

Life's Enthusiasms eBook

Life's Enthusiasms by David Starr Jordan

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Life's Enthusiasms

It is the layman's privilege to take the text for his sermons wherever he finds it. I take mine from a French novel, a cynical story of an unpleasant person, Samuel Brohl, by Victor Cherbuliez; And this is the text and the whole sermon:

"My son, we should lay up a stock of absurd enthusiasms in our youth or else we shall reach the end of our journey with an empty heart, for we lose a great many of them by the way."

And my message in its fashion shall be an appeal to enthusiasm in things of life, a call to do things because we love them, to love things because we do them, to keep the eyes open, the heart warm and the pulses swift, as we move across the field of life. "To take the old world by the hand and frolic with it;" this is Stevenson's recipe for joyousness. Old as the world is, let it be always new to us as we are new to it. Let it be every morning made afresh by Him who "instantly and constantly reneweth the work of creation." Let "the bit of green sod under your feet be the sweetest to you in this world, in any world." Half the joy of life is in little things taken on the run. Let us run if we must—even the sands do that—but let us keep our hearts young and our eyes open that nothing worth our while shall escape us. And everything is worth our while, if we only grasp it and its significance. As we grow older it becomes harder to do this. A grown man sees nothing he was not ready to see in his youth. So long as enthusiasm lasts, so long is youth still with us.

To make all this more direct we may look to the various sources from which enthusiasm may be derived. What does the school give us in this direction? Intellectual drill, broadening of mental horizon, professional training, all this we expect from school, college, and university and in every phase of this there is room for a thousand enthusiasms. Moreover, the school gives us comradeship, the outlook on the hopes and aspirations of our fellows. It opens to us the resources of young life, the luminous visions of the boys that are to be men. We come to know "the wonderful fellow to dream and plan, with the great thing always to come, who knows?" His dream may be our inspiration as it passes, as its realization may be the inspiration of future generations. In the school is life in the making, and with the rest we are making our own lives with the richest materials ever at our hand. Life is contagious, and in the fact lies the meaning of Comradeship. "Gemeingeist unter freien Geistern," comradeship among free spirits: this is the definition of College Spirit given us by Hutten at Greifswald, four centuries ago. This definition serves for us today. Life is the same in every age. All days are one for all good things. They are all holy-days; to the freshman of today, all joys of comradeship, all delights of free enthusiasm are just as open, just as fresh as ever they were. From the teacher

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like influences should proceed. Plodding and prodding is not the teacher's work. It is inspiration, on-leading, the flashing of enthusiasms. A teacher in any field should be one who has chosen his work because he loves it, who makes no repine because he takes with it the vow of poverty, who finds his reward in the joy of knowing and in the joy of making known. It requires the master's touch to develop the germs of the naturalist, the philosopher, the artist, or the poet. Our teacher is the man who has succeeded along the line in which we hope to succeed, whose success is measured as we hope to measure our own. Each leader of science and of intellectual life is in some degree the disciple of one who has planned and led before him. There is a heredity of intellect, a heredity of action, as subtle and as real as the heredity of the continuous germ-plasm. Ask the teacher who has helped mould your life, who in turn was his own master. In a very few generations you trace back your lineage to one of the great teachers the world knows and loves. Who was your teacher in Natural History in America? Was he a pupil of Agassiz, or was he a student of one of Agassiz's pupils? Or, again, are there three generations back from you to the grand master of enthusiasms?

And there are masters in the art of living as well as in other arts and sciences. "A log with Mark Hopkins at one end and myself at the other." That was Garfield's conception of a university. It was said of Eliphalet Nott at Union College, that he "took the sweepings of other colleges and sent them back to society pure gold." The older students of Stanford will always show the traces of the master teacher Thoburn. "In terms of life," thus he construed all problems of Science, of Philosophy, of Religion. In terms of life, Thoburn's students will interpret all their own various problems, for in terms of life all things we do must finally be formulated. Every observation we make, every thought of our minds, every act of our hands has in some degree an ethical basis. It involves something of right or wrong, and without adhesion to right, all thought, all action must end in folly. And there is no road to righteousness so sure as that which has right living as a traveling companion.

