

The Simple Life
By CHARLES WAGNER
Translated from the French by Mary Louise Hendes
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CHAPTER XIV.
CONCLUSION.
I THINK I have said enough of the spirit and manifestations of the simple life to make it evident that there is here a whole forgotten world of strength and beauty. He can make conquest of it who has sufficient energy to detach himself from the fatal rubbish that trammels our days. It will not take him long to perceive that in renouncing some surface satisfactions and childish ambitions he increases his faculty of happiness and his possibilities of right judgment.

These results concern as much the private as the public life. It is inconceivable that in striving against the feverish will to shine, in ceasing to make the satisfaction of our desires the end of our activity, in returning to modest tastes, to the true life, we shall labor for the unity of the family. Another spirit will breathe in our homes, creating new customs and an atmosphere more favorable to the education of children. Little by little our boys and girls will feel the enticement of ideals at once higher and more realizable, and transformation of the home will in time exercise its influence on public spirit.

As the solidity of a wall depends upon the grain of the stones and the consistency of the cement which binds them together, so also the energy of public life depends upon the individual value of men and their power of cohesion. The great desideratum of our time is the culture of the component parts of society, of the individual man. Everything in the present social organism leads us back to this element. In neglecting it we expose ourselves to the loss of the benefits of progress, even to making our most persistent efforts turn to our own hurt. If in the midst of means continually more and more perfected the workman diminishes in value, of what use are these fine tools at his disposal? By their very excellence to make more evident the faults of him who uses them without discernment or without conscience. The wheelwork of the great modern machine is infinitely delicate. Carelessness, incompetence or corruption may produce here disturbances of far greater gravity than would have threatened the more or less rudimentary organism of the society of the past. There is need, then, of looking to the quality of the individual called upon to contribute in any measure to the workings of this mechanism. This individual should be at once solid and pliable, inspired with the central law of life to be oneself and fraternal. Everything within us and without us becomes simplified and unified under the influence of this law, which is the same for everybody and by which each one should guide his actions, for our essential interests are not opposing; they are identical. In cultivating the spirit of simplicity we should arrive, then, at giving to public life a stronger cohesion.

The phenomena of decomposition and destruction that we see there may all be attributed to the same cause—lack of solidity and cohesion. It will never be possible to say how contrary to social good are the trifling interests of caste, of coterie, of church, the bitter strife for personal welfare, and, by a fatal consequence, how destructive these things are of individual happiness. A society in which each member is preoccupied with his own well being is organized disorder. This is all that we learn from the irreconcilable conflicts of our uncomprehending egoism. We too much resemble those people who claim the rights of family only to gain advantage from them, not to do honor to the connection. On all points of the social ladder we are forever putting forth claims. We all take the ground that we are creditors; no one recognizes the fact that he is a debtor, and our dealings with our fellows consist in inviting them, in tones sometimes amiable, sometimes arrogant, to discharge their indebtedness to us. No good thing is retained in this spirit. For, in fact, it is the spirit of privilege, that eternal enemy of universal law, that obstacle to brotherly understanding, which is ever presenting itself anew.

In a lecture delivered in 1882 M. Renan said that a nation is "a spiritual family," and he added, "The essential of a nation is that all the individuals should have many things in common, and also that all should have forgotten much." It is important to know what to forget and what to remember, not only in the past, but also in our daily life. Our memories are lumbered with the things that divide us; the things which unite us slip away. Each of us keeps at the most luminous point of his souvenirs a lively sense of his secondary quality, his part of agriculturist, day laborer, man of letters, public officer, proletarian, bourgeois, or political or religious sectarian, but his essential quality, which is to be a son of his country and a man, is relegated to the shade. Scarcely does he keep even a theoretic notion of it. So that what occupies us and determines our actions is precisely the thing that separates us from others, and there is hardly place for that spirit of unity which is as the soul of a people.

