

The Simple Life
By CHARLES WAGNER
Translated from the French by Mary Louise Hendee
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But the greatest lack is that want of discernment which leads men to ground their pride in their fortune. To begin with, it is a childish confusion of thought to consider wealth as a personal quality. It would be hard to find a more ingenious fashion of deceiving oneself as to the relative value of the container and the thing contained. I have no wish to dwell on this question. It is too painful. And yet one cannot resist saying to those concerned: "Take care; do not confound what you possess with what you are. Go learn to know the underside of worldly splendor, that you may feel its moral misery and its puerility." The traps pride sets for us are too ridiculous. We should distrust association with a thing that makes us hateful to our neighbors and robs us of clearness of vision.

He who yields to the pride of riches forgets this other point, the most important of all, that possession is a public trust. Without doubt individual wealth is as legitimate as individual existence and liberty. These things are inseparable, and it is a dream pregnant with dangers that offers battle to such fundamentals of life. But the individual touches society at every point, and all he does should be done with the whole in view. Possession, then, is less a privilege of which to be proud than a charge whose gravity should be felt. As there is an apprenticeship, often very difficult to serve, for the exercise of every social office, so this profession we call wealth demands an apprenticeship. To know how to be rich is an art, and one of the least easy of arts to master. Most people, rich and poor alike, imagine that in obedience one has nothing to do but to take life easy. That is why so few men know how to be rich. In the hands of too many wealth, according to the genial and redoubtable comparison of Luther, is like a harp in the hands of an ass. They have no idea of the manner of its use.

So when we encounter a man at once rich and simple—that is to say, who considers his wealth as a means of fulfilling his mission in the world—we should offer him our homage, for he is surely mark worthy. He has surmounted obstacles, borne trials and triumphed in temptations, both gross and subtle. He does not fall to discriminate between the contents of his pocketbook and the contents of his head or heart, and he does not estimate his fellow men in figures. His exceptional position, instead of exalting him, makes him humble, for he is very sensible of how far he falls short of reaching the level of his duty. He has remained a man. That says it all. He is accessible, helpful and far from making of his wealth a barrier to separate him from other men; he makes it a means for coming nearer and nearer to them. Although the profession of riches has been so dishonored by the selfish and the proud, such a man as this always makes his worth felt by every one not devoid of a sense of justice. Each of us who comes in contact with him and sees him live is forced to look within and ask himself the question, "What would become of me in such a situation—should I keep this modesty, this naturalness, this upright-ness which uses its own as though it belonged to others?" So long as there is a human society in the world, so long as there are bitterly conflicting interests, so long as envy and egotism exist on the earth, nothing will be worthier of honor than wealth permeated by the spirit of simplicity. And it will do more than make itself forgiven; it will make itself beloved.

More dangerous than pride inspired by wealth is that inspired by power, and I mean by the word every prerogative that one man has over another, be it unlimited or restricted. I see no means of preventing the existence in the world of men of unequal authority. Every organism supposes a hierarchy of powers; we shall never escape from that law. But I fear that if the love of power is so widespread the spirit of power is almost impossible to find. From wrong understanding and misuse of it those who keep even a fraction of authority almost everywhere succeed in compromising it.

Power exercises a great influence over him who holds it. A head must be very well balanced not to be disturbed by it. The sort of dementia which took possession of the Roman emperors in the time of their world-wide rule is a universal malady whose symptoms belong to all times. In every man there sleeps a tyrant, awaiting only a favorable occasion for waking. Now, the tyrant is the worst enemy of authority, because he furnishes us its intolerable caricature, whence come a multitude of social complications, collisions and hatreds. Every man who says to those dependent on him, "Do this because it is my will and pleasure," does ill. There is within each one of us something that invites us to resist personal power, and this something is very respectable, for at bottom we are equal, and there is no one who has the right to exact obedience from me because he is he and I am I. If he does so his command degrades me, and I have no right to suffer myself to be degraded.

