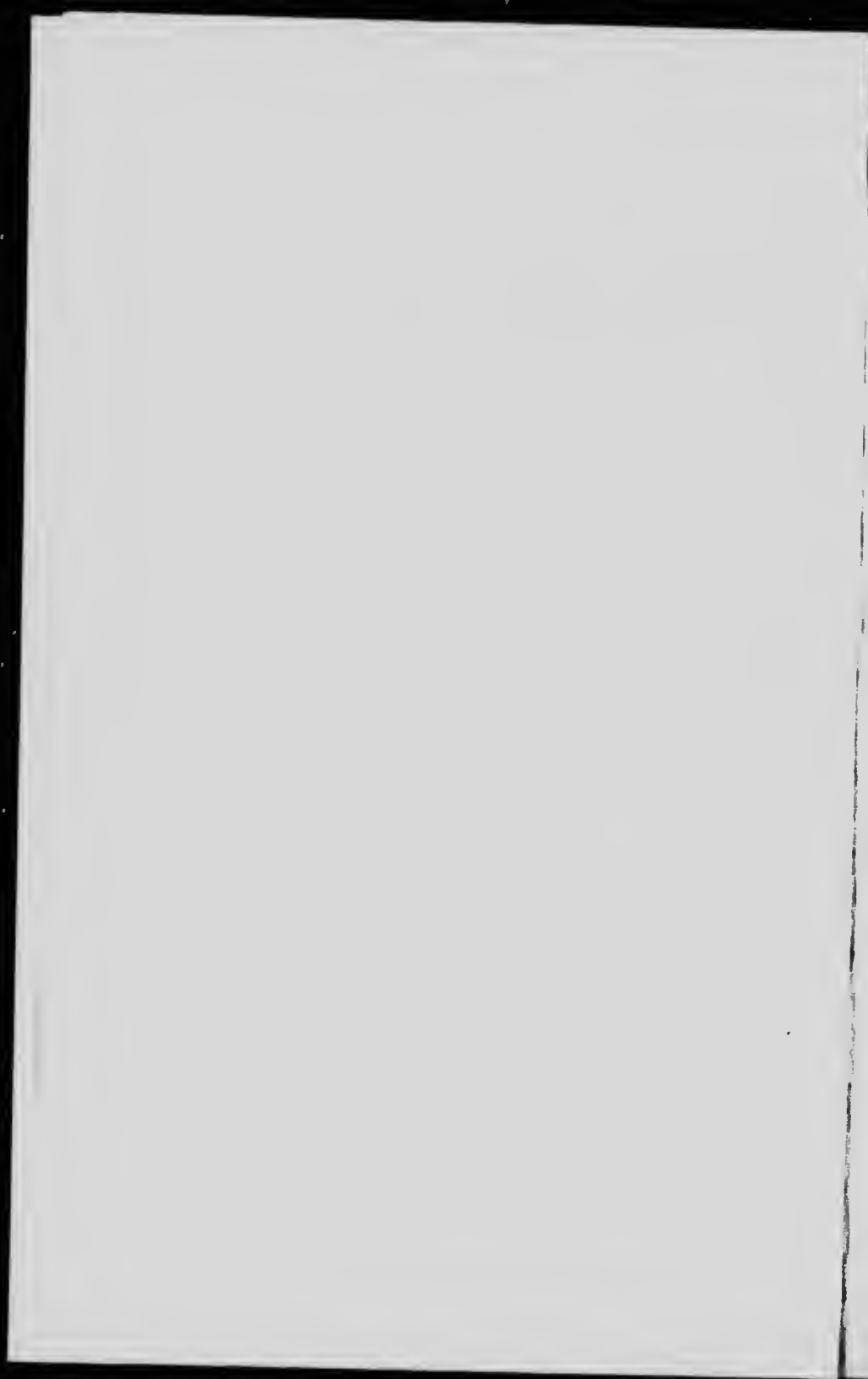
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**ARTHUR MEE'S
LETTERS TO BOYS**



ARTHUR MEE'S LETTERS TO BOYS

By the Editor of the
Children's Encyclopædia

*Watch ye, stand fast, quit
you like . . . strong*

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To
THE BOY OF MY DREAMS



A BOY'S JOURNEY THROUGH THIS WORLD

Letters to the Boys who
are Going my Way

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I

TO THE BOY WHO WILL BE PRIME
MINISTER

Do you remember where the Kingdom of God is? Long ago, when you were growing up to be a little man, you thought it up in the skies; then you grew up and went to school and it seemed impossible to you that a great kingdom could be up there; and some day, when you have come to be a man, you will wonder that you could ever have thought that God could be so far away, and you will remember that you once heard your mother say—*The Kingdom of God is within you*, and you will know that that is true.

Ringing through the ages that truth has come down to us, and even Jesus, whose words are the most precious things in the world to-day, left behind Him no more wonderful words than these. To you, looking out into the future with your young heart

yearning for honour and power, they come as magic if you understand them, for they mean that you, a boy with all his dreams, can be whatever you want to be—if you really want it and the power is *within you*.

If that power is not within you, nothing can give it you from without. A wise old lady is fond of saying to a friend of mine that there are three aristocracies—the aristocracy of birth, the aristocracy of wealth, and the aristocracy of character. It is fine to have them all, but it is finest of all to have the last. A great man may be poorly born, he may struggle against poverty all his days; but no man has ever been great without character, and nothing else endures.

The Roman Empire has perished in the dust, but the fine character of Marcus Aurelius lives while the dust of his empire is blowing about the earth. And if you will ask a wise old man to-day to look back through the centuries that have rolled away, and to tell you which of all the men who have lived he would rather have been, he will not say Cæsar, or Alfred, or Napoleon; he will not even say Sir Isaac Newton, or Shakespeare, or Milton; he will pass over the names of kings and soldiers and inventors, and even poets, and he will tell

you that he would rather have been a certain man making tents for fishermen at Corinth nineteen hundred years ago. For while kings had only thrones and crowns, while soldiers were destroying the fair face of the earth, while inventors were giving men things to work with or to play with, while even poets could give their treasures only to such as could properly value them, Paul the tent-maker gave to the world a vision that has never left it. A mighty man of character, he saved religion from being weak and small, and he did for the world, without the aristocracy of birth or wealth, perhaps the greatest work that has ever been done by one ordinary man since the world began.

And you would do a great work too : you would be Prime Minister. You would make your way among forty-five millions of people until you rise to be their chosen great man, pushing your way, winning your way, until no man in this forty-five millions, nothing in the nation, can stop you from leading the people who lead the world.

Well, there is, we may be sure, a boy growing up in England now who will one day be Prime Minister ; and why not you ? You have the first of all essentials—you really, really mean what you say, and you have that great quality that Paul had. You are brave :

you would not flinch before any danger, or any difficulty, into which your duty led you. You are proud: you would be ashamed to do a mean thing. You are honest, and know that lying is a coward's game. Keep these things, keep your face to the sun, and nothing can defeat you. You are on the path that has no regrets for you when you reach the end.

You have brought into your life already—when you made up your mind to be a man, and long before you wanted to be Prime Minister—many of the things that you will need, and you will not expect me to remind you of them here. They go without saying, if you are to be the first man in the nation. There are other things we must consider now.

You will have no room in your mind for little things like prejudice. You will look a long way, and see all sides. You will think first and form your opinion afterwards. You will know what you are doing when you take a side, or join a league, or support a society. You will not vote for a resolution that you do not understand, for you have learned at school already that the right way in things you do not understand is the middle way between Yes and No. You will love right-doing and right-thinking too much to

act lightly or speak hastily; you will be careful lest an act or word of yours should give power to an ignoble cause. You will listen readily to an opponent and be willing to learn, and you will love truth and honour so well that you would be ashamed, when you come into your inheritance, to say what a public man said once—that he had heard many speeches in the House of Commons which changed his opinion, but never one which changed his vote. You will not lose your love of fair play when the stakes are higher than they are at school. You will want fair play for great ideas, for honourable motives, for right causes, for rich and poor, for strong and weak; you will *play the game* though your team should go to pieces.

You will be on the winning side, as the best men always are. Your victory may not come to-morrow, but only the best can win in the end. Your party will not be always right, the other will not be always wrong; and you will scorn to sneer in victory or defeat, because you will learn that there is some essential good in all defeated parties, and some essential bad in all triumphant hosts. The game you will play is the game of the best life for all and the highest honours for the nation, and you will blush when the fair

name of patriot is stolen by selfish men with smaller aims. You will train yourself to keep to the main highway of your great causes, and refuse to be turned aside for lesser things; you will conquer the emotions that would play you false; you will have courage to give pain to those you love if the time comes when they do not see the way. You will see your star and steadily pursue it. You will serve the World, the Universe, Life itself, God and Mankind, and nothing less.

You will come to understand, as the years pass by and you see the world in movement all around you, that education is not in remembering things that happened long ago, interesting and useful and often inspiring as these memories may be. Education is the understanding of the laws of life, the preparation for your place in the world, so that your life may be a joy to you and a blessing to your fellows. An engineer may know the name of every king who ever reigned, the field of every battle ever fought; he may read Homer and the Bible in the great originals, and may be able to tell you the height of every mountain; but if he does not know that a chain depends on its weakest link he is not educated, and one day the world will hear that a bridge has fallen and a train has been wrecked,

Education is the instrument by which we live our life and do our work. If you would be a builder of houses, educate yourself for building houses; if you would be a builder of nations, educate yourself for building nations. If a tree is dying, the gardener does not strip off the leaves or trim the branches—he nourishes the root; and you will learn to find the roots, the causes of things. It does not help an idle man to feed him when he is hungry; he will be hungry again. The only help that can be given to him is to make him work. If the foundations are shaking, the structure can never be safe; if the heart of a man is wrong, his life can never be right. And so you will see that your education is real; you will ask yourself what the world needs of you, and will prepare to give it.

You will have a great love of your name and of our homeland. It is not the boy of the future who gets tired of home, and too big for his mother, and so important that he must always be out in the town, at the theatre or the music-hall, or loafing at a football match, watching other people take their exercise. You will know that an hour of your life is too precious a thing to throw away, and you will love your home and know that there lie the influences that will

make you strong. And as your home comes to mean to you what our English home has meant to millions and millions of boys before you, you will feel it is a shame that millions of our boys and girls have no happy home like yours. You will want to know the reason why, and you will find out.

You will wonder why, if nearly all children are born physically equal, as science tells us they are, so many lose their chance. You will wonder why so many cradles of smiling children are in the shadow of a grave. You will wonder why some streets are wide and full of sunshine, while others are narrow and dark. You will wonder why this way seems to invite you like a garden, while that way makes you shudder like an evil thing. You will go down to the homes of the poor and stand aghast at their ugliness; you will see slums rising even in the country, and will wonder why these things should be.

It will sadden you to see these things in our beautiful England, and you will remember that we are taught at school to love the Empire on which the sun never sets. Let us love it, but let us hate the empire on which the sun never rises. These stunted little men that play about the streets, whose only playground is the pavement, whose only garden is a flower-pot, whose only outlook is a red-

brick wilderness—you will pity them. You, with the light of the sun in your eyes, with the breath of the field in your lungs, with the love of the open air in your heart, will see these things and be moved by them; and you will know the things that are worth reading about, and inquiring about, and thinking about, and will make up your mind that, come what may, every boy and girl shall have a home in the homeland; that the love of our English home, so dear throughout the world, shall not perish in the slums.

The boy who can think of England as it will be, who can see these slums pulled down and smiling avenues in their place, with children playing in gardens and sunlight dancing in the open windows, the boy who can stand in the shadow of to-day and see the sunlight of to-morrow, that is the boy who will be Prime Minister. He is not bothering himself very much about the battle of Agincourt; he is not making his head ache by trying to remember the names and reigns of kings; he does not care very much whether Parliament was right or wrong in killing Charles the First. Boys who are going to be Prime Ministers have other things to think about. They have nothing to do with 1650 and they have everything to do with 1950.

What sort of country will our children live in then? Will the poverty that grinds the lives of the poor have passed away? Will the mention of a prison sound like something from another age? Will our hospitals be needed only for accidents? Will the men and women of 1950 refuse to believe that in 1918 more than seventy thousand people died from a disease that could not exist in a clean country? Will they believe that in 1918 it was necessary to put up this ugly notice in streets and trains—"Please do not spit?" Will they believe that in 1918 more than forty thousand little boys were driven to work down English coal-mines every day?

And in 1950 will these amazing days of ours seem ancient and slow? Will every house be on the telephone? Will railways and motorways run everywhere? Will every cottage have electric light? Will heat and power be carried into every house as water is carried now? Will every house have a garden round it? Will chimneys disappear and smoke be utterly abolished? Will a stream of water run all day and night down every street? Will men read of the plague of flies, and the lives that flies destroyed, and go to a museum to see what a fly was like? Shall we talk from anywhere to anywhere, and shall we see the distant friends we talk to?

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Will every child have enough to eat, and a warm house to live in, and clothes to wear? Will children at school be taught that it is more important to know the way a house should face than the way King James went when he ran away?

Because you love your country you must think of these things. There is a patriotism that springs from the past, that thrills us when we think of the men who suffered and toiled and fought to make a nation for you and me. But there is a nobler patriotism of the future, that thrills us to think of what will be. What are we giving to the future? You, with this vision before you, what will you give to the land in which your children will live?

No boy is born into the world, said a poet who had much to do with Prime Ministers, whose work is not born with him. For you the work of leading a nation waits. You will be willing to die for your country, if need be; but you will be willing to live for it, too. You will live, not for the day, but for the years to come. You will keep your reverence for yesterday and your passion for to-morrow. You will love our England, with all her faults, and will help her to redeem them. You will love your own country and all countries; you will love the world and the universe;

you will not be cruel to a butterfly, because you believe in the great Brotherhood of Life, the union of all created living things.

Your mind will grow wide with these thoughts, and clearer and clearer, and nobler and nobler, the vision will loom before you. You will teach yourself, and as far as in you lies you will teach the people, that happiness lies not in money and great possessions, not in motor-cars and great estates, but in things not made with hands. You will teach the poor to enjoy the riches of Nature; you will teach the rich to enjoy the simplicities of natural life. But, above all, you will bid a nation to remember that rich and poor are reckoned not in money but in Life. You will lead the people in the paths of peaceful progress, you will bring back to the worker the lost joy of labour, you will give the children a great love of their country and the country a great love of its children. The petty strifes of other days will have passed away. Then men will be like brothers, friendly rivals in the fruitful arts of peace, and Merrie England will be back again.

You will reach your goal; you will do your work; and out of the hearts of forty-five millions of people will come a great thankfulness. You will look back upon your life and remember what your mother told

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you, and will say to yourself—"The Kingdom of God is within me." And then you will look out upon a smiling land, and you will say in your heart—"The Kingdom of God is about me, also."

II

TO THE BOY WHO IS LEAVING SCHOOL

As I sit at my desk and think of you, with the gates of Life open wide before you, I wish with all my heart that when I was a boy like you I had known what I know now. How many blunders it would have saved, how much disappointment and trouble! I had a good schoolmaster, but I have had a better schoolmaster since than can be found in all the schools and colleges and universities in the world.

For every day since I left school I have been learning in the big School of the World, where every man and woman is a scholar and Experience is the teacher. And this big school is like all other schools—full of wise or unwise scholars. There are some who go through it day by day, week by week, year by year, as if life did not matter, waiting always for play-time, caring nothing for the

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things for which schools were made and men were born.

It is these scholars who keep down the proud reputation of the school. It is these, in the big school of the world, who are responsible for most of the misery and trouble among mankind. Let us make · p our minds, every British boy among us, to be a credit to our school, and to live and work in the world so that our old school shall never have to apologise for us, but shall rather feel itself honoured by the way we live and the work we do.

You are living at a time when to be a boy is the proudest thing in the world. There is hardly a successful man anywhere who would not give his success for the years that lie before you. There is no man alive, perhaps, who does not wish he were a boy again. A famous man once said to me that he would give all he ever had to be alive in fifty years.

The world will be a fine place to live in when you are men. What are you going to do in it? Are you going to muddle through somehow until the dark gates open that lead into another life, or are you going to make yourself known and felt, and become a power for good? You live in a village, perhaps, and have not seen much of the great world beyond; but every avenue that leads to fame

in the greatest country in the world begins at the door of your school. You may walk out of your school and be Prime Minister of England.

At least one man sits in the Cabinet to-day who never had the chance of a school like yours, who walked in the streets of London, carrying home washing for his mother; and there is another man in the Cabinet, who has control of every penny that England spends, who used to go about picking up sticks to make a fire. Neither of these boys had such opportunities as you, but they meant to get on in the world, and neither poverty nor anything else could keep them back.

So it is with you. Nothing can keep you back if you mean to go forward. The roads that lead to success in life are widening more and more. You may wander in a hundred fields and pick your prize.

I am sure that as you sit there, thinking, perhaps, of all the difficulties that you have, and thinking, perhaps, that there can never be anything but a struggling life before you, you will feel that what I say is all very well for others, but that somehow it is not true for you.

If you think like that you may make up your mind at once that it is *not* true for you, for no boy, and no man, can get any farther

than he aims. How many times have you written in your exercise-books, "Look before you leap"? It is a wise saying, and we all know what it means, but more important still is it to look before you walk. Make up your mind where you are going. Remember that it is not only the way you go that matters, but how far you go that way; whether, when you have chosen your way, you quit yourselves like men. Remember that all useful work is honourable, and that the only dishonour in it is if it is badly done. And the task that is set before every man is, not to be this, or that, or the other—to mind a machine, to drive a plough, to write a book, to paint a picture, or to go into the House of Commons; the great task set before a man is, so to prepare himself in the days of his youth that in carrying on his work in the world he shall do all things well.