The very humanity of men at large is in itself a source of inspiration. Study men on the trains, at the ferry, on the road, in the jungles of the forest or in the jungles of great cities,—“through the ages, every human heart is human.” Look for the best, and the best shall rise up always to reward you. One who has traveled among simple-living people, men and women we call savages, because they live in the woods and not in cleared land or cities, will bear witness that a savage may be a perfect gentleman. Now as I write their faces rise before me. Joyous, free limbed, white toothed swimmers in Samoan surf, a Hawaiian eel-catcher, a Mexican peon with his “sombbrero trailing in the dust,” a deferential Japanese farm boy anticipating your every want, a sturdy Chinaman without grace and without sensitiveness, but with the saving quality of loyalty to his own word, herdsmen of the Pennine Alps, Aleuts, Indians and Negroes, each race has its noblemen and through these humanity is ennobled. It is worth while to go far from Boston to find that such things are true.

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And we may look not alone among primitive folk who have never envied us our civilization or ever cared that we possessed it. Badalia Herodsfoot, in Kipling's story, lived and died in darkest London. Gentle hearts and pure souls exist among our own unfortunates, those to whom our society has shown only its destroying side. All misery and failure as well as all virtue has its degrees, and our social scheme is still far from the demands of perfect justice.

Some one has said that "the wise young man will wear out three dress suits in a year." This is a playful way of saying that he will not shun men and women, even those bound by the conventions of society. All such association can be made to pay—not in money—but in getting the point of view of other people. This is worth while if not costing too much of time and strength. There is another maxim which can offset the first. It is from Lorimer's Chicago pork packer: "You will meet fools enough during the day without trying to roundup the main herd of them at night." But even the main herd of fools may teach its lesson to the student of human nature. It gives at least a point of departure in the study of wisdom. To study men or to kill time. What is your motive? The poorest use of time is to kill it. This is the weakest and most cowardly form of suicide. Moreover it is never quite successful. That "time which crawleth like a monstrous snake, wounded and slow and very venomous" is sure to take its own revenges.

It is therefore good to look on the cheerful side of life. A touch of humor is necessary to the salvation of the serious man. It is a gift of the men of America to see droll things and to express them in droll fashion. To see the funny side of one's own accomplishments is the highest achievement of the American philosopher and there is hope for the land in which the greatest wits have been the most earnest of moral teachers. Who was more earnest than Oliver Wendell Holmes, who more genuine than Mark Twain? Without the saving grace of humor our Puritan conscience which we all possess would lead us again into all extravagance, witch-burnings, Quaker-stoning, heresy trials, and intolerance of politics and religion. From all these we are saved by our feeling for the incongruous. A touch of humor recalls us to our senses. It "makes the whole world kin."

In the love of nature is another source of saving grace. Science is power. In the stores of human experience lies the key to action, and modern civilization is built on Science. The love of nature is akin to Science but different. Contact with outdoor things is direct experience. It is not stored, not co-ordinated, not always convertible into power, but real, nevertheless, and our own. The song of birds, the swarming of bees, the meadow carpeted with flowers, the first pink harbingers of the early spring, the rush of the waterfall, the piling up of the rocks, the trail through the forest, the

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sweep of the surf, the darting of the fishes, the drifting of the snow, the white crystals of the frost, the shrieking of the ice, the boom of the bittern, the barking of the sea lions, the honk of the wild geese, the skulking coyote who knows that each beast is his enemy and has not even a flea to help him “forget that he is a dog,” the leap of the salmon, the ecstasy of the mocking-bird and bobolink, the nesting of the field-mice, the chatter of the squirrel, the gray lichen of the oak, the green moss on the log, the poppies of the field and the Mariposa lilies of the cliff—all these and ten thousand more pictures which could be called up equally at random and from every foot of land on the globe—all these are objects of nature. All these represent a point of human contact and the reaction which makes for youth, for virtue and for enthusiasm.