One must have lived in schools, in workshops, in the army, in government offices, he must have closely followed the relations between masters and servants, have observed a little everywhere where the supremacy of man exercises itself over man, to form any idea of the injury done by those who use power arrogantly. Of every free soul they make a slave soul, which is to say the soul of a rebel. And it appears that this result, with its social disaster, is most certain when he who commands is least removed from the station of him who obeys. The most implacable tyrant is the tyrant himself under authority. Foremen and overseers put more violence into their dealings than superintendents and employers. The corporal is generally harsher

than the colonel. In certain ramines where madam has not much more education than her maid the relations between them are those of the convict and his warder. And we everywhere to him who falls into the hands of a subaltern drunk with his authority!

We forget that the first duty of him who exercises power is humility. Haughtiness is not authority. It is not we who are the law; the law is over our heads. We only interpret it, but to make it valid in the eyes of others we must first be subject to it ourselves. To command and to obey in the society of men are, after all, but two forms of the same virtue—voluntary servitude. If you are not obeyed, it is generally because you have not yourself obeyed first.

The secret of moral ascendancy rests with those who rule with simplicity. They soften by the spirit the harshness of the fact. Their authority is not in shoulder straps, titles or disciplinary measures. They make use of neither ferule nor threats, yet they achieve everything. Why? Because we feel that they are themselves ready for everything. That which confers upon a man the right to demand of another the sacrifice of his time, his money, his passions, even his life, is not only that he is resolved upon all these sacrifices himself, but that he has made them in advance. In the command of a man animated by this spirit of renunciation there is a mysterious force which communicates itself to him who is to obey and helps him do his duty.

In all the provinces of human activity there are chiefs who inspire, strengthen, magnetize their soldiers; under their direction the troops do prodigies. With them one feels himself capable of any effort, ready to go through fire, as the saying has it, and if he goes it is with enthusiasm.

But the pride of the exalted is not the only pride; there is also the pride of the humble—the arrogance of underlings, at pendant to that of the great. The root of these two prides is the same. It is not alone that lofty and imperious being, the man who says, "I am the law," that provokes insurrection by his very attitude; it is also that pighended subaltern who will not admit that there is anything beyond his knowledge.

There are really many people who find all superiority irritating. For them every piece of advice is an offense, every criticism an imposition, every opinion an outrage on their liberty. They would not know how to submit to rule. To respect anything or anybody would seem to them a mental aberration. They say to people after their fashion, "Beyond us there is nothing."

To the family of the proud belong also those difficult and supersensitive people who in humble life find that their superiors never do them fitting honor, whom the best and most kindly do not succeed in satisfying and who go about their duties with the air of a martyr. At bottom these disaffected minds have too much misplaced self respect. They do not know how to fill their place simply, but complicate their life and that of others by unreasonable demands and morbid suspicions.

When one takes the trouble to study men at short range he is surprised to find that pride has so many lurking places among those who are by common consent called the humble. So powerful is this vice that it arrives at forming round those who live in the most modest circumstances a wall which isolates them from their neighbors. There they are, entrenched, barricaded with their ambitions and their contempt, as inaccessible as the pole, a sort of earth behind their aristocratic prejudices. Obscure or illustrious, pride wraps itself in its dark royalty of enmity to the human race. It is the same in misery and in high places—solitary and impotent, on guard against everybody, embroiling everything. And the last word about it is always this: If there is so much hostility and hatred between different classes of men it is due less to exterior conditions than to an interior fatality. Conflicting interests and differences of situation dig ditches between us. It is true, but pride transforms the ditches into gulfs, and in reality it is pride alone which cries from brink to brink, "There is nothing in common between you and us!"

We have not finished with pride, but it is impossible to picture it under all its forms. I feel most resentful against it when it meddles with knowledge and appropriates that. We owe our knowledge to our fellows, as we do our riches and power. It is a social force which ought to be of service to everybody, and it can only be so when those who know remain sympathetically near to those who know not. When knowledge is turned into a tool for ambition it destroys itself.