What, then, are the qualities that we need most on our way through the world?

There are not many things that all men agree about, but some things there are that every man knows to be true. And perhaps the first of these things is that to do anything worth doing in the world we must have a definite purpose. We must have an aim in life. We must make up our mind what we want to do, how we want to do it; and we

must let nothing come in our way. We must think of time as what it really is—a treasure given to us for our safe keeping.

Time, we say, is money. But time is much more than money, for time can do what all the money in the world can never do. Time can heal all sorrows and cure all ills, and time, if you will use it rightly, will give you an opportunity such as you can hardly think of now. Remember that, when you waste your time, when you stand with your hands in your pockets looking at somebody else playing football, or when you stand idling in the street. You would not throw a sovereign away, yet how often you lightly waste an hour or a day! We do not want for ever to be bent on serious things, and there is time for all of us to play; but nothing is so dangerous as amusement, and we had better never play at all than let play steal away our lives, and lead us to forget our aims.

And we must have ambition. Do not believe those who would tell you there is anything wrong in the desire to get on well in the world. There is a right getting-on and a wrong getting-on, and when we say that we want to get on I hope we always mean, not merely that we want more money in our pocket, but that we want to know more as

well as to have more; that we want more opportunities of well-doing and well-being. There are low ambitions and high ambitions. Let us see to it that we aim at a high purpose; that, in Emerson's splendid words, we hitch our waggon to a star.

We must be resolute; we must have determination. It is no use our having ideas unless we mean to carry them out. It would take me a week to tell you of half the things that men have said to be impossible, which have been done by men of determination. Men said it was impossible to have railways, and the man who first tried to make a steamship was driven to despair by people who looked upon him as a man out of his mind. Even so wise a man as Sir Walter Scott once said that a man was an idiot because he talked of lighting London by gas. The men who gave us the inventions which make millions happy to-day were often ridiculed and driven to starvation, and we owe the pleasure we get from our inventions simply to their wonderful determination, which never gave way.

One other thing goes with determination, and that is concentration. You may have great energy, and you may put it all into your work, but you may use your strength in such a way that it simply fails. We all

know what a spendthrift is—the foolish man who throws away his money in stupid ways, and finds one day that he has nothing left. There are spendthrifts in strength as well as in money, and the worst spendthrift is he who wastes his energy in ways which serve no purpose instead of keeping it for something that is worth doing. Stick to your work—that is what we mean by concentration. Do not give yourself so many things to do that you can do none of them well. You are only wasting your time if you fritter it away in little things that make no difference to anybody.

If you set out to win a scholarship, make up your mind exactly what it means. Think out the best way to do it, and, having thought it out and made up your mind, draw up a programme of work and keep to it. Do not run away from your books every time there is a football match. Football is a fine game for those who play it, but we should be ashamed of the habit of looking on while others play. The football match may amuse for an hour, but an hour with your books may make all the difference in the years that are to come.

I am not much more than a boy, but long before you are as old as I am you will come to regret the time you wasted in these days

of your youth. But there is one thing you will never regret—you will never regret the time you give to your books, and the attention you give to your teachers. Men grow rich by using their money so that it brings them good interest, so that a sovereign grows to be 25s. and 25s. grows to be 30s. But nothing pays such good interest as the hours that a wise boy spends at school or at home, and if there are any hours that a man would like to call back again, they are those golden hours which you can call yours to-day, but which all too soon will be gone from you for ever.

Use them well, for they are the hours in which you are making your name in the world. There died not very long ago a man who saved a million lives. Long before you and I were born he began to think about a great problem that was puzzling the doctors, and he had almost every one against him. Hardly anybody believed in him. But he was in earnest, and he stuck to his work, and he went on thinking, thinking, thinking, until at last there came to him a great idea which has been a blessing to every suffering creature who has ever passed through an operation, and must have saved millions of lives. And this splendid man, Lord Lister, did this by sticking to his work.

The boy who sticks to his work—that is

the boy the world is waiting for. That is the boy for whom somebody has a thousand pounds a year. That is the boy for whom there is a vacant place in the House of Commons. That is the boy who will paint the picture that everybody will go to see. That is the boy who will be manager of a big business. That is the boy that every mother wishes her son to be.

There are plenty of other boys ; plenty of boys who will grow up to sell matches, or newspapers, and to do nothing in particular for anybody, and worse than nothing for themselves. But the boy the world wants is the boy in earnest, the boy who is ambitious, the boy who is determined, the boy who will "stick to it."

Be men. Be reliable. Do what you do so that it need not be done over again. Be a comfort to your mother, an honour to your father, a credit to your school. Be bold and courageous. Do not be afraid if you make a mistake. One of the most successful men in the world once said to me, "Never be afraid of mistakes. I have made many of them, and am going to make more." It is perfectly true that the man who never made a mistake never made anything. Do right because it is right, and be bold in doing it.

You are growing up in the greatest country

in the world. There are many things to put right in England, sad things and bad things that will cry out loud to you when you grow up. But that must always be, until the end of the world, and what I hope you are growing up to feel about your country is that it is the best of all the countries that have ever been.

We should be proud to belong to the race of Alfred and Shakespeare and Milton. No nobler thing can happen to a boy than to be born on "this precious isle set in a silver sea," from which has gone out to the ends of the earth a spirit of freedom, a love of truth, a thirst for knowledge, a yearning for justice, a hope of immortality, without which the world could never be the happy place it is to live in. As the grain of mustard seed grows until it covers the field, so the seed of the English spirit has grown until it has covered the earth, until—as I read in a book the other day—so completely has it conquered the earth that if some terrible catastrophe could sink these islands under the sea tomorrow, or shatter them into dust to be carried away by the wind, still the greatness of England would live on in the world—in the love of home, and freedom, and truth, and justice, and order, and beauty, that our race has planted round the earth, in imperish-

able monuments of liberty set up in many lands, in books that all mankind will read for ever, in the vision of a Golden Age which was born in England and can never die until the Day shall dawn.

Looking back through the ages of England, we find that here and there the English spirit, working always in the lives of its people and spreading quietly everywhere, has burst out suddenly upon the world like a thing from the skies, so that the world has stood and wondered as a child at the opening of a rose or the rising of the sun; and at these times the power of England has been the most precious thing on earth, crushing the oppressor, releasing the captive, uplifting the down-trodden, and bringing new strength and hope to millions of mankind.

It is yours to help to carry on this work of England. You belong to the freest, the happiest, the most generous nation that has ever been known, and you are growing up to take your place in it. You will have to help to rule one quarter of the human race. You speak a language which is covering the earth; you belong to a country which has laid the foundation of good government everywhere, and you will grow to know how rich is the opportunity and how great is the glory of being born in this free land. You can never

know until you are a man how dear the reputation of England is throughout the world.

And it is for you, you who will rule this land in a not far-off to-morrow, to keep its name untarnished. Be proud of your country, which has given you more than you can ever pay back to it.

Be in all things honourable and courageous ; be capable in what you undertake ; be afraid for nothing but evil : be anxious for nothing but good. So you will serve your country well ; so you will honour God ; so you will travel to your destiny with peace and love for your companions, by a way which no cloud can darken, with a calm which none of this world's sorrows can destroy.

III

TO THE BOY WHO LOVES A GAME

ONE of the first things they will tell you, now that you are growing up, is that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. It is true. You need not believe all the extravagant things that are said about games in these days; you need not believe that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, as the Duke of Wellington is said to have said. Let us set aside these extravagances, and be content to believe that games, like all good things, have their proper place and their special value.

The battle of Waterloo was won at Waterloo, but what the Duke meant, no doubt, was true—that at Eton the men of Waterloo built up those great qualities that make a man a hero when his hour comes; so that, in a sense, the victory was the fruit of the seed sown on the playing fields. It was the fruit sown, too, on many an English hearth, at many a mother's knee, and in the rough

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and tumble of this busy world; but it is true that many of the great lessons of life come from the games we play as boys.

The great healthy games are those played out-of-doors. You will not have time to bother with cards, the great time-wasters of a young man's world, beset with snares and temptations which only an enemy would put in your way. Seek first the Kingdom of Out-of-Doors. You will find health and pleasure there. Remembering that your body is the house your soul inhabits, you will seek to make it a worthy temple of a holy life. In the field and on the river you will seek, and you will find, a strong arm, a sure aim, a steady eye, and dignity of bearing. You will not forget that one of the first rules of games is to lay the foundation of a full and splendid manhood, and you will keep, as one of the mottoes of your life outdoors, the thought that a noble mind should live in a noble body. You will have learnt that healthy, whole, and holy are three words with one meaning, and, believing that nothing unhealthy can be holy, you will not think it wrong to worship the body God made for you as if it had come to you from Heaven itself.

And, just because you reverence the temple in which God planted your soul, you will suffer no harm to come to it through heedlessness

of yours. The first man you meet will tell you sad stories of boys who played too hard, and suffered from the strain of it all their lives. You will be wise, and know when to stop; how far to run, how long to pull. You will love the joy of your games too much to imperil it for ever.

You will play a game for its own sake; you will never spoil the spirit of all true games, or lower the dignity of all true manhood, by playing it for profit at the expense of somebody else. You will blush if a friend should think you capable of that. If a game is not interesting enough in itself you will leave it alone, you have not yet fallen so low—you for whom the future waits—that you must turn the pleasures of your friends to your own self-seeking. You would scorn to break the great English rule of Fair Play by playing for a baser motive than the pure love of the game. You will shudder to think that your friend should come to hate you because you turn his pleasure into business.

As you hate a sneak, so you will hate a gambler. As you hate a parasite, living and fawning upon others, so you will hate a man who preys upon his friends. You will grow up looking your friend straight in the face, with no need to turn away because you have gained by your friend's loss. You will scorn to

strike such coward blows at friendship, to degrade a game to such a level, to dishonour yourself until you stand, in the sight of God and your own conscience, side by side with thieves. There is no depth to which a gambler may not fall, no steps that lead to ruin so certainly as his. You will keep pure the name your father gave you; you will keep sweet the love your mother bears you; and you will keep your honour free from this mean strain.

You will never take part in any way, never look on or be interested at all, in a game that is not being played for the joy of it. There are better things to learn than the cunning and greed and bitter selfishness that come from playing for money; there are better services you can render to your friends than to take their pocket-money from them because you have a chance to do it. When you walk about in London you will come across miserable little shops, in alleys and side streets, where a sheet of paper is nailed up outside asking you to put a shilling on a horse, or perhaps even on a football match.

It is a lying paper, put there by a trickster who thinks that boys are easily trapped. Just as the old highwaymen waited in the dark for a man to pass, so these highwaymen wait in the open daylight to catch you, perhaps, in an unwary moment, to play upon

your honest trust in the honesty of others, and then to cheat you like the thieves they are. Some day the police will tear these lying papers down from the doors of these tricksters' shops; but till then you will learn to know these shops and to treat them with contempt.

You will be indignant if a man tells you that he can give you a sovereign for a shilling, that he knows a certain horse will win a race, a certain team will win a match; and you will look him in the face, knowing that he is a thief who preys on ignorant people, especially on women and boys, and you will tell him that he insults an educated boy when he talks like that. Always, as you go through life, you will find about you traps set by these men to catch you unawares; perhaps a dishonest advertisement in the papers—which the best papers do not print—and the end of these things is inevitable ruin and despair. They will promise to make you rich quick, to give you £5 a week for a few hours' work in the evening. Competitions in papers will tempt you to waste your time in the same useless, hopeless effort to get something out of nothing—which means to get something out of somebody in return for nothing.

You, who have learned to behave like a gentleman, will scorn to stoop so low as that,

and you will refuse indignantly to take the first steps in this low game by playing at anything for money.

Well knowing the peril that lies before you, you will have nothing to do with the silly habit of playing a game for anything at all save for its own sake. You will laugh into ridicule the idea that you should play for nuts or anything else. At the very beginning of your school life lay down this rule, and swear that it never shall be broken—*Play the game for the game, and for nothing but the game.*

The games of a boy are his lessons in noble things; the playing field is in very truth the High School of his life. It is there he finds the great distinctive English quality that mark a man all over the world. I once heard of a man who came to the university of a great English town from a country in the East. He was cultured, kind, and made friends everywhere; a lovable man. Yet every now and then this lovable man would do something terrible in English eyes; he would make you want to hit him, said my friend. *He had not learned the laws of honour.* Now, no English boy can be a healthy boy and miss the laws of honour. They ring through every school that is worth the stuff it is built of; they are blazoned as in letters of fire

over every playing field that is worth walking on. They are among the oldest things in the world, and they will last as long as the human race. Even in olden days, when a man's sense of honour was curiously twisted, so that only the killing of his enemy could satisfy it, a man would not take a mean advantage of the man he was about to kill—he would kill him "like a gentleman"—and so, before they fought, they would measure swords to see that the chances were equal and the fight was fair. And always, at the bottom of our English idea of sport, however men may forget it, is the great maxim—*A fair field and no favour.*

There is no room, if you think of it, for anything else in any game, and the first law to which we must all bow down is that to which King Arthur's Round Table bowed—the law of chivalry. We must think of the game and not of ourselves. That game is lost in which one member of the team seeks his own glory. The unity of all for a single cause, each playing his part for the general end, is the condition without which no game is won. You will be yourself when you play; you will bring on to the field those special qualities which mark you out among your comrades; but you will bring also the willingness to sink yourself in entire forgetfulness, and to place your qualities

at the service of the team. You will not be a mere cog in a wheel, but you will not think yourself the whole machine; you will be a *part* of the machine and a part of the force which drives it, and you will remember that the whole machine breaks down if a vital part of it goes wrong. Perfect self-mastery and perfect submission, the natural use of your own powers in co-operation with others, the natural balance of your service to others and your dependence upon others, will come to you like the dawn of a new truth, and you will realise yourself growing into fulness of manhood. Chivalry, the surrender of self, obedience to the law that holds the team together—these things will grow naturally with every game you play, and you will cherish them as a very part of you, so that others will know the things that you are made of. You will be staunch and loyal and true; your comrades will be able to rely on you.

Especially you will be a good loser; you will yield the palm with grace and cheerfulness to a victor who has played the game. You will leave haggling, grudging, and quarrelling to meaner souls, and will not spoil the temper of a game by claiming doubtful points or insisting on little rights. You will not strain the rules of a game so that the keeping of them breaks the spirit of them;

you would rather lose a thousand games than win one by even the shadow of unfairness. When the time comes, as it comes in all games, at which nobody could see if your play was unfair, you will be glad to know that your loyalty is above suspicion, and will do the right thing as quickly as a lightning flash, never playing with temptation to take a mean advantage, or—in a word which will be hateful to you—to cheat.

The sad side of human life, made up of cunning and intrigue, of seeking selfish ends at any cost to others, of preferring our vain-glory rather than the achievement of a common good, of shutting our hearts to the troubles of others so long as we are prospering, has no encouragement on the playing field, where only the flower of life, and not the weed, can grow. We must be loyal, or the game is lost; whether we win or lose, it is victory or defeat with honour. We love the game so well that we love the sight of a glorious win, though it be against ourselves; we could never be mean enough to withhold the applause that belongs rightly to the victor.

So that there grows up in us in our play that part of our life which makes the difference as the years go by, between the men who help a nation on and the men who pull it back. The life of the world itself calls for those quali-

ties in us which spring from the holding together of the team. If we hold together in the nation as we hold together in the team, in the boat race, in the tug-of-war, we shall give back to the nation a hundredfold the talents entrusted to us for its service. If we are loyal to our team, to our school, we shall be loyal to our village, to our town, and to our country; the very beginnings of patriotism lie in the cap that a schoolboy wears, in the badge he has on his coat, in the honour in which he holds his school, his form, or his "house." Every boy who is proud of his school remembers the ringing verse of Mr. Henry Newbolt :

To speak of Fame a venture is,
There's little here can bide,
But we may face the centuries,
And dare the deepening tide:
For though the dust that's part of us
To dust again be gone,
Yet here shall be the heart of us—
The school we handed on!

You will not only leave your heart at school, but, wherever time may take you in the world, you will hand on the honour of your school—the chivalry you found there, the loyalty you cherished there, the lofty aims you followed there, the whole love of life you built up there.

The hour that passes lightly in a game

will leave its mark upon you ; we build up our manhood while yet we are boys. As you grow older, and the games of a boy live only in your memory, you will keep the spirit of them true in the games you play as a man. You will feel a blush of shame when you see men shooting pigeons as they are let out of a basket, with no chance of escape ; or men driving birds into the face of the guns, to be shot by men who could not hit them in fair sport ; or men sending fifty hounds after one poor fox, for the thrill of seeing him torn to pieces.

That is not the Fair Play for which England is renowned throughout the world. That is the spirit of the Colosseum, where innocence was flung to raving lions ; or of the Spanish bull fight, where a man is pitted against a bull ; or of the dark house in a dark slum, where a brutal father beats his child. That is the spirit of the coward, who finds pleasure not only in shooting a beautiful living creature, but in shooting it when he has cut off its chance of escape, as a bully kicks a boy who is down. Your games have given you the fine sense of honour, and you will hate the coward who puts on a brave man's cloak and calls himself a sportsman. You will remember that even duellists measure swords, and take no mean advantage.