So, too, do we foster bad feeling in our brothers. Men animated by a spirit of particularism, exclusiveness and pride are continually clashing. They cannot meet without roasting each other with the sentiment of division and rivalry. And so there slowly heaps up in their remembrance a stock of reciprocal ill will, of mistrust, of rancor. All this is bad feeling with its consequences. It must be rooted out of our mind. Remember, forget! This we should say to ourselves every morning, in all our relations and affairs. Remember the essential, forget the accessory! How much better should we discharge our duties as citizens if high and low were nourished from this spirit! How

"Oh, Dan!" whispered his wife. "Never in his heart. 'Never in the world will I forget!'"
The spirit of simplicity is a great magician. It softens asperities, bridges chasms, draws together hands and hearts. The forms which it takes in the world are infinite in number, but never does it seem to us more admirable than when it shows itself across the fatal barrier of position, interest or prejudice, overcoming the greatest obstacles, permitting those whom everything seems to separate to understand one another, esteem one another, love one another. This is the true social cement that goes into the building of a people.

THE END.
The carriage was bounding violently from side to side. The two women and child in the back seat were at the mercy of the terrified horses that were manly running directly toward Priscilla and Dan. Another moment and they would be upon them. At the foot of the hill was a rocky ford waiting to engulf the fated occupants of the vehicle if they should reach it alive.

Paralyzed by fear, Priscilla knew in a moment of terror that Dan sprang from his horse, throwing her the bridle. Then she saw him through a fear dimmed haze rush just in time for the salvation of them all straight in front of the maddened brutes with arms outstretched to stop them. She heard his muffled command, "Whoa, boys, whoa!" as he made a dash for their floundering bits.

He sprang nimbly from side to side to avoid being trampled under their hoofs. Again and again it seemed that their brute strength would overwhelm him as they plunged forward straining to get free.

The man and the beasts strove, it seemed to Priscilla eternal ages, until at last, at last, he was conquering them. With months dripping bloody foam, eyes starting from their sockets, they finally stood trembling, but still, save for an occasional trampling and clamping of their bits. This, too, ceased at Dan's command: "Whoa, boys! Steady, boys!"

His brute instinct responded to the master without fear. He stood at length stroking their manes. Even then Priscilla realized in a dim, unworded way a thing that was better than the subjection of signs and symbols to the rule of law.

She emerged from her crumple of agony with an aching relief that her husband was alive, while her own soul, shriveled by the refining fire, saw him with a larger vision, a deeper understanding.

Proudly she marked his chivalrous bearing toward the unweary, frightened woman, who lauded his exploit in words of intensest gratitude. She noted with a swelling heart his bluff kindness toward the bruised and distressed driver, who came limping up to see the extent of the calamity, bloody and battered from his terrible fall.

He made light of what he had done, calling it "nothing." When the trembling animals were quite pacified, greatly to Priscilla's apprehension, her husband turned the vehicle around about—a thing not done without much ado on the narrow shelf of a road—got into the carriage and took the reins with a firm hand to drive the ladies to their home, which was "but a mile or so back," they had told him. Priscilla led his horse for him until he could deposit his charges at their own door.

"Your man is too knocked up to drive," he tactfully explained as he saw the ladies tremulous at the thought of being trusted again to their unicky Jehu.

"Dan, you are simply great!" Priscilla told him as they rode down the hill again toward home. "I'm proud of you through and through. But promise me never, never, never, again to take so dreadful a risk. It makes me faint but to think of it. What if those awful runaway horses had killed you!" And she shuddered.

"Then you could, should and would have been a widow, Priscilla!" "I neither will nor shall nor could, should or would be a widow! I'll die when you do, Dan!" sobbed Priscilla hysterically.

"Never say die, little girl. We will be happy. Nothing shall prevent it, my Priscilla!" "You are a hero, Dan!" The girl reached out her hand to him, and in their clasp thrilled between husband and wife the love that is above and beyond all speech and language.

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The Mt. Hood Railway, which is a common carrier, is now constructing its road to the city and will maintain a station here and furnish cars for the transportation of passengers and freight. Electric light and city water works will be installed before a single lot is sold, although many of the far-seeing ones are clamoring for lots now. Everybody is watching the band automobile.

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