To travel is merely to increase the variety of contact by giving our time to it, and by extending the number of points at which contact is possible. It may be that “he who wanders widest, lifts no more of beauty’s jealous veils than he who from his doorway sees the miracle of flowers and trees.” It is true, however, that the experiences of the traveler cover a wider range and fill his mind with a larger and more varied store of remembered delights. The very names of beloved regions call up each one its own picture. The South Seas; to have wandered among their green isles is to have seen a new world, a new heaven and a new earth. The white reef with its whiter rim of plunging surf, the swaying palms, the flashing waterfall, the joyous people, straight as Greeks and colored like varnished leather, the bread-fruit tree and the brown orange, the purple splendor of the vine called Bougainvillia, and above all the volcanic mountains, green fringed with huge trees, with tree ferns and palms, the whole tied together into an impenetrable jungle by the long armed lianas. The Sierra Nevada, sweeping in majestic waves of stone, alive with color and steeped in sunshine. Switzerland, Norway, Alaska, Tyrol, Japan, Venice, the Windward Islands and the Gray Azores, Chapultepec with its dream of white-cloaked volcanoes, Enoshima and Gotemba with their peerless Fujiyama, Nikko with its temples, Loch Lomond, Lake Tahoe, Windermere, Tintagel by the Cornish Sea, the Yellowstone and the Canyon of the Colorado, the Crater Lake of Oregon, Sorrento with its Vesuvius, Honolulu with its Pali, the Yosemite, Banff with its Selkirks, Prince Frederick’s Sound with its green fjords, the Chamounix with its Mont Blanc, Bern with its Oberland, Zermatt with its Matterhorn, Simla with “the, great silent wonder of the snows.”

“Even now as I write,” says Whympers the master mountain climber, “they rise before me an endless series of pictures magnificent in effect, in form and color. I see great peaks with clouded tops, seeming to mount upward for ever and ever. I hear the music of distant herds, the peasant’s yodel and the solemn church bells. And after these have passed away, another train of thought succeeds, of those who have been brave and true, of kind hearts and bold deeds, of courtesies received from strangers’ hands, trifles in themselves but expressive of that good-will which is the essence of charity.”

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That poetry was a means of grace was known to the first man who wrote a verse or who sang a ballad. It was discovered back in the darkness before men invented words or devised letters. The only poetry you will ever know is that you learned by heart when you were young. Happy is he who has learned much, and much of that which is good. Bad poetry is not poetry at all except to the man who makes it. For its creator, even the feeblest verse speaks something of inspiration and of aspiration. It is said that Frederick the Great went into battle with a vial of poison in one pocket and a quire of bad verse in the other. Whatever we think of the one, we feel more kindly toward him for the other.

Charles Eliot Norton advises every man to read a bit of poetry every day for spiritual refreshment. It would be well for each of us if we should follow this advice. It is not too late yet and if some few would heed his words and mine, these pages would not be written in vain.

I heard once of a man banished from New England to the Llano Estacado, the great summer-bitten plains of Texas. While riding alone among his cows over miles of yucca and sage he kept in touch with the world through the poetry he recited to himself. His favorite, I remember, was Whittier's "Randolph of Roanoke:"

"Here where with living ear and eye
He heard Potomac flowing,
And through his tall ancestral trees
Saw Autumn's sunset glowing;

"Too honest or too proud to feign
A love he never cherished,
Beyond Virginia's border line
His patriotism perished.

"But none beheld with clearer eye
The plague spot o'er her spreading,
Nor heard more sure the steps of doom
Along her future treading."

This is good verse and it may well serve to relate the gray world of Northern Texas to the many-colored world in which men struggle and die for things worthwhile, winning their lives eternally through losing them.

Here are some other bits of verse which on the sea and on the lands, in the deserts or in the jungles have served the same purpose for other men, perhaps indeed for you.

"It has been prophesied these many years
I should not die save in Jerusalem,



Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land.
But bear me to that chamber, there I'll lie,
In this Jerusalem shall Hardy die."

"And gentlemen of England now abed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhood cheap while any speaks
Who fought with us upon St. Crispin's day."

"Let me come in where you sit weeping, aye:
Let me who have not any child to die
Weep with you for the little one whose love
I have known nothing of.
The little arms that slowly, slowly loosed
Their pressure round your neck, the hands you used
To kiss. Such arms, such hands I never knew.
May I not weep with you
Fain would I be of service, say something
Between the tears, that would be comforting.
But ah! So sadder than yourselves am I
Who have no child to die."

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“Your picture smiles as once it smiled;
The ring you gave is still the same;
Your letter tells, O changing child,
No tidings since it came!
Give me some amulet
That marks intelligence with you,
Red when you love and rosier red,
And when you love not, pale and blue.
Alas that neither bonds nor vows
Can certify possession.
Torments me still the fear that Love
Died in his last expression.”

“He walks with God upon the hills
And sees each morn the world arise
New bathed in light of Paradise.
He hears the laughter of her rills;
She to his spirit undefiled
Makes answer as a little child;
Unveiled before his eyes she stands
And gives her secrets to his hands.”