And one more thing you will scorn ; you will not let yourself forget the dignity due to life by letting the love of sport consume your time and dominate all other things. A game has its place and is important in its place ; but a game, after all, is a rivulet, and not the main stream of your life. You will scorn the sham sporting spirit of these days, the mania of football, whose victims imagine they are sportsmen because they look on while other people play. You will play football as much as you can, and enjoy the rush of warm blood through your veins and the suppleness that comes to your limbs, but you will have nothing to do with the fraudulent sport which makes a football team a business and buys and sells men like sheep. There is something to be said, no doubt, for the locker-room who can no longer play as he used to do, who is tired after his week's work, or whose home is at the back of a slum, or whose only change is in the street or in a public-house ; but you have nobler things to do than watch men kick a ball about, and you will check every step that would lead you into the ranks of despair which gather week after week at a big football match, and talk of football as if it were deciding the fate of nations.

It does not matter in the least who wins the English Cup, except to the men who play

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honestly for it. For all the millions whose lives are so dull that they must seek their chief interest in the game played by these men, let us be sorry. But you will not add to their numbers; you will be on the side of the players against the lookers-on; and here, again, you will play for the love of the game itself, and for nothing else.

And now put down this letter and go to your games. They will give you strength and courage; they will bring you selflessness and manliness. Play them well, and win. Quit you like a man: be strong.

IV

TO THE BOY WHO WILL MANAGE A GREAT BUSINESS

I SHALL never forget one thing that was said to me when I was still a boy like you. I wish I could, for it comes to me again and again, until I think of it as a millstone round the necks of those who are trying to save the world. It was just one sentence, of only nine words, and they were spoken to me by the superintendent of a Sunday school, who said, as if he were saying an ordinary thing, "Oh, but religion has nothing to do with business."

And ever since that night, now perhaps twenty years ago, I have thought of that as one of the most terrible things ever said to me. If religion has nothing to do with business, be sure to see that business has nothing to do with you. But it is because you know better, because you know that religion has to do with shops as well as churches, that I would urge you to go forward and make yourself a king

among the men who manage that side of the world upon which so much of our happiness depends.

You will find room in it for religion every day that you live, and you need not be ashamed of "being in business" any more than you would be ashamed of being in art, or literature, or the law, or the Church. Michael Angelo could carve the finest statues ever seen, and paint such glorious pictures that the Pope must have them all; but do you remember that he set aside his brush and chisel to build a wall in Florence? After all, the artist is helpless unless somebody brings him his paints, the author is helpless unless somebody brings him his paper, the lawyer is helpless unless somebody brings him the worries and puzzles of the workaday world to unravel. And so business is the broad foundation of the world, the great thoroughfare along which the world goes on its way; and who should not be proud to walk thereon? I have heard of boys who think themselves too good for business, but how sad that is! for it means that they are too narrow for the widest field of service in which any man can serve his fellows.

A poor look-out for mankind it would be were all our boys like that. There would be no engineers to run our railways; no con-

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tractors to store up the water of life for the people of Egypt, to save them from starvation. There would be no ships to bring us food and clothes. There would be no men to build us homes, no fires to make them warm, no light for us at night. Without our men of business the world could not go round one day. They are the managers of the wheels of the world, and if these wheels should stop there is nothing anywhere that could go on.

And so I want you to grow up in your work feeling that business is not a narrow thing, important to those who are in it and to nobody else. The bounds of the world are drawing nearer and nearer together, and even as I write to you the chemist in my Kentish village cannot fill up a bottle on his shelves because men on the other side of Europe are setting fields ablaze with fire instead of with purple poppies. As the Turks are too busy fighting to grow poppies, my doctor runs short of opium. So a poor crop in the cotton-fields of India may mean sad homes in Lancashire, and the consequences of the bad management of a harbour may be felt across the earth.

It is a fine thing to be a Member of Parliament, but no Member of Parliament in any country can affect so many people in so many places as the manager of a certain

railway or a certain mine could do. The painter may give up painting his pictures tomorrow, the writer may stop writing his books, and still the life of the nation goes on ; but if the miner refuses to go down the mine, or if the carrier refuses to carry things, or if the clerk refuses to make up his books, the life of the country must stand still until he pleases to work again. It is business and not art, work and not wealth, industry and not politics, that have cast their net so wide around the world that all the world is in it, and it is business that may yet end war, and bring in the universal peace which preachers and thinkers and statesmen have failed to bring. When you look at a shop, or go into an office, or walk round a great works, remember that it does not stand alone, but is part of a machinery of business which has come nearer to the idea of universal kinship than anything else on earth. On the day when you join a great business, you join the international forces of mankind ; you blot out the boundaries of the map, and belong to the brotherhood of the human race.

It is good to have a vision, to look far on in the way we are going, to feel that our lives reach out beyond a counter or an office door ; and it will help you in your work to

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remember why you are doing it, and what the end of it may be. We are ministering to the comforts and needs of the world, or we are doing nothing worth doing. We are doing something that needs to be done well, or we had better not do it at all. Make up your mind that the thing that may be done anyhow is simply a waste of time. The first great step in your career is when you say to yourself that your work is a necessary part of the life of the world, and must be done as well and as quickly as you can do it. Nothing can keep you back if you keep this rule in all you do.

It need not be said, of course, that you will choose carefully the work to which you mean to give your life, and that you will choose the work you like to do. I heard once of a boy who loved pictures and beautiful things, who was what men call a dreamer, so that he would stand in the garden and stare at the stars as other people stare at fireworks. He was born to be an artist, and he loved to play with his box of paints and think out pictures that he would paint some day; and then one day his father decided what he should be, and apprenticed him to—a *butcher*! No protests were of any use, and the end of that was too sad for words to tell.

Be what you want to be. There is no safer

rile than that. It may not be easy to follow a boy's desire. Perhaps money may stand in the way; you may not be able to give up years to learn the business you would like to make your own. Perhaps it may be overcrowded, and those who advise you may know that your ambition could hardly be achieved. Perhaps your strength may not be equal to your mind, and you may have to give up something to save your health. But of course you will think of all these things. You will consult those who know best.

You will discover yourself, and realise your powers, and *then* you will be what you want to be. You will feel your heart longing for some particular thing; you will feel that your soul is drawn to it; you will know your mind is shaping for it; and you will have your opportunity. You will make the great decision, and have faith in the end of it.

It is a long ladder that leads to the top of a great business, and he who would climb it must climb it step by step. The boy who has a goal at end in view does not despise the small beginning. If you are fortunate enough not to need to begin at the bottom, put your good fortune away and forget it. The man who reaches the top never starts half way. We must know the whole alphabet of a language before we can speak it, and a man

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must know the alphabet of his business before he can manage it. A man I met the other day saves his firm £3000 a year because he has studied a subject so closely that there is nothing about it he does not know. Forget, if you can, that your work is your way of earning wages and remember that it is your way of giving your powers to the service of mankind.

It is surely worth beginning well : it would be a pity for a manager not to know what every boy in his works will know. You will be interested in everything that concerns you. You will have what we call concentration, and will not waste your time in idle things ; but, because you take a big view of your work, you will not let concentration make you narrow. Even Napoleon made that mistake. When Robert Fulton went to him, and offered to build him a steam navy, Napoleon put him off, little knowing that he was throwing away a thing that would have made him master of the world. And, because he had shut out all but one thing from his mind, Napoleon refused to be interested in Pestalozzi's scheme of national education, saying he had no time to bother about the alphabet, but little thinking that he was throwing away a chance to win the admiration of the world.

So that, although you will concentrate, it will be better that you should not concentrate too much. You will concentrate at particular times on particular things, and fix your attention on the task you have in hand as if nothing in the world were more important. That kind of concentration can only be good, and is your first necessity. But you will not become so absorbed in the business side of your life as to forget that you are a citizen of the world, a friend of men, a member of a household. You will do your work all the better if you take an interest in the world about you. More and more the time is coming when the head of a great business must understand his people, and that manager will control them best who understands them best. You will stick to your work, but you will never forget that there are other things, and that work is but a part and not the whole of life.

Of course, you will have no time to smoke ; you will let the other boy do that. It will do you no good, and is almost sure to do you harm ; and it is a thing you can leave till you are years and years older, when it will not be worth while to begin. The smoking boy is the loafing boy, the boy who goes about the world slowly, reading silly papers in the street ; the boy who is never

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to be relied upon, who is never there when he is wanted, never comes back when he is expected, and is never particularly missed when he goes.

You will be too manly to do things merely because other boys do them; and of course you will never touch alcohol, the enemy of every boy who ever lived, and of every good chance he ever had. You may as well go through the world with folded arms as hope to do your best with alcohol. It will poison your body and enfeeble your mind; it will dim the vision of your soul, and there is no advice that can be given you more important than this—that you should leave all alcohol utterly alone. And gambling, too; shun a gambler as you would a thief. You cannot gamble and be an honest boy; you cannot gamble and grow up without losing something vital from your life which no money could replace. All these things are wastrels of time, and time, you know already, is the most precious thing you have. You boys are the world's real millionaires, and your millions are in minutes. There is not a millionaire who would not give his money for your years. You have their past to guide you, and yours is the future that they will not see.

You will waste no time in idling. You will see that every hour of time bears in-

terest, and brings you nearer to your goal. You will not find life so dull that you must stand with fifty thousand poor dull people to watch a football match; you will let the boys who are *not* going to manage businesses do that. And you will not find books so dull that you must read bad and stupid papers. You will not spoil your mind by pouring into it the awful stuff that crams so many book-stalls. You will be ashamed to feed the brain God gave you with such bad food as that. There are more glorious books in your nearest library than you can ever read, and you will scorn to pass them by for trash.

And, as doing all things well means everything to you, you will take pains to do well all the ordinary things that so many boys do ill. You will go quickly where you have to go; you will finish completely what you have to do; you will listen to what is said to you and understand instructions. You will start eagerly and early in the morning. You will not care much whose place it is to do a thing so long as it is done, and you will never lose a chance of doing something you have never done before. That is how your progress comes, the new experience that makes the boy a man. You will be ready to fill a gap if somebody else should fail, and I hope you will fit yourself for a hundred little

services by training your hand to write well. A boy should be ashamed not to write plainly and with ease. I saw a stupid advertisement the other day, written by a man who had typewriters to sell, and the best thing he could think of to say was that there is no need now for good handwriting, and that bad writing does not matter. The proper thing to do with that advertisement is to burn it. The man who writes it is selfish and dishonest, willing to tempt a boy to spoil his chance in life in order that he may sell a typewriter. Again and again a boy may miss an opportunity because his writing is bad.

The boy who can be useful in a hundred ways, who can mend a bell or hang a picture if need be, is the boy who will rise quickly, but he will take care to do one thing especially well. He will do his own particular work, and will watch the work of the man above him. Some day the man above will rise higher still, and then will come an opportunity. It will come to the boy who loves his work, whom it is a pleasure to meet, and whose face seems always to say, "Let me do something for you." Have you ever heard a man say of a boy that rather than ask him to do a thing he would do it himself? Perhaps the boy would forget a letter, or put the telephone through to the wrong number, or be

twice as long as he should be in going an errand. A friend of mine asked such a boy to shut a window. He was busy writing, and the boy had just to pull a window down. But the boy went out to fetch the window-stick, broke the stick in trying to fix it, moved a table, brought a chair to stand on, and made such a noise and fuss that my friend turned round, and found him at *the wrong window!* Then the man closed the right window himself, in a moment, and wondered if boys are not more bother than they are worth.

And yet I know boys who are worth twice as much as some men, who get on with their work and do it well while men muddle about. One of the greatest men of business in this country engaged a man the other day at a salary of £500 a year, and told me afterwards that the man would have to go. "I can't stand him," he said. "He started by bothering me about where he was to sit, and sent me half a dozen notes the second day asking who would pay his salary." And so that man will lose £500 a year, because it is too high a salary for a man who simply bothers other people.

You will not bother about where you will sit in the world, about who will pay your wages. The wages of the good worker will come to him—have no fear of that. Twice

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over they will come to him if he is wise ; he will have his reward in money and in the joy of labour too. For the good worker is no drudge, toiling because he must, giving himself up to slavery to buy bread. He is as free as the air he breathes, working because work is good, working well because he loves it, spending his natural powers in natural ways. He has no master but himself. Though he may gladly serve another, as a man serves the cause he believes in, or follows the leader he admires, his mind is his own, his work is worth the value he receives for it. He has discovered himself ; he has found the place in the world to which he belongs. He is taking daily from the world the joy that is rightly his ; he is giving daily to the world the strength of his good right arm, with the power of his brain, the love of his heart, and the purity of his soul behind it. He can face the whole world ; he is like the man a friend of mine came upon the other day in an English town. " I owe nobody anything, and I can say what I like," he said. " I have eighteen-pence a week more than I want, and I can give it away ! " The man who can say what he likes and has more than he wants is richer than the millionaire who wants more than he has.

You will be rich in the best things.

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Choosing your work well, so that it brings to you the joy of life, you will love it increasingly as the months grow into years; and the years, as they go by, will bring you the reward that comes to all who give their strength, their qualities, the best that is in them, to the carrying on of the world. You will toil and not be weary, and you will rest from your labours and lie down, and there will come to you a soft voice saying, "You have builded better than you knew."

V

TO THE BOY WHO LOVES A
FRIEND

ONE thing you will need on your journey through this world, whatever Time may bring to you. We come into this world alone; we pass out of it alone; but none of us can live our life alone. It is true that there are things in all our lives that God and we alone can know. It is true that there are times in all our lives when God alone can comfort us. It is true that the hour will come when the love of the dearest friend will fail us. But it is true that the love of a friend is the dearest thing in all the world, and that no man is so happy, and no man is so miserable, that he can scorn or reject it. In happiness and sorrow, too, the heart of a friend is the common need of men.

In the great world that is opening out before you there will come to you, I hope, a generous share of what men call success. It is pleasant to succeed, to win by our own

striving an abundant share of this world's happiness, a place of honour among our fellows. But even then you will need a friend ; and the word of your friend will be the thing you cherish most. And in those other times, when success is not knocking at the door, when it seems as if the sun has gone out, and when words fail, the hand of a friend will sustain you and the look of a friend will be to your sad heart what nothing else on earth can be. In the glad light of morning and the darkness of night you will crave for the love of a friend.

And so, in these days when you are gathering friends about you, you will remember that a friend should be to you as life itself, chosen for ever, and not for an hour or a day. You will ask yourself what influence it is, what manner of mind and heart it is, that you admit into your life. You will not give the key of your life in trust with less carefulness than if it were the key of a box of gold. You will not set out, on your journey through the universe, in company unworthy of your destiny. Yet the first temptations that will come to you may be to choose your friends unwisely. You will need sympathy so often, it will seem to be so near and to come so easily, that you will think the world is full of good companions. It is one of the great trials of

boyhood. You will be so lonely, and the company will be so welcome. You will be so depressed, and the others will be so cheerful. You will not know your way about, and they will know everywhere. And, of course, being a healthy boy, with a great love of the open air, you will gather about you a host of companions, whose good spirits will lift you up and save you from yourself when perhaps you are your own worst enemy. For even that may happen to us all—when perhaps the heart is weary and the mind is overborne; and, left alone, we grow sad and heavy, and forget the things that make the saddest life worth while. No wise man will wish that you should shun good companions. Seek them and cherish them, and open your heart to them frankly; they are the precious gift for which no boy can be too grateful. But it is the trial of boyhood that in all good company there lurks the seed of evil, and from a tiny seed may grow the ruin of a life.

You will keep watch constantly lest that seed should sow itself within you. You will learn, in many ways, to prize the wheat and reject the chaff. Something in you, as if it were an angel's voice, will whisper when wrong comes pleasantly disguised. What most of us call Instinct, what some of us think the spark of divinity planted in the

garden of the soul, will warn you when evil creeps up, looking like good. The wolf will come up in sheep's clothing, and perhaps his words will be so winning, his ways will be so cunning, that you may be drawn by them all unsuspecting; and almost ere you know it the net is woven round you, and tightening fast. It is terrible to think of the brilliant lives that have been ruined by one false step in boyhood, and nearly always the false step has been in the choice of a friend. See that, whatever else may happen, the friends you draw unto yourself are not your enemies.

Perhaps they are about you even now, when all the world seems happy, and you would scorn the thought of wrong. Let that fine scorn remain with you. The scorn of wrong will save you when most other things will fail. It is good that you should be too proud to do what is wrong; that religion of the manly boy is worth a hundred lesser creeds. It is his proof against temptation, his coat of mail against attack, his strength to face all odds.

And yet, in this very confidence of strength, there may be weakness. That which is evil to-morrow may seem so innocent to-day. The little liberty to-night may be licence in the morning. Perhaps you were merely loitering, but loitering grows to loafing, and loafing is

the end of manly boys. Perhaps you were not thinking, and said unthinkingly what you would not let your mother hear you say for all the world; but careless talk grows into swearing, and swearing is the trade-mark of vulgarity. Perhaps you were a little ashamed of your companion, and half denied that you were with him; but half-denials are cowards' lies, and even a liar will hate a coward. So easy is the broad way to destruction. So easy is it to take pleasure in things that grip us like poison and sting us like an adder.

Too soon you will learn the fatal ease of doing wrong in company. A hundred boys or men together will do things that no man or boy in the crowd would do alone. It is as if a new soul crept into numbers, as if the spirit of company wrought some strange change. The habit that is second nature to us all has made us copy almost as naturally as a mirror reflects, so that much of our life is largely automatic, and we follow too readily the example of those about us. And so we are led into paths we would not tread, half surprised, perhaps, to find ourselves there, and wondering how we came.