And what shall we say of the pride of good men? For it exists and makes even virtue hateful. The just who repent them of the evil others do remain in brotherhood and social rectitude. But the just who despise others for their faults and misdeeds cut themselves off from humanity, and their goodness, descended to the rank of an ornament for their vanity, becomes like those riches which kindness does not inform, like authority untempered by the spirit of obedience. Like proud wealth and arrogant power, supercilious virtue also is detestable. It fosters in man traits and an attitude provocative of I know not what. The sight of it repels instead of attracting, and those whom it deigns to distinguish with its benefits feel as though they had been slapped in the face.

To resume and conclude, it is an error to think that our advantages, whatever they are, should be put to the service of our vanity. Each of them constitutes for him who enjoys it an obligation and not a reason for vanity. Material wealth, power, knowledge, gifts of the heart and mind, be come so much cause for discord when they serve to nourish pride. They remain beneficent only so long as they

are the source of modesty in those who possess them.

Let us be humble if we have great possessions, for that proves that we are great debtors. All that a man has he owes to some one, and are we sure of being able to pay our debts?
(To be continued.)

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Donald Nickelsen's Birthday.
Donald Nickelsen's birthday last Friday was the occasion of a pleasant party of young folks at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Nickelsen, on Oak street. Among those present were: Garnet Haynes, Floyd Gillis, Marion Stout, Joe Spangler, Walter Shay, Nina Shay, Abiline Bartness, Forrest Mae, Angus McDonald, Ethel McDonald, Madge Hallowell, Oscar Jones, Lem Noble, Willie McDonald, Dick Yates, Eva Yates, Aubrey Blowers, Raymond Early, Helen Orr, Lucy Stuart, Lurrah Miller, Irvin Morris, Ruth Hanna, Bart Jayne, Vera Maves, Fay Orr, Blanche Howe.

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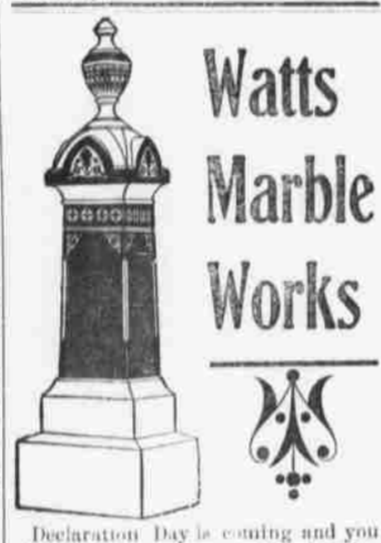
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Some Bargains.
One list contains about 40 different tracts of fruit and general farm lands in Missouri; about 500 acres in Vandercook, divided into tracts of from 40 to 200 acres each; also about 185 different tracts of farm property in Hood River valley, and some very desirable residences in Hood River and Mosier.
31. 60 acres 1/2 mile out; berries and orchard. A beautiful location. Will be sold at a bargain.
32. 35 acres one-half mile from Mt. Hood P. O. 14 acres in clover, 4 in hay 11 in strawberries, 1 share water, 2 houses, all for \$1400.
33. 42 acres 5 miles out, 16 acres in orchard, 10 full bearing. First-class improvements. A beautiful home.
34. 80 acres, 5 miles 7-year-old apple trees, balance in clover and general farming. New 4-room house.
35. 40 acres in the most beautiful portion of the valley, 4 acres in orchard one year old, 31 acres in berries, 4 acres in alfalfa, balance general farming.
36. 10 acres 4 miles out; splendid soil; 1 acre apples, best varieties; one year planted. 11 acres in straw berries, 2 acres in potatoes, 5 acres in clover.
37. 114 Two 16-acre tracts about nine miles out; one on east side, other west side. Choice for \$1000.
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