Many a man, looking back upon his life with bitterness and regret, can trace the beginning of his folly to some thoughtless act,

some habit learned from somebody he trusted as a friend, some chance speech to which he listened—as John Bunyan listened to some women talking at a cottage door and, starting a new life, won for himself an immortality and gave to thousands an inspiration to noble things. It is not always so. The conversation of a stranger saved John Bunyan; the conversation of a friend helped to ruin Robert Burns. The great poet had a pure mind as a boy, and was distressed by the conduct of men he saw about him. But the genius whose heart was touched if he turned up a nest of mice with his plough, or cut up a field of daisies, gathered about him companions whose society he enjoyed for their clever wit and for the stories of adventure they could tell him. A merry boy was one of them, a sailor-lad whose life at sea had made him wild and free, and Robert Burns was drawn to him by what he thought his fine spirit of chivalry and independence. They spent much time together, and the poet was captivated by his friend, but he found, too late, that the irregular life of a wild sailor-boy was not the manner of life for him. He paid dearly for a bright companion, and there is a letter from Robert Burns still in the world in which he deplors the influence of his friend in leading him astray. “His

friendship did me a mischief," the poet wrote, and he recalled, as one of the first steps in his downward career, the loose talk of his companion about things which Burns had regarded with horror. He regarded them with horror less and less, and in the end he found pleasure in what would once have given him pain, and was in after years to prove his ruin.

The company that leads us to forget our better selves is the last company that we should seek. It is easy, terribly easy, to come in touch with evil quietly; to look at an evil thing and pass it over lightly, as if it were nothing; to say an evil thing and pass it off with a sort of half-regret. But the time will come when the thing we took pleasure in for a moment will seize us for an hour, and the hour will come again, and we shall crave it and long for it, and in the end the evil that we never meant to touch holds us in its power, and only suffering and the love of God can save us.

You will remember this, and will be on guard against the slippery places that a boy's natural life must lead him to. Especially you will beware of the danger that lies in unguarded conversation. When something is said that a healthy boy should be ashamed of, you will not let it pass without a protest.

You will not let a mother, or a sister, or any woman's name, be sullied in your presence. An insult to a woman, an offence against a mother, is not to be passed over by a mother's son. You will check the common sneer, the cheap aping of the manners of a good-for-nothing which may be passed off as if it were wit. It is the easy way to low living and low thinking, and should be left to bullies and thieves. You have known the depths of a mother's love, you have had the inspiration of a home in building up the manhood, the tenderness, the hope, the joy of life, the love of good and the hate of evil that is in you; and the memory of your mother and your home will not fail you when you are expected to mock at somebody's mother, somebody's sister, somebody's daughter. You will not knock the bully down, though he may steal a fair name in the absence of its owner and defender, for you will have learned better ways of despising caddishness than that. But you will not lose your opportunity. The boy who insults a woman in your presence, even by so much as a word, must apologise for the hurt he does to you, or must lose all opportunity for repeating his offence. You will feel, when a woman's name is slandered in your hearing, as if the woman were knocked down in your

presence ; for what has happened may be worse than if a bully had only knocked the woman down. The company which, in this lovely world, can find no better subject for its conversation than the slander of mothers and sisters, is not for you. There is only one name for the boy who seeks these things and cherishes these companions. You will avoid them as you would a blackguard.

The chance influences of a boy's life—if we may call that chance which may make or wreck you—increase from year to year. Never were there so many temptations in the world as now. Papers and books are noble things, and may help a boy to build up true nobility ; but there are in shop windows scores of papers and books which honest people ought to burn whenever they see them, and we see boys reading them everywhere. Amusement is a lawful thing, and a place of entertainment may be a saving tonic to us when the mind is pressed and our lives are heavy ; but there are places of entertainment flaunting vice openly in the streets of our towns and cities, which ought to be filled with their own programmes and burned down to the ground ; yet their prices are so low that any boy may go. The cinematograph is a splendid force for good when it is rightly used ; but there are pictures

shown in our great cities every night which disgrace the men who show them, and the town which allows them; and thousands of boys may get the beginning of wrong-doing in these places which should uplift them and fill their minds with a sense of the wonder of life. Football is a splendid game to play, and the boy who does not waste his leisure in this way may gain by even looking on sometimes; but football is becoming a curse to England second only to the Turf, and may soon be unfit for honest boys to interest themselves in, unless Parliament saves it from the betting thieves who care for nothing except that they should build up fortunes out of ruined lives. And at every street corner these thieves have their little shop—generally a tobacco shop, or perhaps a newsagent's—where boys are tempted by lying announcements; and in hundreds of workshops these swindlers have their agents. When the agents cannot reach a boy they send their traps by post, and it is hard to think that there can be a group of boys anywhere in which one boy is not in touch somehow with these blackguards, who would be imprisoned if they destroyed property, but are allowed to live as free men while they destroy life and happiness. And so you will be careful in your chance acquaintances, in your move-

ments among your schoolmates, or among your friends at work ; and you will be quick to recognise the steps that lead astray. You will wait till you are older before you mix with boys who drink and smoke and go to music-halls, and when you are older you will leave them to themselves because you will have passed them by, and left them with the ne'er-do-wells.

Let the other boy smoke and play cards and waste his evenings at street corners ; you have other things to do with the hands and brain that you are giving to the service of your country and the honour of your name. Of course, you will have no secret companions ; you will never spend an hour with anybody anywhere unless you can gladly let all the world know where you went, and with whom you went. Thus sneaks begin ; thus frank and honest boys start to their doom. You will ask yourself, when you make a friend, " Will he help me ? Shall I help him ? Are we on the same way through the world ? "

For that is the test of a comrade. In the great things that make life worth while, the hearts of comrades beat as one. In the journey from this world to the next, comrades march together. Deep in the heart of hearts is sown the seed of friendship. When the daughter of a captive king bowed in submission

before the closest friend of Alexander, thinking him the conqueror, she was much distressed by her mistake. "Do not distress yourself, madam," said the conqueror; "he, too, is Alexander." It was Alexander's beautiful tribute to a friend who was in possession of all Alexander's sympathies. Such friends are towers of strength to you. When your burden is greater than you can bear, they will share it with you. When your life is pleasant and easy, they will increase your happiness.

And the friend you choose in early life, whose life is linked with yours in these days when you are building up your interests, will grow dearer and dearer to you as the earth rolls through the heavens. The cares of life will knit you closer to him, and out of your sorrow Time will weave a bond between you that time itself can never break. Sorrow brings out friends as evening brings out shadows, and there are no friends truer than those who have shared our griefs, have known our fears, have helped us to sustain our lives in all the storms that come.

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel.

You will hold them by bonds more enduring
than steel, the bond of sacrifice each for each,
of perfect reliance upon each other's strength,

of perfect trust in each other's love. Each will give to each the strengthening and uplifting things that men and boys need in every hour of mortal life. In perplexity there will be counsel, in fear there will be courage, in all great enterprise there will be wise urging to splendid ends. And there will be the steadying force of friendship always—not the false cautiousness which grows into timidity and becomes a peril to advancement, a destroyer of ambition, and so a poisoner of the very fount of life ; but the restraint of wisdom, the love that would be sure that right is right, and pursue it in spite of consequence.

The wise love of a friend will know when to urge and when to check. It will not surrender great ends for smaller things. It will not determine great issues by small considerations. It will not oppose itself to natural circumstances and natural development, but will seek to guide them wisely and to grow with them. And you, on your part, will welcome the affection that bids you pause, that would be doubly sure rather than not sure at all before you plunge and overwhelm yourself with some great enterprise. You would not have flatterers about you, but rather the candid friend who is to you as a mirror, almost another self. You will scorn the company in which things are said to please

you, not caring whether they are true or false. You will be grateful for appreciation if it is deserved, and it is stimulating when it comes ; but you will value it rightly, and determine more than ever to be worthy of it. And as for flatterers, you will rate them at their proper value in the market of the world, and that is less than nothing. "For flattery is the fume of little minds." We value most the opinion of those who know ; we should value at nothing at all the praise of ignorance. Worse even than that is the praise of selfishness, the fraudulent love that clothes itself like a friend for something to be gained, some profit or glory that may come some day, as if the noble things of life were bought and sold and ticketed in the market-place. You will find them everywhere—fair-weather friends who protest their love when the sun is high in the heavens, but forget to protest it when the sun goes down. They break men's hearts, these so-called friends ; they leave us nothing to comfort us, in our anxious days, but the bitter memory of love betrayed.

It is wise to know many people. It is wise to seek the company of those who are interested in the movement of the world. There is not much room in the world for dull people, and there is no room in your mind for ignorant people who will not learn.

You will pity them, and teach them wisdom if you can, but you will seek the inspiration of those who feel that the world is real, that everything about them matters, and that the march of the world depends upon them, under the guiding hand of God. Every year, with your expanding vision, you will widen the circle in which you move. It will be no narrow circle. You will shut your mind to nothing that is good, nothing that is useful, nothing that has in it promise of a better future for anything under the sun.

And in this broadening circle, to which you will give of your life payment in abundance for what it gives to you, you will choose a closer circle of your friends. Many you will know, but few you will choose. They will come into your heart of hearts, and you will open the gates of your soul to them. Life may cast you apart, or a happier fortune may keep you nearer to each other, but, near or far, your hearts will beat as one. Space may divide you, but neither space nor time itself can break the bonds that hold you closer than a brother.

In Caria, in Asia Minor, hundreds of years before the Friend of Martha and Mary was born in Bethlehem, Heraclitus wrote poems famed far and wide for their beautiful melody. One of the most beautiful verses in English

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literature is supposed to be a friend's farewell to his friend Heraclitus.

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to
shed.

I wept as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking, and sent him down the
sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake ;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

“ He taketh all away ; ” but the love your
friend bore you, the sweet memory of it, the
pure fruit of it, will live through Time and
after Death, with the stars, and the wind on
the heath.

VI

TO THE BOY WHO WILL BE MAYOR OF HIS TOWN

I AM sure you are growing up with a great love of the world, and with a love that will never die for your own country. The boy who really loves his country is the greatest treasure a country has, for if he loves his country he loves the world beyond it, and especially his own little corner of the world within it. That nation is greatest, a wise man said, which has the greatest number of happy homes, and we can never remember too often the truth which lies in that saying—the truth that a nation, like a human body, is made up of parts, and depends upon its parts for its strength.

Now, your town, your village, is a part of the nation, as much a part of it as London is, and in the streets of your town the life of the nation is being lived as truly as in the House of Parliament or the palace of the King. If the life of your town is good and fine, then it

contributes to the strength of the nation ; if the life of your town is mean, then it is helping to drag the nation down. You needs must love the highest when you see it, and you will see that, as far as in you lies, the life about you is healthy, the streets around you are wide and clean, the people with whom you come and go are happy and noble and brave. You will grow up not only the joy of your home, but the hope of your town, for you will learn, with new conviction every day, that the town is your larger home, and that the path from your door leads out into the great world. A little way along the path the Town Hall rises, and from there—who knows?—you may one day help to rule the town.

Even now you are helping to make it. A street is better or worse because you live in it. Whether we know it or not, we influence those about us ; we can no more live by ourselves, apart from all other people, than the wheels of an engine can work by themselves, apart from the driving-rod and the piston and the cylinders. What we call society—many people together—is a body of itself, in many ways as wonderful as the human body, as complicated as a motor-car ; and you and I are parts of it. Think of yourself as the driving-shaft of an engine on a great ship, and ask what would happen if you failed.

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Think of yourself as a little wheel on the captain's bridge, and ask what would happen if a tooth in the wheel should break. Think of yourself as the blade of a propeller, and ask what would happen if it should be made of rotten wood. The ship depends on the strength of its parts, on the proper working of every part of its parts ; and so the Ship of State, as we call a nation, or the Ship of Society, as we may call a town, depends upon the way in which every living part of it—you and I, and all the others—do our share of its work, or live our daily lives, whatever they may be.

So that you will strive to do your own share of the work of the town, to keep its name honourable, to make it a worthy home for men and women who are born to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. And it is wonderful how much even a boy can do in the place where he lives. He can do the whole town, or the whole village, a service by setting a great example.

Every morning, as I leave the country for the town, I pass a row of cottages, one of those long, unlovely rows of little red houses of which good people are so tired in England, herding families together like horses in stables. In front of each house is a little strip of garden, and it was sad to see these strips neglected,

so that, instead of giving a pleasant frontage to the plain row of red-brick houses, they made them uglier than ever. Well, one day some good, wise friend in the top house of this row—I hope it was a boy—looked out at his strip of wasted garden and thought it a shame to leave it empty and untidy when a penny packet of seeds would make it a beautiful picture, and he dug the ground, and sowed the seeds, and planted a trailing rose, so that the summer brought out of that strip a perfect blaze of colour. The top house was no longer ugly; it was as if a fairy prince had touched it with his wand; and the end of the story is this—that the next house copied the top one when the next year came, the third house followed the second, and now, after a few summers, every one of these gardens is a beautiful thing to see instead of a dreary waste. It is as if a great artist had come into this country road and touched it with the glory of colour, so that the row of unlovely houses has completely changed, and has become, in summer at any rate, a scene that any lover of Nature is glad to look upon.

Now that is a public work that even a child can do, as great a gift to a town as any picture to hang on a wall, and greater. I have a friend, a wise old man who has known Time for nearly eighty years, who has made

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it his hobby to plant trees in a Kentish village, and his love of trees has spread so that there have been planted in and about his village perhaps a thousand trees, and the idea of Arbor Day, which he founded in England, has spread in a hundred places. My friend is not an architect, building beautiful homes for people to live in, but he is a builder of beautiful country, and a great multitude of people who will never know his name will bless his memory for preserving the loveliness of the countryside against the indifference, and often against the opposition, of most of the people about him.

That is the saddest thing the man who loves his own little corner of the earth can have to face: he will find that *hardly anybody cares*. Men who lose their heads over things that matter little, and are far away, very often care nothing about things that happen at their very door. I heard the other day that a member of Parliament, who has done splendid work in the House of Commons for many years, thinks himself well rewarded because, after thirty years of pleading, he has persuaded a Board of Guardians to take little children out of the workhouse, where only barbarians would think of keeping them, and to put them into cottage homes. The greatest service any man can render to a

village or a town is to wake it up from its deep sleep. I shall never forget the sight of a blind old man who got up at a village meeting to oppose street lamps, saying the light was *quite enough for him!* I can never forget it, for pity's sake, but also because in the hard struggle for this public good all but one or two people seemed to be blind, so that year after year the fight for light went on, and at last was won, with the result that three other villages, whose roads run into ours, cried aloud for light within three months. No stone wall is so hard to break through as the wall of public indifference.

All this you will find out as you grow up, seeking the public good, and you will ask yourself, as you watch men fighting hard for causes in which they have nothing to gain, why one man should bother about these things while other people stand still. The answer to that question will come to you as you grow older and take your own part in the battles for better things.

Some people care and some do not. Some people are glad to let evil have its way lest by upsetting it they upset their own quiet lives. They are not the helpers of the world. Out of their lives shines no great light to illumine the path of progress. You, who

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love your town, will give yourself, your thought and time and energy, to make it better, to make it a model of what a town should be, and you will hate to be a drone in the busy hive.

A public man of great experience has given me this counsel to hand on to you.

1. Do not think you can gain any personal advantage from voluntary public service; you may if you are a lawyer, not otherwise. Your real reward is in the substantial public service your work will set going.

2. Do not expect public recognition of your work. It may come; if so, let it come of itself. But the public often turns its back on its benefactors.

3. Do not allow yourself to be a dispenser of patronage or public favour. That is wrong in any case, and only the least worthy will expect it of you.

4. Have a clear idea of what is good for the public, and set out for that, and that only—straight.

5. Remember that what may be desirable may for the moment be impossible, and take the best you can get.

6. Always have the ideal before you, and let it be your inspiration. Do not hesitate to express it for the stimulation of others though you may have to support something lower because it happens to be practical.

They are points of wisdom that a rising young citizen will do well to keep in mind as he learns the lessons of public life. You will not be learning at school, I am afraid, all that you should know if you mean to be a useful citizen in your town, yet it is not less important that you should know why a sweeper sweeps the streets, or why a householder pays rates, than that you should know how many pennies there are in a shilling. It will be a part of the education you give yourself to find out what elections are about, why people have votes and what they do with them, and you will come to understand what so many people never learn at all and so many more forget—that the rights a man has in a town are exactly balanced by his duties.

If we are free to walk in comfort along the street, it is our duty to see that others share the freedom with us. The right to be free is not born with us, even in a free country ; *we must earn our freedom*. It is true that heroes fought to make us free, that brave men died that we might live free men : it is true that we can take our stand on Magna Charta and refuse for ever to be slaves. But it is not true that, merely because the breath is in our bodies, therefore we may claim the full and priceless pearl of freedom which is

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worth more than the king's throne. That right is his who wins it. We have the right to be free *if we deserve it*, but a thief does not deserve it, a drunkard does not deserve it, a man who ill-treats a child does not deserve it. And can we say we deserve our freedom if we are willing to stand by while freedom is in peril, while others fight to save it? It will be clearer and clearer to you, as you think of this, why men and women give up their lives to public service, for most of the public work that must be done has something to do with freedom.

Nothing is more certain than this—that freedom, unless it is guarded and watched, slips away to the oppressor. The freedom of the street, the freedom to be healthy, the freedom of children to go to school, the freedom to enjoy a walk in the fields, the freedom even to play on the sands by the sea, must be guarded for us lest we find one day that it has slipped away. Somebody must see that a foot of ground along the whole side of a street is not encroached upon by builders and stolen for private uses. Somebody must see that common land is not enclosed. Somebody must see that houses are built so as to be healthy, that cases of serious illness are made known before they spread and cause a plague, that the drinking water is kept pure, that

dangerous roads are repaired, that the fire-engine is in good order and ready when wanted, that the police force is well managed, that the rates are properly spent, that the street lamps are lighted at night, that the schools are warmed in the morning, that the hospital is well supported, that the library has plenty of books : for all these and a hundred other things somebody must be watchful all the time.

In the ideal town that will come some day, everybody will do a little, but you will find about you, wherever you live, a hundred people who do nothing at all, and their work must be done for them. Somebody must do the work the drone leaves undone, so that in every town you will find a few who work hard because they have so many other people's work to do. You will belong to them and work with them, caring nothing that your service is lowly at first, but remembering that the quietest act in the service of all is nobler than the proudest act of selfishness ever talked of in a newspaper. The public service of a town reaches out in many ways, but

As many arrows loosed in several ways
Come to one mark ; as many ways meet in one town ;
So many a thousand actions, once afoot,
End in one purpose.

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I hope you will learn, even while you are a boy, that good work in a town, or good work anywhere, knows no ending, and if you will think of this it will help you in a hundred ways to serve your town. Even a boy can help in making a town's good name or in saving it from a bad one, especially in these days when temptations to lower the tone of a town are very great. What we call the *tone* of public life, or the tone of a town, is one of the precious things that money cannot buy. Only character can make it, and if the character of the people is bad, the tone of a town cannot be good.

We mean, when we talk of "tone," the spirit of a place and its people—actually the character of a place—and, just as bad habits make bad character in boys, so it is with towns. Bad habits give a town a bad name, its *tone* falls low, good people begin to be ashamed to live there, and the management of the town is left to those who care for nothing except their own gain, and who use the public service to serve their private ends. Whole cities in America have been captured in this way by the forces of evil, and only the increasing watchfulness of good people in any town can save it from this unhappy fate. It is in this way especially that a boy can help.

Anybody will tell you of ways in which

you can help to keep the name of your town pure and sweet. I can think of six at the moment. When you see vulgar things in shop windows, especially vulgar picture-postcards, call the attention of a grown-up to them, and be sure never to patronise the shop. When you see vulgar pictures at a cinematograph show, tell your father or your teacher, and never patronise the place as long as vulgar pictures are shown. When you see offensive pictures on the hoardings, call attention to them until other people agitate for their removal. When you see a piece of orange-peel on the pavement, remove it. When you see children spitting in the streets, beg of them not to do so. Keep to the right on the pavement and take care in crossing the road. Attention in such little things, if all people would remember them, would make a great difference to the life of any town. In these and endless ways you may serve your town and be a useful citizen, quietly and gently, and without any fuss. It is astonishing how many evils may be remedied quietly and quickly if we take the right steps to end them. A friend of mine, by writing a wise and pleasant letter, has just removed two huge advertisement hoardings from a country road where they spoiled the view or interfered with trees.

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It is harder sometimes, and often you will hear men say that to give your life for a public cause will break your heart in the end. It is true that there is little gratitude in a town, unless it is stirred up by some emotion ; but then you will serve your town because you love it, and will not look for public recognition. One of my friends has given half of the best years of his life to the public work of one of our English towns, and has worked harder there, though earning his own living all the time, than half the men who have been paid to work. Yet he has been violently abused at times and never very much praised, though he has been doing for nothing what men in other towns have been paid £1000 a year to do. But my friend has not been disappointed all these years ; he has been perfectly happy in his work. He has not sought or desired any sort of recognition, because his life has been based upon the truth that the joy of helping on great causes is its own reward.

You will be buffeted hardest, perhaps, for your very best work, and the best things that you do will often be misunderstood ; but you will steer your course straight and keep on, knowing that the day will come when you will be justified.

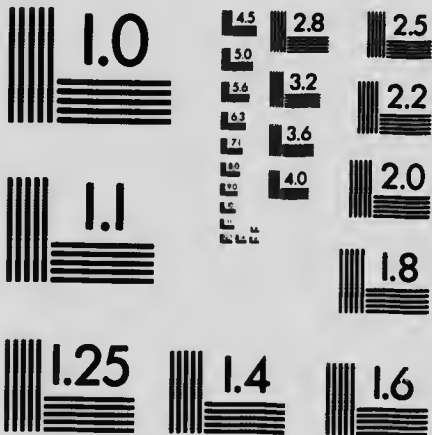
A million people in Kent to-day are saving





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1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

money by a reform in which not a thousand of them ever took a moment's interest; and not one in a thousand people in Kent know that this great saving, amounting to £80,000 a year, is due to the way in which one man on the County Council insisted on being heard, until at last the Council listened. Yet few people know this quiet man's name, though in ten years he rescued from wastrels and robbers in Kent enough money to build a great cathedral. That is all the reward he wanted. He is gone now, his work in this world done; but he left behind him, in that part of the world he calls his own, a higher standard of honour, a healthier system of service, a more efficient staff of workers, than he found there. The good a man can do in his town, which he can know intimately, whose needs he can understand, whose opportunities he realises, is often actually more than a man can do in Parliament itself.

Let your town, or your village, be the school in which you study the things of the great world. Let your mind strive to realise that round about you is a little world, a group of human beings—a small kingdom or a greater household, as you may choose to call them—with all the interests and problems, all the needs and all the hopes, of human beings the world over.

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So you may come to rule your town, to find at your door the problem confronting Prime Ministers and kings—the problem of helping all sorts and conditions of people to live happily and usefully together, each in his way advancing the welfare of the human race. You will find around you what should be and what should not ; you will strive to conquer the one and to extend the other.

You will see that your streets are clean and wide and well kept, thronged with happy people. You will see that, if the poor must be always with you, at least they shall be warm and well fed. You will see that loafers do not live on honest people in your town ; you will see that slums come down for England's sake, whatever the cost may be. You will see that babies have a chance of life, and that mothers know how to feed them ; you will copy the glorious example of the great Mayor of Huddersfield who has taught the nation such a famous lesson in saving little children's lives by giving them pure milk. You will not hesitate to advise even grown-ups how to walk the narrow way of health and how to avoid the broad way of destruction, and you will not fear to bring new knowledge before your people in the plainest way, as Sheffield and many other towns have done of late in their great poster

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against alcohol, the traitor of every town and nation.

You will do a hundred things, as a ruler of your town, which will redound to your honour and add to its glory. You will seek no personal advantage; you will have a clear idea of the public good, and, in spite of all else, you will strive only for that. Though you win less than you hope for, you will keep the end before you, knowing that it will come as surely as the rising of the sun. You will let your flag fly high above the town, and you will need no thanks from anybody, for you will have done your duty, like Nelson, and you will be a citizen of no mean city, like Paul.

VII

TO THE BOY WHO GETS OVER DIFFICULTIES

It is often said in these days that Life is made too easy, and that, because we have no longer to fight for our birthright as men fought in other days, we are not so strong and ready and daring as those who lived in harder times. There is just enough serious truth behind that to make it difficult to contradict, because Life does, of course, become easier and happier as knowledge grows. If it did not, knowledge would not be worth having. The things that do not help us to live are not worth learning.

But it is not really true that Life is becoming so easy that character has no chance to grow—which is what people mean when they look back and sigh for the good old times to come again. There never was such wicked nonsense as the talk about the good old times, and the man who sighs for them back again does not know what he is sighing

for. There never were such good times as these in which you live; there never were such bad times as those that have gone. In the good old times little boys were forced up chimneys and down mines, and little girls were whipped to work in factories. That was one way of making them strong, but the pity was that most of them died without finding anything worth being strong for. Nothing can be more wicked than to wish for the dark, ignorant, cruel past to come back again.

Those who talk in this way imagine that character grows best in hard ground, and that, therefore, Life must be made hard and cruel, and boys must be buffeted about, and perhaps beaten, or at any rate in some way brought to feel the cuts and blows of some outrageous fortune. The great untruth behind all this is the idea that cruelty is necessary to breed strength, that hardship is necessary to develop firmness, that we must make difficulties in order to develop the power of overcoming them.

You need not look beyond your school to see how false and unreal that is. It is true that overcoming difficulties is a fine way of growing strong, but it is true, also, that Life is always difficult enough to develop the highest strength of character. In the great

training ground of the world the noblest human qualities can always grow, and your life can never be so easy that you need fear you will lose your character, *if you want to keep it*. The difficulties of life do not disappear; their nature changes--that is all. You are going to make your mark in the world, and, however pleasant a place the world may be when you grow up, you will find difficulties to overcome.

There will always be a world for you to conquer, and nearly always it will lie about you, perhaps nearer than your door. Make up your mind, at the very beginning of anything, what it is you want to do, and, having made up your mind, do it. Let no difficulties turn you back from the way that you should go. Only cowards count the cost of doing right, and shrink from it. The thing that is easy is there for anybody to do; it is the brave boy who will tread the difficult way, who will run a risk, and do the hard thing. There are people in the world who think it right to go through life taking all that life can give them and giving nothing in return; but they live their selfish lives and pass away and are forgotten. Out of their ranks no hero comes.

You will let all these pass by on the other side while you stay to make the rough place

smooth, to help somebody up the hill, to break down some barrier, to help to spread some truth abroad, to clear the way for some great cause. It is perfectly true that where there is a will to do a thing the way to do it can be found. You have read in your history books how Alexander the Great arrived one day at the city of Gordium, and found there a famous chariot, fastened with cords tied into knots that no man could undo. And Alexander was told of the legend that whoever should untie the knots should rule the world. It was not like Alexander to waste his time untying knots, but he found a better way. He cut the knots asunder with his sword, and ever since the man who chooses the bold way out of a difficult situation has been said to cut the Gordian knot.

It is right that you should be cautious, but it is wrong that you should be cautious even to timidity. The world is not in want of men who will hold back. They are at the corner of every street; every town is full of them. It is the boy who will go forward that the world is waiting for—the Livingstone, the Columbus, the Wilberforce of the future. Mr. Timidity took no risks, and Mr. Timidity never did anything that is worth mentioning now. Most of his life was

spent in waiting until he was quite sure, until all his plans were laid so carefully, and all the cost was counted so exactly, that nothing at all could possibly go wrong. And while Mr. Timidity waited, somebody did it.

Be sure that what the world needs is the courage that climbs over mountains or cuts them through, the boldness of a man who, knowing what is to be done, sees the difficulties and conquers them. You and I would not be living in a free country, the land we live in would still be overrun with barbarism, if men had chosen the easy way. You have only to think for a moment of the things which every boy knows to see the spirit that conquers the world. You will think of Columbus facing King Timidity at the Court of Spain, fighting against prejudice and ignorance and blindness until his courage moved a queen to pledge her jewels for the expedition which was to discover America. You have only to think of Handel yearning for the music he was forbidden to touch, stealing up into the garret in the dead of night, and bringing out of his clavichord the lovely melodies that he dared not let anybody hear then, though men would go across the earth to hear them now.

You have only to think of David Living-

stone poring over his books till midnight, getting up at six o'clock in the morning, and working in the factory till eight at night, going to school from eight till ten, then poring over his Latin grammar again as long as his eyes would keep open, and then sleeping till six o'clock brought back another day. He bought a Latin grammar with his first half-crown, and read it at his spinning; he worked half a year in the factory, and spent his wages in the next half at the university. He never met, either then or as a man, any difficulty that he allowed to stand in his way.

I remember reading a witty saying in an American paper, at a time when all America was talking of Mr. Roosevelt. "Just stop to think," said this paper, "that Theodore Roosevelt is only one six hundred-and-forty-thousandth of one per cent. of the population of the United States." But it was the genius of Mr. Roosevelt that he would not let America think that. The man who means to have his way may count only one in the census paper, but he may count a million ones in history. Another thing I read only a day or two ago—the story of an engineer's wonderful pump, which does what no other pump in the world has done before, and was set going by the King the other day to lift

the water of the River Lea to a height from which it will run into the homes of a million people. The engineer knew that his pump would work, but such a powerful pump had never been made, and people were afraid. So the pumps were ordered for London on condition that the engineer would pay the sum of £20,000 if they should fail; and the engineer, to whom so great a payment would have meant ruin, set his faith in his invention against the £20,000, and the bold man won.

It is right to be afraid of failure, but we must be so afraid of failure that we will not fail. To succeed in all the things that we love most, in all the highest things we cherish, should be our aim, and the fear of failure, more bitter to a brave man than death itself, should drive us on till nothing can stop us or turn us back, except the goal we aim for and the end we fight for.

All things come to him whose spirit will not die. The men who have transformed the world for you and me—what sort of lives were theirs? They read their books by candle-light and lived in garrets, they toiled long hours down mines and rarely saw the sun, they prayed in vain for one word of sympathy; for the bold man with the new idea had all the world against him until these modern times.

It is hard to believe the difficulties that were put in the way of the men who looked into the future years ago, and laid the foundations of comfortable lives for you and me, and of prosperity for nations. The man who made steam navigation a success was scoffed and jeered at on every hand; not one word of encouragement, not one bright hope, not one warm wish came across his path, he said. George Stephenson was denounced as an impostor when he began to make his railways; and one of the saddest things in the history of any nation is the story of the bitter struggle to save the little children of England from slavery. They were whipped to work in factories like dogs, until so many died that they were buried in secret to hide the awful truth.

Nothing is more dreadful to read to-day than this, yet the men who cried out against it were like men crying in a wilderness, with none to hear. Not more than a hundred years are we from a savage England, and the men who saved the nation from these horrors pleaded in vain with doctors and bishops and statesmen, and even men whose names we love to-day were as deaf as stone to the cry of little children, and as blind as night to the appalling scenes that took place in our factories.

We see and listen now, and times have changed, but still it is true that the path of the good man through this world is strewn with thorns. Men have so much to do, and so little time, and so many things to bother them, that it is hard to interest them, and harder still to get their help; and so we are discouraged and downhearted, and noble causes lag for want of friends.

It is always so. But you will arm yourself, in these days in which you are putting on your strength, against the disappointments that must come into your life. They will come, whatever happens, and at times it will seem to you as if the sun had gone out, and as if nothing matters and nobody cares. But you will remember that, however dark the clouds are, the sun breaks through again. You will not let despair seize hold of you because the task is hard and there seems to be no way out. You will sustain yourself by the proud thought that you are in the line of heroes. Behind you stand Captain Scott and General Gordon and David Livingstone and Thomas Clarkson and George Washington and Oliver Cromwell and Francis Drake and Joan of Arc, and you will not shame these mighty names by turning back.

The thing that is in your way is your great

test, the touchstone of your enterprise. Two boys meet a difficulty, and it is like the instrument at the Mint which touches every sovereign, throwing out the bad and keeping the good. One boy turns back, but the other is true as steel. The fear of danger, the sight of a mountain, the touch of risk, the wondering whether he will really manage it, are new life to him. He goes on with new zest and resolution, and almost before he sees the difficulty it has gone. Like melting snow difficulties go when a brave heart comes along.

Especially will you be on your guard against the difficulties that do not exist. Write down in your Commonplace Book those lines of Emerson :

Some of your hurts you have cured,
And the sharpest you still have survived ;
But what torments of grief you endured
From evils which never arrived !

Half the people in this world spend half their lives in wondering how they will get over a stile that they will never reach. One of the wisest things ever written in a copy-book is "Do not meet troubles half way." Your time is too precious to spend in imagining difficulties ; they will come to you soon enough.

Even wise men are wrong sometimes, and there has been quite lately in England a remarkable example of wisdom in need of courage. A great moral reform has been carried through the House of Commons, and those who were carrying it, having got over many difficulties, at last became afraid, and crossed out an important part which they thought could not be passed. Without this, it was said, the bill would go through. So the friends of this Bill gave way to their fears. And then, when the nation saw what had been done, a great opposition did arise, and it *compelled the House of Commons to put back the things that had been crossed out.* The House of Commons, that is to say, had imagined a vain thing, had set up for itself a difficulty that did not exist, had given way to fears which had no foundation.

And if Parliaments actually do this, be sure that we ourselves must guard against it always. Perhaps you have read how, in the early days of railways, men spent their time in trying to get over the difficulty of making a smooth wheel ride over a smooth rail. The wheels would skid on the smooth lines, it was said, and for years men saw no way out. Then, at last, somebody tried a smooth wheel on a smooth rail, and found that the difficulty did not exist.

There is a story of a professor who was a great mathematician. He studied the flight of a golf-ball and spent a long time in proving to his own satisfaction, and to the satisfaction of everybody else, that the strongest man who could hold a golf-stick could not hit a golf-ball more than a certain distance. It was all worked out very carefully, and was a great triumph of mathematics in which nobody could find a mistake. But it happened that the professor had a son who was a golfer, and the son one morning hit a ball twenty yards farther than the "farthest distance possible," so that the professor's beautiful sum fell to pieces like a thread of sand. Often the best way of deciding things is to do them.

You will train yourself to make up your mind which way you will go, and, sure that your way is right, sure of the end, you will march straight on. You will be like Napoleon at the Alpine Pass. "Is it possible to cross?" he said. "Perhaps it is within the limits of possibility," said the men who were afraid. "Forward, then!" said Napoleon.

Two wonderful ideas are making their way in England now. One is Mr. Willett's idea for saving daylight by changing our clocks in summer so that we begin work a little earlier and end a little earlier and get more sunshine in our waking life; the other is

Norman Angell's idea that war is kept alive by a great illusion, and that no civilised nation can ever gain from war. Both ideas were quietly born, and were met at first with sneers and scoffs. It seemed impossible that these two men could ever overcome the difficulties in their way. But both ideas are capturing men everywhere, and nothing is more certain than that they will win. Mr. Timidity would never have thought of them, for keen minds do not run with feeble hearts ; but Mr. Timidity, in any case, would have been crushed by a thousandth part of the bafflings and buffetings that these two men have faced. Only a great daring, an inflexible purpose, an unquenchable spirit of perseverance, can rouse the world from its indifference and drive away defeat. In little things and great, in the trials of our own lives and in the public things we fight for, we must dare to do right, whatever the consequences may be.

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all.

There are nobler things than boldness, there are baser things than fear. But there is nothing sadder than the fear of doing right ; there is nothing nobler than the fear of doing

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wrong. Let that be your only fear. You have given yourself to the future. Let your soul be pure, let your heart be brave. Be strong, and of good courage. He that overcometh shall inherit all things.

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VIII

TO THE BOY WHO LOVES A HERO

FROM the day when you heard your first story you have loved a hero. You have loved the man who dared to do a brave thing, whether he lived or died. You have loved the man who cared so much for this beautiful world that even the peril of his life was not too great a price to pay for serving it.

And I know that, in these days of your young manhood, you have been stirred by the story of one of the bravest heroes who ever walked upon the earth, for all the world has been stirred by it; and as long as books are read and tales are told the heart of a boy will be thrilled by this story of a man. He was a young man, with a glorious life opening before him; and he was one of five men who stood at the South Pole, where, until a month before, no man had stood since human history began.

A thrilling thing it must have been for him, and we may be sure that as he stood

there he was looking forward to the future; thanking God who had brought him safely to that great place; wondering what other great events the years would have in store for him; making a hero's great resolution that, come what might, the memory of that day should keep him strong and brave and true. And then he turned back, to walk hundreds of miles across the snows to the ship which was waiting to take him to civilisation again.

But the cold was almost greater than a man could bear, and his poor limbs were frozen so that he could hardly walk. Yet his mind was bright and his heart was cheerful, even while his body suffered an agony of pain, and he kept up with his companions as long as he could move. And then he lagged behind; their day's marches towards the ship were slower and shorter, until it seemed as if these comrades would never see their friends again. One had died already, and the shadow of doom seemed to hang over this little band slowly crossing the trackless snows. Unless they hastened their steps, famine and death were certainly awaiting them.

The terrible truth came home to our hero. For him his comrades were imperilling their lives. They lay down side by side in the tent on the last night they spent together,

and the stricken man closed his eyes hoping that he might never wake again.

Freed from the burden of a sick man, the others would go forward, would quickly march across the snows, and in a day or two would be in sight of camp, with food and stores and friends. And so he prayed that he might not wake when morning came. But morning found him awake again, and our hero's hour had come.

Outside the tent a blizzard blew, a blinding blizzard of snow into which no man could go and hope to remain alive. Our hero, stricken with pain, looked into the eyes of his three comrades. For them remained one chance of life. They should not lose it for his sake. They should not suffer the pain of seeing him die. "I am just going outside," he said, "and I may be some time." And then there happened one of the bravest things that ever happened on this earth. Captain Oates, of the British Army, *walked out into the blizzard.*

Somewhere in that pathless world he lies; and beyond him, a few miles nearer home, lie his comrades, too. They gave their lives for him who gave his life for them, for they died but eleven miles from camp and friends, and only their devotion to their comrade had kept them back. They lived long enough after him to leave this story for the world,

and if I were offered to-day the piece of paper on which Shakespeare wrote "Hamlet," or any other piece of paper now in the world, I would have the paper on which Captain Scott, dying himself of cold and hunger, wrote these words: "We knew that Oates was walking to his death, but, though we tried to dissuade him, we knew it was the act of a brave man and a gallant English gentleman."

I have told you this story, which will never die, because I would have you grow up to manhood with a fervent love of heroes. No boy who loves a hero can grow up a coward. The thought of Captain Oates who walked out into the blizzard to save his comrades will give him courage when his hour of danger comes.

Choose well your heroes; seek your company among the brave men whose names will never die. The men whose lives shine out in history as stars shine in the sky, who counted life as nothing if laying it down should bring some great good to the world—let these be your companions, your inspirers. All down the ages of time the hero comes, a beacon light in a dark place, a voice in the silence of a wilderness, a strong arm raised against oppression, a beckoning hand to a faltering host, a willing prisoner that others might be free, a life laid down that truth might spread and knowledge

grow. No age has been without its hero; no noble cause has been without its conqueror. They have fought against scorn and greed and self-contentment; the pleasures of this world have not been for them. For them, often, the prison door has opened and the palace has been closed, and a nation has passed by on the other side while its saviour and hero perished. But the just Judge, Time, has brought them crowns and thrones, and, as surely as the coward meets his doom, the hero enters into his inheritance. He lives for ever

with the kings of thought,
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

You who have read of Galahad, whose blood is stirred by the memory of many a noble deed in poetry and story, will seek for inspiration in right places; you will love the great adventure which leads a man to do and dare, and care nothing. We do right to use a wise cautiousness, especially as we are growing up and gathering to ourselves all those precious experiences that make a man able to hold his head high above the rough tide of this world; but one of the beautiful brave sayings I shall never forget was a good man's answer to a timid lady who asked if he knew what happened to "Don't Care,"

"Yes, madam," said he; "He died on Calvary."

I have known good people who are shocked at that, but it is my text for this letter, and it brings me to the central thing I want to say to you. You, with the world before you, with all the battles of your life to fight, with all the conquests of your life to win, will need your flag, will want your leader. Would you have the noblest flag that ever blew in the breeze? Would you serve the greatest hero who ever wore a crown? They are yours, and every boy's—the flag that has never yet been lowered on any battlefield, the leader who has never yet been conquered by any enemy.

It is thrilling to run through the names of your heroes, to think of Alfred and Cromwell and William the Silent; of the few kings who were really worthy of their thrones; of Joan of Arc and Catherine Mompesson and Florence Nightingale; of Paul and Nelson and Captain Oates; and of a great host of well-remembered and half-forgotten names which should be written round the walls of your school. But for a conquest of the world which makes all other conquests seem poor things we must turn to the hero of all boys.

Born in a workman's house a few days' journey from London, hunted by a king who

feared him even as a child, followed by the smallest army that ever swore devotion to a leader, our hero set out to conquer all the world. And though he built up for himself the greatest empire that the world has ever seen, though he won to himself the greatest number of subjects that any king has ever had, he won his way without a sword, without a gun; he did what no king ever since his day has yet been wise enough to do. He declared that he would conquer all the world by love instead of hate, by peace instead of war; he believed that men would come to him as a friend instead of as an enemy, and he declared to the world, to people and kings too, that he had found a new Power. He was not only the greatest conqueror, but he was the greatest discoverer the world has ever known, for he found the secret of the most tremendous force that has ever existed on the earth. He gathered together a little band of comrades who promised to be true to him till death, and with their secret power they set themselves to capture all mankind.

It is wonderful what love can do in the world. It will conquer a thousand enemies while hate is conquering only one; it will make its way where hate can never reach; it is the only thing on earth that never fails. But the world had not learned this great

lesson when our hero came into it, soon after Julius Cæsar died. It was quite a new idea then that men should love each other, that they should work together for the good of all rather than for the victory of an army or the so-called glory of an empire. But nothing is more certain to make its way in this world than a noble idea, and one by one men gave up their business, their power, and all they had, to join our hero's band, so that soon he had about him perhaps as many followers, men and women and all, as the soldiers in a king's private bodyguard.

How you would have loved to be on his side in such a fight as that—a hero and his little band against the world! For the rest of the world *was* against them, led by the priests, who felt that their occupation and authority would be gone if men came to believe the simple message this strange teacher was spreading abroad. And so our hero fell upon dark days, until men were almost afraid to come to him, or to profess that they believed in him, lest they should be persecuted and cut off from their friends.

The first and bravest of all our hero's friends was thrown into prison by a king, who killed him and sent his head to a princess to please her at a dance; and one day there happened the saddest thing in all the history

of the world. Our hero was betrayed by one of his own friends, one of the little band that had solemnly promised to be true to him till death.

In the darkness of the night the soldiers came upon them and took our hero captive ; and at that moment it must have seemed as if all hope and love and goodness had gone out from the world. Think for a moment of his beautiful life, of the beautiful message he had brought to the world, of the friends who had sworn to be true to him and to spread his message among the people, and then think of this, that at that dark hour when his enemies came, every friend that he had *forsook him and fled*. Our hero stood alone in all the world.

I do not know of anything that I have ever seen, or read, or heard, or thought, that is so sad as this. On that dark night the gentlest and noblest man in all the world was left alone. He had done not one wrong thing since he was born. He had healed the sick and comforted the poor ; yet at this hour, when his enemies came, not one friend stood by him. At the moment of danger they left him at the mercy of his enemies ; the only sinless man in all the earth was alone, with not one hand stretched out to help him, with not one faithful friend. They took

him away and murdered him. His friends were scattered, and many of them were killed, and it seemed as if the end of love had come. And yet to-day the name that is best known in all the world is not the name of a king, but the name of our hero. I have not written it here, yet I need not, for he who stood alone at that dark hour, who died on a cross between two thieves, is the master of our lives to-day—the master for ever, I hope, of yours.

There are two kinds of things in the world—the things that pass and the things that remain—and our hero conquered the world because he lived for the things that remain. If you were to wake up in the morning and find that your town had disappeared, that all the things you have been used to see there were changed, you would think it very wonderful, and think yourself in a dream. Yet that would not be so strange as if you were to wake up and find that nobody loved you, that all your friends had turned to enemies, and that you stood alone in a cruel and hateful world.

It is much more likely that the waves of the sea will swallow up your town than that love will disappear from among us. The things that are not seen are stronger than the things that are seen. The mountains may be destroyed and the rivers run dry, but truth and beauty and gentleness and courtesy

and courage and love can never cease. They are the unseen forces that are always working in the world, always powerful. It is not easy to believe that there are things we cannot see, or feel, or even understand, which are stronger than armies, but it is true. Not nearly so wonderful are the things we know as the things we do not know. Have you ever thought how a caterpillar makes its cocoon? It has never seen a cocoon before, but it makes one at the right moment, in the right way, in the right place, and no man knows why. So that you have only to think for a moment to understand that we can never know all that is to be known, and as you grow up you will see that the world is more wonderful and more mysterious every day that we live. And what you will come to believe more and more is the truth that the really important things in the world are the things we cannot see or touch, although we know them and feel them all our lives.

Our hero came not to bring riches and glory, but Love, into the world, and he left us a gift that nobody can take away. He knew that riches perish and glory fades, and he left us something that should last for ever, the only thing that can make your life truly happy, the only thing that can bring you a friend in your loneliness and comfort you in your

distress. He taught us to do unto others as we would have others do unto us. He left his message for us in the hearts of his followers, who wrote it down in the book we call the Bible. And this book, though foolish and wicked men quarrel about it, and make up all sorts of stories about the meaning of it, is so plain that you will easily understand it, and from it you may learn how to live as our hero lived. One of the heroes in your library is Charles Kingsley, and it was he who said that from your Bible you may learn to be a more thorough gentleman than if you were brought up in all the drawing-rooms in London. It is perfectly true, and if you will read your Bible simply, trying to understand its plain teaching, you will find that this book is worth more to you than all the gold in the Bank of England would be.

The things you make with your hands will perish, but what you *are* will live for ever. The good that you do will help the world forward, will help to conquer one more corner of the world for our Hero and Leader. Let your heart be pure, like his. In all the world there is one secret of true happiness, and you cannot buy it, however rich you may be. It is free to every boy under the sun, and no boy who puts his trust in it has ever been disappointed. This great secret of happiness

is to love God and to do right. Sorrow may come to you, great shadows may come across your life; but you can never, never fail in your life, and you are certain to be happy at the end, if you do right.

You will have on your side the strongest thing in the world, against which nothing can prevail, the one thing that never fails or ends, and you will come to know that the poet wrote what is true when he said :

All things that are on earth shall wholly pass away,
Except the Love of God, which shall live and last for aye.

You will love your other heroes, too; you will never mind anybody calling you a hero-worshipper, as men will call you sometimes with a gentle scorn. You needs must love the noblest when you see it. I hope you have read the thrilling poem by Walt Whitman on President Lincoln, and I hope you love those wonderful words in which the rugged poet greets the ship bringing the President home :

Where on the deck my captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

I can never read that poem without a lump rising in my throat, and if Abraham Lincoln had not set free the slaves and saved a nation the whole world must have loved him because

he could inspire this glorious feeling in Walt Whitman. Well, your hero and mine, nearly 2000 years after he walked upon the earth, inspires this feeling still, not in poets only, but in wise and simple people everywhere, in rich and poor, in strong and weak, in Eastern and Western, in old and young. In sorrow and in gladness his vision comes to men, sustaining them in defeat or steadying them in triumph. He left his message in the world with twelve simple men, and his little band of comrades were persecuted and slain after he had left them.

But the thirty thousand words he left behind him—a very small book if they were all brought together—and the beautiful life he lived, have remade the world, so that today, across nearly twenty centuries, his voice comes to us, "Follow Me," and men follow him, and boys follow him, and girls and women follow him, and conquerors and kings bow down before him; and there is no other name in the world which is held in such reverence, no monument around which so many millions of people gather as around his. Men think of Livingstone dying among the poor savages he lived to save; of Gordon's lonely sacrifice at Khartoum; of Father Damien, who gave up his life and became a leper; of Captain Oates, who walked

into the blizzard; of Captain Scott, who crawled out of his sleeping-bag to cover the bodies of his companions before he died; but is there in all the world a man who would do for these heroes what millions of men would do for the boy's hero who was born in Bethlehem 1900 years ago? Never in all these centuries has there been a moment when somebody would not have died rather than betray him; never has been told a story that so thrilled mankind as his. His little band of comrades has become a mighty host, so that all the subjects of all the kings upon the earth would not make up so great a number.

There is a beautiful story of an old man walking in a picture gallery one day, and coming upon a picture of our hero. He stood before it in a sort of reverie, half forgetting where he was, until the picture gallery and the strangers and the quiet seriousness of the place all passed from his mind, and the old man, thinking only of the picture, cried aloud, "Bless Him! I love Him!" A man near him grasped his hand, and said, "Brother, so do I!" And a third man, and a fourth man, and a fifth man came up beside them, all strangers to each other, but drawn together by the love that has conquered the world.

Follow him, the boy's Hero of heroes, King of kings and Lord of lords. He will

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lead you to the only triumphs worth the winning; he will guard you from the only perils you need fear. His cause has never lost a battle; his kingdom has never yet been overthrown. Time brings change in all things, and no man can say what a day will bring forth. But two things are certain: the sun will rise to-morrow, and the Hero of Calvary will conquer the world.

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IX

TO THE BOY WHO WILL NEVER GROW OLD

ALWAYS, as I send these letters out to you, wherever you may be—on this continent of Europe or on some other, at school, or at home, or in the great workshop of life in which you are fitting yourself for the years that lie before you—always there comes to me a wish to say to you one thing. I am not much older than you, but I have lived long enough to know that Time, in some ways the friend of us all, is in other ways an enemy who must be driven back. Time, I said, is in some ways our friend, and so Time is, for Time is on our side, ever bringing nearer and nearer the golden sheaves of the harvest sown for us by other hands than ours, ever leading us nearer and nearer to the realisation of our dreams. But Time is a friend who must be wooed and won. To those who woo and win he will bring the joy of an enduring youth; but to those who

woo him not Time is the bitterest enemy of all.

And the thing I would say to you above all others is this—*Keep young*. Not even Time can make you old against your will, for age is not in years. Who does not know somebody eighty years young, and who does not know somebody eighteen years *old*? And who does not feel old and young in the same hour sometimes? We are as old as we feel, whatever the calendar may say, and the age of our feelings is much more under our control than most of us imagine. One of the wise things the dictionary tells us is that those three great words—healthy, whole, and holy—are really one, three branches springing from the same root, and it is wonderful to think of what this means. It means nothing less than this—that goodness is health and health is goodness, and the complete life has both these great things. It means that whatever is bad in the world is unhealthy, not in keeping with the order of the universe, and it means that to be healthy we must be able, not merely to walk and talk, and eat and drink, and do our work, but to enjoy the life of the world about us, to understand the movement and progress of things, to take our part in the carrying on of the world. We have a place, you and I, in the government of the

universe, and we are unhealthy *if we are not at our posts.*

Think of health in that splendid way, and you will be astonished to see how gently Time will deal with you. You will find the secret of being a boy as long as you can, as Herbert Spencer said, for you will find the world so interesting that you will not notice how time passes, and as the hours go at a play, or as the days go on a holiday, so the years will go by in this busy life of yours; and you will be astonished to remember, some day, that you are ten years older than you were. We are most healthy when we are forgetting age and time.

And so I want you to be so healthy that you will forget these things—healthy in body and mind and soul, healthy in the sense that your limbs move freely and your muscles work with ease, healthy in the sense that your mind is alert and interested in the things about you, healthy in the sense that your soul is at peace and conscious of its destiny. That is health, and nothing else is; and now, when you are building up your world, carving out the path you will tread through it, you may be very largely your own doctor, and present your future with that good health which no doctor can give you when it is too late. The child is father of the man, said

Wordsworth, meaning that as the child is trained so the man will be, and in exactly the same sense we may say that the boy is doctor to the man.

There are some things we can never do. We can never build up good health on bad foundations; we can never bring strength from seeds of weakness that may have been sown in our bodies before we were born—a terrible thought that should make us deeply anxious, seeing that from our lives grow the lives of others who will come after us. But though we cannot always secure ourselves against ill-health, though we must often endure it if our weakness should be born with us, though we may be stricken down through no sort of fault of our own, it is still true that the health of our lives rests largely upon ourselves. Form healthy habits now and you may build up a healthy body, and on a healthy body your happiness depends. It is not possible to exaggerate the influence of the condition of your body upon your life, and most of us, by our habits, make our bodies largely what they are.

I would not have you think of this side of your health as if it were the end and aim of life for you. We must ask ourselves, every one of us, "Am I a body or a soul?" and there is no doubt as to the answer. You

are both, but most of all you are an immortal soul. The real life within you is something that only God can understand, and these hands and feet, this body you inhabit, are the servants, not the masters, of your life. But, just as a servant may make life unendurable for his master, so may your body influence the life within, and if we would live nobly and usefully and happily we must understand our bodies and treat them well.

Fearfully and wonderfully are we made, and nothing fashioned by the Hand of God is more marvellous than our bodies. We think of the wonder of the world, of the stars that hang in the sky by night, of the great sun that goes on his way from age to age, of an oak-tree that grows from a little seed, of a bird that creeps out from a tiny egg and flies from an English country lane to the heart of Africa, and our minds are stirred by these things.

But the thought of the sun and moon, and a million worlds, is not more stirring than the thought of ourselves. You are only a boy, but a boy is more than Jupiter and more than Saturn, if these worlds have no life. You bother little, perhaps, about your body, but this temple of yours, not made with hands, is more wonderful than St. Paul's Cathedral. It would take a book

to talk of half its marvels. There are rooms in your living-house full of mystery which no living man can understand. There are things in your house so delicate, so beautiful, that nothing else in this beautiful world can compare with them.

It is on your honour as a boy to maintain this temple worthily, to do it no harm, to bring it no shame. You would not thoughtlessly break a window in your brick-and-mortar house, and you will guard with at least the same care this house of your life, the dwelling-place of God in you, the habitation of a living soul that shall survive the passing of all this world.

I am not a doctor, nor can I tell you the laws of health, but there are things that every man knows, and laws that every boy who loves his life will obey. The years are full of splendid things for you, and you will see to it that you come to them with fullness of strength. You will think of your body as a precious casket, containing within it a noble jewel which must suffer in brightness and value from any damage to the casket; and, knowing that that jewel is your pure soul, you will guard the casket from all harm, and especially you will see to it that no thoughtless act of yours, no offence of carelessness or neglect, brings mischief to it.

It is always worth while to take care, to stop to think twice. Your life is worth more to you than a king's ransom, and if a little thought, a little constant care, can keep it at its best, you will not grudge a little trouble every day. You will regard it as a duty to life itself, and therefore to the Creator of all life, to keep the great laws of health. You will live as much as you can out of doors, you will see that the sun pours through your windows all day long, that a stream of fresh air flows for ever through your rooms, that you give your body rest when it is tired, and that the great and supreme law of health—*Wash ye, make you clean*—is applied to everything about you.

It is dreadful to know that even in England, the cleanest country in the world, diseases still rage which can only live and thrive in dirt, and it is terrible to know that millions of people throughout the world die for want of cleanliness. In all these things you will be scrupulously careful, a model and example to those about you.

It is not necessary, happily, to ask a boy to play. It will be part of your great plan of life to give play its proper place, to mix it with your work, as it were, in the proportions that make for perfect health. And of course you will so conduct your life, dividing

it up so naturally with work and play, and walking and resting, that you will not have to invent all sorts of poor exercises to keep you fit and well. You will never be so silly as to worship muscle, as if that were anything at all to be proud of, and as if, in any case, a man could ever match a horse for that. Perhaps, if for some special reason you cannot take natural exercise, you may put up with some poor artificial second-best, such as we call gymnastics—which may be good sometimes, no doubt, if rightly and moderately used; but such things are not for the healthy life.

The truly healthy boy takes no exercise for its own sake, for he knows that energy wasted in this way is lost to other things. We have so much energy, and if we spend it in swinging dumb-bells we cannot spend it again in walking to the station, or in playing cricket, or in cycling, or in reading.

The natural exercise of a human being, and the best exercise of all, is that of which we are generally unaware—walking, playing, bathing, or any other of the ordinary interests of a healthy life which keep the body moving. Artificial exercise is a medicine which healthy people do not need, any more than they need half the rubbishy drugs which ignorant people will take till they can take them no more. Time was when the great Voltaire could speak

quite truly of the doctor who poured drugs of which he knew little into a body of which he knew less; and even long after that a witty poet declared that if all the drugs in the doctor's books were sunk to the bottom of the sea it would be all the better for mankind and all the worse for the sea.

The world has learned a great deal since then, and the splendid men who spent their lives in finding out the uses of these things have cast most of them away as useless, so that the man who knows most about drugs in these days is the man who uses them least. You will not offend your body by pouring rubbish into it. You will think it worth while to find out from those who know what value this, or that, or the other thing has.

That being so, you will, of course, never touch a drop of alcohol. You are growing up in a world in which alcohol is in its last dregs, the enemy of all life everywhere. It is passing away as a beverage and as a medicine, and will take its proper place some day, no doubt, side by side with petrol in driving motor cars. We need not trouble here about the reasons why manly boys who love their fellows, why patriotic boys who love their country, why athletic boys who love their games, are all teetotallers. For a hundred reasons the long, disgraceful life of alcohol

is coming to an end. But we may consider here, for just a moment, the greatest reason of all—the discovery that alcohol, whether we take little or much of it, is the enemy of every human being, and of no sort of service to anybody either in sickness or in health. Science, in these late years, has become the most fanatical of all teetotallers, and the beginning of it all goes back to a laboratory in Paris, where a great man still living has run down alcohol to its lair and sentenced it to death. Let us see what he found.

In this wonderful body of yours a river of blood flows ceaselessly through thousands of miles of living walls, and in this river swim more living cells than there are people on the earth. There are red cells and white cells, and without their work, carried on ceaselessly from morning till noon and from noon till night, neither you nor I, nor anything else human, could be.

Every time you breathe, without knowing it, your lungs receive a fresh supply of the source of life—of oxygen, without which no life can be. It is the business of the red cell to call at the lungs for this new source of life, and to distribute it to every part of your system. Every red cell in your body pays 20,000 visits to your lungs, and makes 20,000 journeys through your system, in the

course of its short life; and at the end of a fortnight it lays down its life, and another red cell takes up its work.

Now, what has been proved, so that no man can contradict it, is that alcohol makes it hard for the red cell to carry on its work, hard for it to distribute the oxygen which the body needs, and there are many evil things that arise from this. We need not go into them, but they bring about the ill-health which brings the white cells into play. The white cells are the great defenders of the body, your army and navy, ever watchful for invaders, ever ready to fight them should they appear, and never pausing in the fight until the enemy is destroyed or they themselves are dead. And so, when illness comes—perhaps because the red cell is hampered by alcohol—then the white cell is most needed to drive off the evil microbes that are gaining the upper hand. But the alcohol that has crippled the red cell cripples the white cell too, and paralyses these defenders of our bodies, so that we are helpless against attack. It is as if two nations were at war, and as if one nation drugged its soldiers.

Well, the great ocean of knowledge sweeps onward, and the men who made the great discovery, that our bodies are everlasting battlefields, in which war goes on for ever

between our living cells and bad microbes, have now found out that alcohol hinders the red cell in distributing life, and hinders the white cell in resisting death. There is only one thing now left for every manly boy to do. He will keep his brain free from alcohol, and he will not dishonour the temple of God within him by suffering this evil thing to enter it.

You will not touch the wines that pretend to be medicines, though they are mostly alcohol disguised to trap those who would never touch alcohol if they knew it; and you will never buy the horrible things called liqueur chocolates, which are perhaps the meanest way of all in which alcohol, beaten and disgraced in the open field, is trying to obtain a fraudulent new lease of life by planting evil tastes in children.

We have been thinking, after all, of the health of the body, but we have been thinking of the body as the house of life, and not as the end of life. Somewhere within it is our invisible soul, keeping watch over the things that are done in the body. More than we can realise, the mind is the master of the body. You will let your mind be open to all that is good and true; you will no more think of shutting your mind to the great rush of new knowledge for ever coming

towards you than you would think of shutting your eyes to the advancing waves of the sea that were closing in around you. So you will keep your life fine and sweet, and in tune with all that is best about you ; and because your mind is healthy, because you yearn to play your part well in this great world, you will wish your body to be healthy too. Keep it so.

As I write these words, the boy of a friend of mine lies dying, dying a death so fearful that I cannot tell you of it. He is a man now, but he is dying from a sin of his boyhood, and nothing can save him, and perhaps nothing can save the afflicted child he will leave behind. It is the bitter price we pay for a moment of forgetting, for breaking the laws of health. You will not forget. You will keep the house of your soul clean and sweet, and your mind noble. "Whatsoever 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"—you will think on these things. And as for your house, it shall pass away ; but the mind you keep true in it, and the soul you keep pure in it, shall live till the love of God is dead.

TO THE BOY WHO LOVES A BOOK

ONE of the splendid things John Ruskin said was in the book he wrote for a girl, whom he asked a question which meant this—"Will you stand gossiping with foolish people when you can talk with Shakespeare?" I pass that question on to you, and it will help, almost more than anything else, to make a man of you if you will remember it always.

It is one of the things a boy can never be thankful enough for that he can sit down with Shakespeare. Have you ever thought that Alfred the Great or William the Conqueror *never read a printed book*? The growth of books is a story as wonderful as any that a book has ever told, but we can only just think of it now. It must have seemed a marvellous thing in the Long Ago that a man should make marks on stone, and then on the bark of trees, and then on paper, and send his thoughts in such a way to his far-off friends; and then, when the first real book came into the world,

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it must have seemed to the men of that time as if a new wonder had fallen from the sky.

And if the first book had really fallen from the sky, straight out of the hands of angels, it could not have brought into the world a more wonderful seed than it did contain, for out of that book has come—I was going to say all that you know, and all that I know, and all that the wisest men in the world could tell you. But perhaps I should be wrong, for when you were a little child there came to you wonderful things that were never put in books, and as you grow older there will come to you things that can never be described in words. As the light of the stars comes to us at night, so there comes to us, in a way that no man knows, a wisdom that is not of this world, that all the books that ever were written could not contain. But still from that first book has come, not only a marvellous story, but the whole spreading of knowledge among mankind, the setting free of slaves, the scattering of darkness, the discovery of millions of worlds, the love of justice, the laws of health, and the whole mighty structure of civilisation which has sprung up about the boy who has the glorious good fortune to be born in the days of books.

Never throw a good book on the floor; never handle it lightly without thinking.

There is something in it that will live for ever; something that will live in the world when the forest from which the paper was made is covered with great cities. That book, perhaps, has in it the thought of a man whom this world knows no more; it may carry on his thought to a boy who will come into the world when the age we live in is as far back as the age of Greece and Rome. We should treat good books with reverence.

And, as we should reverence books themselves, so we should reverence the power of reading them. Nothing that you have will bring you more lasting pleasure if you use it well; reading is perhaps the most enduring pleasure you can give yourself while you are still looking into the future. When nothing that money can buy will bring you peace, the power of reading may heal your sorrows. When all others fail, a book will be your friend, and reading will bring you the friendship of the kings of men. Guard well this holy trust, this touch of Nature's magic wand which opens the doors of the past for you, quickens the present, and draws the veil—if ever so little—that hides the future. You would not scorn a free pass over a railway: will you treat with scorn this free pass through all the kingdoms that have ever been, through all the secret treasuries of Nature,

into the innermost rooms of the homes of the wisest and greatest of mankind ?

I have seen boys throwing to the dogs this precious gift of reading : I have seen boys loitering in the streets over trashy papers which were not likely to rebuke them for stealing their master's time. You love reading enough, I hope, never to sully this gift by reading rubbish, or stuff that is worse than rubbish. Every bad book you read, every trashy paper you look at, makes it harder for you to read a good one, and the reading of bad books is *like taking poison*. A man may take poison slowly, in little quantities, until his body is so used to it that it shakes off the evil and, at any rate, does not kill him ; we know that by the way in which men smoke the poison in tobacco and drink the poison in beer. But the poison is there still, and some day or other an enemy will find it out and the man will pay the price. And so the mind that has even a little poison poured into it from bad papers is being slowly poisoned, and some day or other the evil will tell. Keep this great power of yours free from any stain, and read what is clean, and sane, and true.

There are two things, it seems to me, that we should all remember about reading ; two reasons why we read at all. The first reason

is to gain knowledge; the second is to stir the imagination. There are other reasons, and many people will think of many different ones; but all over the earth men and women read for these two reasons that I have given. They are noble reasons, both of them, for without knowledge nothing worth doing can be done anywhere, and without imagination there is no hope for the future of mankind. And I think I may well say to you that in choosing your books you may safely put aside any book that does neither of these two things. It is a safe rule that a book that gives you nothing takes something from you. To say the least, it takes your time, but it takes more, for it takes from you also something another book would have given you in that time. Many men have been moved to great deeds by reading a single book; what would have happened if they had read some other book instead?

We can never know, and we do not expect that great books will make us great men; but you will thank God to the end of your life if you lay down a rule that you will read no book which does not give you knowledge or stir your thoughts. Then you will rule out from your life all the stupid books that are so much wasted paper, all the books that are merely sensation. You do not want to

spend your life with hooligans, or tramps, or burglars, or policemen; why should you buy their company even for an hour?

A friend of mine has just told me a true story of one of his own boys, who left a small school to go to a public school with a fine reputation. His father had found him reading a trashy paper, and expressed his disapproval without forbidding the boy to read it again. But one day, as the boy was going back to school after his first term, he left his father for a moment, bought the same trashy paper at a bookstall, and then came back, said good-bye to his father, and got into the train with a carriageful of schoolfellows. Taking out his paper, he settled down to read it, and I am sure that his father was never more pleased than he was at that moment, for his boy received a lesson that he will not forget. The head boy in the carriage turned to the boy with a scornful look, and, saying, "That is not good enough for our school," took the paper from him, tore it up, and flung it from the window. That boy is not likely ever to touch these papers again. He has learnt that they are beneath the dignity of a scholar.

You will be on the side of the boy who tore up this paper, who was too manly to let such rubbish creep into his brain. He knew, what I would have you know, that

these papers that have nothing to give you but sensation are not clever. Nothing is easier than to heap excitement on excitement, adventure on adventure, all leading to nowhere and ending in nothing. One writer copies another, the same adventure is told in a hundred ways, and so, with new names and new titles, silly stories run through miles of papers, insulting every healthy boy who reads them and spoiling his mind for the wonderful tales that are waiting for him if only he will turn to them.

I am sure you will not misunderstand me. We all love thrilling books, tales of mystery that thrill us through and through, lifting us up beyond ourselves, out of our little lives, into the world that lies far off beyond our reach, yet not beyond our dreams. It is good that your imagination should run wild. It is more important that you should read a book which carries you up into the clouds, or down into the seas, than one which merely tells you that Henry the Eighth had seven wives, that the Duke of Marlborough won the battle of Blenheim, or that Cardiff and Carnarvon both claim to be the capital of Wales. You are right to want to be accurate, to want to have the facts at your finger ends, as we say, to want to answer questions or turn up references quickly. But it is vastly more

important that you should know what William Harvey did for mankind when he discovered the circulation of the blood than that you should know the date on which Harvey was born. Most of us give far too much time to details, to merely cramming our minds with facts instead of learning their meaning, and you will be wise, at the very beginning of your reading, to guard against this danger. Try to get into your mind the meaning of this or that; you can look up the little details when you want them. A man may know all the dates of history and be uneducated; that man is educated who, though his mind is not a string of names and dates, has hold of the truth of things, of the law of cause and effect, of the things that lie behind, of the growth and meaning of the world about us, of his place in it and his power in it, of the way he came and the way he goes; and all these things a man may read in books.

Therefore you will read whatever you can that thrills you with wonder of a noble kind; it is good that you should be stirred like that. But you will learn what to reject as unworthy, the books that are the thieves of time, the books that should be burned, the books that make boys criminals instead of men, traitors instead of patriots, weaklings instead of heroes. You will love the spirit of adven-

ture ; you will be eager to solve the mystery, curious to know what will happen ; and these things are a natural part of your education. But you will cultivate them in healthy ways, and one of the things I hope you will learn early in your reading is this, that a tremendous change has come over the world in your day and mine, and that a boy's books depend no longer for their interest on unreal things, on mere tales of adventure, on stories of pirates and smugglers, on fightings and shipwrecks, on fantastic crimes and horrible wars. The old days when a boy must seek his reading in these unhappy fields have gone for ever, and only the tired-out author invites you that way now. You are going to the future, and you will not follow him.

You will find your interest, rather, in the great realities of the world, in those true stories of our age which are more wonderful and thrilling than all the books of other days. You will know, in other words, that the truth of our own day is stranger than the fiction of the past.

The world is full of many kinds of people, but there are two kinds of people in the world whose adventures make up stories every day as thrilling as "Robinson Crusoe." There are the men who are working in material things—making engines, or motor-cars, or

flying machines. Will they ever take us to America in a day? Will they ever make a motor-car that boys may drive and poor men pay for? Will they ever fly to another world, and really see if there are men on Mars? And then there are the men who work in things that are not seen—the great kings of science who peer into the invisible, who weigh the earth and measure the stars, and ponder over the mystery of Life itself until they seem to be almost solving it; and then the secret slips away, and men still ask where Life came from, and where it goes, and what it means. Will they find it out one day? The little crystal that the chemist makes—will it one day come alive? Will these men give us longer lives, or kill disease, or drive back death?

A wonderful and solemn thing it is to think of these two groups of men, one building up a mighty plan of material things, engines and wheels and wires that seem to encompass all mankind; the other peering behind it all, ever finding something new, until the day may come when the quiet men will bid the others cease, and the great material things, the engines and wheels and wires, may be no more wanted, because we shall travel without engines and get power without wheels and speak without wires. Are these things as interesting as pirates? Are these men fit to

be your heroes? Are these mysteries less exciting because the kings of the earth are trying day and night to solve them? These men have made possible this age of wonderful books, they built up the Children's Encyclopædia, which boys and girls all over the world have read for years, and are reading still; they are the travellers and explorers and adventurers whose lives are the great boys' books. Read them, and know that you are growing up in a world that is itself the most thrilling story-book that you can read. The incomparable book is the book that is true, and the incomparable authors are Dickens, who drew the pictures of English life in the age that has passed away, and Scott, who made past ages live again.

It is only the true book that lives, the book that is true to life, as any made-up tale may be; and you will not waste your time on tales that have no sort of truth in them at all. You will have nothing to do with books that play with truth; books of what we call satire—that is, a sort of twisting of the truth; or books of what we call cynicism, which are the worst of all, for the cynic is a man whom nothing pleases, because his mind is grown old before his body, and his soul is sour.

There is still in the world more good reading than bad, for the good lives on and the bad

dies out ; and there is no excuse for any boy who reads a bad, dull book, and no excuse for a dull hour in the life of any boy so long as books are cheap.

But we should need a book itself to say all that can be said of books. A man is known by his books as truly as by his looks, for a man is what his mind is, and books are the makers of Mind. Of course you will love a book for its own sake ; you will soon learn to know the difference between books and furniture, though so many books are merely furniture and nothing more. You will read with a pencil at hand, and mark the thoughts that strike you ; only the men who *pretend* to love books are afraid to mark them, worshipping the ink and paper and the beautiful covers rather than the soul of the book itself. That book is best read and most revered which we treat as a friend, marking the way through it with signposts that we understand. You will not fall into the habit of reading a book without understanding it, or of reading merely that you may say you have read it.

There is no reason why you should read any book you cannot understand. If a book does not interest you, put it down. A book, like a friend, will respond to your mood ; you must bring something to it if you are to take something away. You will soon make up

your mind not to read by candle-light, and not to read books printed in small, bad type; great as books are, the book has never yet been printed that was worth your eyes. Choose the books that are written wisely and printed well. Perhaps you may "skip" a book, running through it quickly instead of poring closely over it, and, though this habit may be dangerous at first, you may cultivate it later with much saving of time and great advantage. No man can read all the books he would like to read, and it is wise to know something of as many as we can. But you will not fall, therefore, into the bad habit of careless reading, of picking up snippets and tit-bits, and finding chaff when you should be reaping golden corn. Especially will you never let yourself read books that you must hide from others, or books that make you think of things you do not care to talk about.

You will choose your books wisely, as you choose your friends, and you will find in the world no more enduring friends than books. Never let yourself be far away from them. In the train, in the field, wherever you are, you may have them with you; at home or abroad they will follow you, the most constant, the most unflinching, the most comforting helpers of men. You will find one, if you seek it, on almost any subject in the

world; in hope or in perplexity you may seek a friend in books, and at the door of these friends you need never knock in vain. They will tell you all that wise men know, they will admit you to the company of the noblest men and women who have ever lived. The love of books is the pass to the realms of gold that are nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven than anything else upon the earth. In poetry, in the Bible, in the great books that will never die, a man may reach his heart's desire, may find the satisfaction that riches and palaces cannot give.

Buy them, and read them, and love them; and remember that a good book is like a flower in the garden of God. The great forces of the universe have brought it where it grows; it gives to you who pass by something of its beauty and sweetness and light; it throws its seed on to the wind, and blossoms still when you have passed out of the garden gate. A man comes and goes, and the hills run into the sea, but the thing a man puts into a book endures. It grows into your life and soul, and when seas and hills and stars are done it shall live on, with God—and you.

XI
TO THE BOY WHO LOVES THE
HIGHEST

WE have talked of many things in these letters, of the things that will come into your life whatever the years may have in store for you, but of one thing, so far, we have said almost nothing, and without it all else is in vain. You will hear boys about you scoffing at religion; you will be shocked, perhaps, to find that the things your mother taught you, the habits you formed in the days when you knelt at her knee, are scorned by those about you; and perhaps your hold upon these things may come to be looser and looser as you go farther and farther on your journey through the world alone. Pray that it may not be; pray that you may realise that the one unfailing thing the world contains is the religion your mother gave you. Better than a king's crown to you is that solemn spirit which brings a boy to his mother's knee and leads the strong man to bow down before the Giver of his strength.

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I would have you proud to be a boy, proud that behind you lies the heritage of the centuries, and before you lies the hope of ages. I would have you proud that it lies in you to win great triumphs in the fields where others have laboured, to gather the harvests that others have sown. But more than all I would have you lowly, living in deep humility in the presence of the Maker of the world.

Nothing can be more true than that we live from hour to hour in the very presence of God. We think of the ages and ages that lie behind us, of all the uncountable generations that had been before we came ; we think of the dark abyss of Time when no sound filled the spaces of the universe, when no light shone in the path of the sun, when no breath of human life stirred the stillness of the worlds : and we know that God was there. We think of these days in which we live, of how they have grown out of the days when wild men fought with bears and wolves in Europe, of the growth of love and pity and comradeship, and the rise of cities, and the spread of books, and the dawn of these hopeful years : and we know that God is here. We think of the days that are to come, when our dreams shall have come true, when little children shall not cry for bread, neither shall there be any evil in the hearts of men : and

we know that God will be there. From everlasting to everlasting is the Creator of heaven and earth. If it were written across the sky when you wake in the morning it would not be more wonderful to think of than it is, and it means that God is with you always.

If you will grow up into manhood remembering that, the world has no power within it to do you harm. No storm that blows can injure you, no slander can hurt you, no care can destroy your peace of mind, if from the rise of the sun till the sun goes down you remember that He who set the sun in the heavens, and upholds it still, is at your side. You are marching through the universe with the Architect who fashioned it, and He will guide you through its dangerous ways.

I have just looked at a dictionary to see what religion is, but the dictionary cannot tell us that. And so, of course, I cannot tell you. Religion is something in the spirit of the world which lifts us up and fills our souls with the joy of life ; and no words can tell us what that something is. It is nothing that makes us sad, that gives us long faces, that binds us down to narrow ways of living, that forbids us to think, or wonder, or to use our minds in any way we can : religion is rather

something that gives us wider freedom still, that opens the gates of the world and bids us carry its influence where we will.

It is, I think I should say if I were writing a dictionary, the feeling of the clear presence in our lives of the Almighty Power of God. It is the resolve, in our heart of hearts, to consecrate our lives to the highest that we know ; not deceiving ourselves, not leaving parts of our life as if they were outside it. but believing that the whole of our life is linked in some deep way with the great movement of the universe, and that upon our life, upon every act and word of it, things beyond our understanding may depend.

At the very beginning of all things is this solemn view of life, this consciousness that we are not alone, but part of a great plan and purpose. If we think of the world as part of a vast universe, and of the universe as something that is being perfected through us, we shall not fall into the grave mistake of thinking that religion is a small thing, something to do with a particular Church, or a particular kind of worship, or a special form of words in which we must believe. There is no particular Church or creed to which we must bow down. But to the faith all Churches hold, to the faith behind all creeds, we must bow down or perish. We

must believe in God, and must live as if we believe in Him.

And how shall we live as if we believe in God? How, in this difficult world, where we must work so hard to keep ourselves alive, where so many things annoy us, so much distresses us, and our minds are so filled with the little worries of our own affairs—how can we, amid all these things, keep in our mind for ever the thought of God, the feeling that His presence is about us, that His spirit is within us, and that the great end of our lives is to spread the love of God throughout the world?

It is not easy to be good, as some would have you believe. You will find, as you go on your way through life, that the world is a rough place for your smooth feet, and all those great qualities that you have been building up in your boyhood must come to your aid now that you are to take your stand against all the world's temptations. And come to your aid they will. The love of pure and noble things, the strength that enables you to drive away mean things, the courage that overcomes difficulties, the resolution to give to the world the best that is in you, the healthy mind in your healthy body, have all been building up in you the manhood you need for this hour.

No craven's treasure is religion, no comfort for a coward. The very spirit of a hero it is, calling for manly boys who will be manly men, and scorning the coward and the sneak who would take all from the world and give it nothing back again.

And so you will face the call that comes to you, as it comes to us all, to love the highest when you see it, and you will love God with all your heart and all your mind and all your soul. You will lift up your voice while it is strong, you will raise your eyes to heaven while your sight is keen, you will give your right arm before it is weary, and you will bow down, like a knight in a new crusade, in the spirit of these noble lines :

God who created me
Nimble and light of limb,
In three elements free,
'To run, to ride, to swim :
Not when the sense is dim,
But now from the heart of joy,
I would remember Him :
Take the thanks of a boy.

But how, then, are we to live as if we believe in God ? How shall a boy, how even shall a strong man, come near to the Creator of the universe ? One or two hundred people, in any kingdom, come bravely and at ease into the presence of a king ; for the millions

of others the presence of a king is as an overwhelming shadow. But the way to the King of kings is easy. No impassable gulf stretches between the world and the Throne of God. *Across it lies a human life.*

That is the supreme wonder of Creation, the miracle that baffles us and bewilders us when all others seem easy to understand; and in it lies the hope of all mankind. For, through this human life that stretched between a sinful world and the pure air of heaven, you and I and all who will may find salvation from our sins. Once in the story of the world the Spirit of God Himself has entered completely into a life on earth, the Character of God Himself has been woven into a life filled with griefs and hopes and anxieties such as yours and mine; and, as for you and me, we may walk humbly in the path of Him who walked in Galilee, of Jesus Christ, who died for us, and for whom millions now would die. For if in Him God became man, in Him, too, man became God; and "What one has been, why may not millions be?" Let nothing drive out from your life the faith that Wordsworth held. Those who seek God will find Him, and the way is through the sinless life of the Son of Man, who also was the Son of God.

You will not make the sad mistake that is often made, of supposing that we must follow

the life of Jesus only in part. You will not seek your own salvation by withdrawing from the world; you will not seek peace by leaving the sorrows of the world for others to assuage. That is the peace which consumes too many lives, but it is not the peace of God that passeth understanding. It is not the peace of Him who healed the sick and fed the hungry, and had not where to lay His head. The teaching of Jesus was not that a man should set himself apart from other men, and live in a kingdom of his own, thanking God, perhaps, that he is not contaminated with the touch of the things of this world. Jesus led men out into the world and bade them take their place in it, and the meaning of His life is not only that we ourselves should be pure and meek and inherit the earth, but that, being pure and meek, we should strive with all our heart to make the whole world pure and lowly.

Christianity is the birthright of all mankind, and if some are robbed of it by the fearful conditions in which they live, by having no opportunity to train their minds to understand it, then Christianity demands of us that we shall reach out to these and bring them to their priceless heritage. All that helps another to lift himself up a little nearer to heaven—a meal for a hungry child, a kind

word to those who mourn, a look of pity to those who suffer, an untying of bonds for those who struggle to be free—will be to you a part of your religion. You will not pass by on the other side as long as you remember who it was that asked that a cup of water should be given in His name. You will let nothing destroy your faith in everlasting right, in the power of truth over falsehood, in the triumph of righteousness over all the forces that are arrayed against it. You will fight against all those forces that make life hard for so many; you will give your countenance to none of those things that spread misery among the people, and sadden and weary the hearts of all who strive to uplift mankind.

But, though you will listen to the claims of the world upon you, you will keep watch upon yourself that the calm of your soul shall remain unruffled by storms within and temptations without. Though you should have the faith that removes mountains, you will guard it from the trials that assail it. We are creatures of habit, all of us, and you will shelter yourself in the armour of those good customs in which, throughout the ages, men have found new strength. It is good that we should guard ourselves from slackness and neglect by discipline of many kinds, and the habit of regular worship will keep

alive your faith and purify your soul. And more than all, I hope, you will never be afraid, and never be ashamed, to kneel to the Maker of heaven and earth.

More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. The yearning of the human soul goes out into the universe, and not in vain. There is no Power beyond the reach of man. And this yearning of the soul, for strength in a great enterprise, for comfort in sorrow, for guidance in perplexity, is the bridge between the soul in its mortal house and the God who planted in it the seed of immortality. In penitence, in hope, in deep humility, we kneel at the feet of our Father, and no man has ever truly knelt in vain. We can think nothing mean in prayer; there must pour out from our hearts at this solemn time a stream of all that is pure and unsullied in our lives. "If Cæsar should adopt you," said a wise man long ago, "no one could endure your pride." Yet God Himself has adopted you, and in prayer God gives you audience.

Was ever so solemn and proud a thing as that? Was ever a thought so wondrously beyond all words? We seek in vain an audience of the King of England, but He who made the heavens, who flung a million worlds in space and lit the stars and shaped

the mountain peaks, is listening to us when we will, and listening as our Father. It is the simple beauty of religion that it makes us, not subjects of a king, but children of a Father. We lift up our eyes in faith at every dawn to the Father who will watch us through the day; we bow down in thankfulness at every dusk to the Father who has kept us through another journey round the sun. So we kindle in ourselves anew the love of God that sustains us through our lives; so we grow more worthy of the glory that is ours, for the sad poet whose life was broken was right when he wrote:

So have I dreamed—Oh, may the dream be true!—
That praying souls are purged from mortal hue,
And grow as pure as He to Whom they pray.

How often, when we have listened to some lovely music, have we been lifted up so that we felt that, if the music could remain for ever, no evil thought could live within its sound! Yet how immeasurably beyond the power of music is the power of prayer to raise us up above the world! How sinless is the moment when we kneel! You will let these solemn moments come into your life, bringing into the pure presence of your highest self all the causes and comrades and enterprises upon which you wish a blessing. It is the testing-

time of our hopes, for nothing evil then can live on our lips or in our hearts.

But if for any wish thou canst not pray,
Then pray to God to cast that wish away.

So that perhaps we may say of religion that it is life at the highest. It is more than honour and duty and courage and generosity and love and justice and mercy ; it is all these earthly things touched with the glow of a torch that was lighted in heaven. It has in it the sense of justice which led Brutus to put his sons to death for treachery to the State ; it has in it the courage which led the people of Eyam to shut themselves off from the world and perish of plague to save the country round them ; it has in it the courtesy which moved Aristides to sign the paper for his banishment, when appealed to by the peasant who could not write ; it has in it the self-sacrifice of the two hundred schoolboys who gave up each an inch of skin to save the life of a laundry girl ; it has in it the honour of a Roman who, when offered his life by a general who had ordered all others to be slain, mixed with the people, saying, " I will not live while so many of my fellow-citizens die unjustly." Woven into Christianity, sanctified by it, are all these noble things.

The great watchwords of religion come

to us down the ages. There is nothing small in them, nothing that manhood may not build itself upon. We must be forgiving—"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." We must be just—"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We must be wise—"Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." We must be kind to animals—"A righteous man regardeth his beast." We must be comrades—"Bear ye one another's burdens." We must be independent—"Better is the life of a poor man in a mean cottage than delicate fare in another man's house." We must make our religion felt in the town and the State—"Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." We must be tender—"Pure religion and undefiled is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." We must have clean hands—"The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." We must be true—"Strive for the truth unto death." We must be determined—"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." We must be patient—"Answer not before thou hast heard the cause; blame not before thou hast examined the truth." We must be

industrious—"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." We must love one another—"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; charity never faileth. And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity."

Men have made a great mystery of religion, and these plain watchwords have been wrapped up in phrases whose meaning no boy can discover; but nothing could really be simpler than religion. The thought of God as a Father, of mankind as a Brotherhood, is so simple that a child may grasp it, and it is the mainspring and centre of the message that Jesus brought into the world. Jesus came into the world to teach men how to live, to tell men that they are the sons of

God, in whose image they are made. He came to draw the human race together as one great family, to give men strength to resist evil, and to fill them with a passion for good. He came to bring sympathy and love into the world, to teach us that sorrow and sin are the enemies of mankind, to kindle in men's hearts the truth that the humblest beggar and the proudest prince are brothers in the sight of God. He came to tell the world that the pomp of the world is a vain and empty show, and that the only things that will not pass away are mercy and truth and love and peace.

No message could be simpler than His, and nothing could be simpler than the way in which Jesus left His message to be handed down to you and me. Think for a moment, and remember that when Jesus had established religion in the world He left it to the care of twelve plain men. He left it, not in charge of twelve great scholars, not in the trust of kings, not locked up in the minds of philosophers, not enshrined in temples or preserved in precious books. Jesus did none of these things. He left His message with the common people. He sowed His seed in the world's highway.

If there is something beautiful in this, there is something solemn in it, too, for it

means that the existence of Christianity in the world depends upon us. Have you ever thought that if, when you wake up some morning, you found no good man left in the world, if every man and woman made up his mind to refuse to believe in God, Christianity would be dead? We think sometimes, perhaps, that Christianity is bound to go on; that, somehow, it is under the special protection of God, and must continue. But religion cannot live except by the will of men. God will not save the world against its will; He will not keep religion alive if we neglect it and let it die.

You will not fail in your share of the great task of keeping religion alive. You will see that, as far as in you lies, religion is simple and plain, making your life fuller, and nobler, and purer, and more useful. You will not allow it to come into your life as a thing of mystery and mischief, an influence from which men flee because they do not understand it. If we are unreal in our lives, pretending to be what we are not, professing religion with our lips and forsaking it in our hearts, men will shun the thing that makes us hypocrites and Pharisees. But if our lives glow with love to all men, if we do right because it is right and not because it is profitable, men will be drawn to that sweet influence which keeps us

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calm amid the storms of life and gentle in adversity.

You will grow up close to the heart of the busy world. You will bear your share of its burdens; you will reap your share of its rewards. But nothing that you can give this world will compare with the gift of a beautiful life; and nothing that this world can give to you will compare with the peace of God that passeth understanding. Pray that you may reach

That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.

So shall you join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's
good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.

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