“Above the pines the moon was slowly drifting,
The river sang below,
The dim Sierras far beyond uplifting
Their minarets of snow.
The roaring campfire with good humor painted
The ruddy tints of health
On haggard face and form that drooped and fainted
In the fierce race for wealth.
Till one arose and from his pack’s scant treasure
The hoarded volume drew,
And cards were dropped from hands of listless leisure
To hear the tale anew.
And as around them shadows gathered faster
And as the firelight fell,
He read aloud the book wherein the Master
Had writ of Little Nell.



Perhaps 'twas boyish fancy, for the reader
Was youngest of them all,
Yet, as he read, from clustering pine and cedar
A silence seemed to fall.
The fir trees gathering closer in the shadows
Listened in every spray,
While the whole camp with little Nell, on English meadows,
Wandered and lost their way.
Lost is that camp and wasted all its fire,
And he who wro't that spell;
Ah, towering pine and stately Kentish spire,
Ye have one tale to tell.
Lost is that camp, but let its fragrant story
Blend with the breath that thrills
With hop vines' incense all the pensive glory
That fills the Kentish hills.
And on that grave where English oak and holly
And laurel wreath entwine,
Deem it not all a too presumptuous folly,
This spray of Western pine."

"Dark browed she broods with weary lids
Beside her Sphynx and Pyramids,
With her low, never lifted eyes.
If she be dead, respect the dead;
If she be weeping, let her weep;
If she be sleeping, let her sleep;
For lo, this woman named the stars.
She suckled at her tawny dugs
Your Moses, while ye reeked with wars
And prowled the woods, rude, painted thugs."

"The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart;
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
The humble and the contrite heart."

"Careless seems the Great Avenger,
History's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness
Twixt old systems and the word.

Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne;
But that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim Unknown
Standeth God within the shadow.
Keeping watch above his own."



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“Pledge me round, I bid you declare,
All good fellows whose beards are gray,
Did not the fairest of the fair
Common grow and wearisome, ere
Ever a month had passed away?
The reddest lips that ever have kissed,
The brightest eyes that ever have shone
May pray and whisper and we not list
Or look away and never be missed
Ere yet ever a month is gone.
Gillian’s dead. God rest her bier!
How I loved her twenty years syne!
Marian’s married and I sit here
Alone and merry at forty year,
Dipping my nose in the Gascon wine.”

“Under the wide and starry sky
Dig my grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die
And I lay me down with a will.
This be the verse ye grave for me:
 ‘Here he lies where he longed to be.
 Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
 And the hunter home from the hill.’”

“By the brand upon my shoulders,
By the lash of clinging steel,
By the welts the whips have left me,
By the wounds that never heal,
By the eyes grown dim with staring
At the sun-wash on the brine,
I am paid in full for service,—
Would that service still were mine.”

And with these the more familiar verses beginning:

“Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea.”



“Bells of the past whose long-forgotten music.”

“Just for a handful of silver he left us.”

“Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead.”

“O to be in England, now that April’s there.”

“The mists are on the Oberland,
The Fungfrau’s snows look faint and far.”

“The word of the Lord by night
To the watching pilgrims came.”

“Fear, a forgotten form;
Death, a dream of the eyes;
We were atoms in God’s great storm
That raged through the angry skies!”

And with this you may take many other bits of verse which were hammered out on the anvil of the terrible Civil War.

Perhaps these bits of verse chosen almost at random will not appeal to your taste. Then find some other verse that does. The range of literature is as wide as humanity. It touches every feeling, every hope, every craving of the human heart. Select what you can understand—best, what you can rise on tiptoe to understand. “It was my duty to have loved the highest.” It is your duty toward poetry to take the highest you can reach. Then learn it by heart. Learn it when you are young. It will give you a fresh well of thoughts. It will form your style as a writer. That is poetry in which truth is expressed in the fewest possible words, in words which are inevitable, in words which could not be changed without weakening the meaning or throwing discord into the melody. To choose the right word and to discard all others, this is the chief factor in good writing. To learn good poetry by heart is to acquire help toward doing this instinctively, automatically, as other

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habits are acquired. In the affairs of life there is no form of good manners, no habit of usage more valuable than the habit of good English. And to this end the masters of English, from Chaucer to Tennyson, and in spite of perversities, we may add Emerson, Browning, and Kipling, have written English verse. It is not in verse alone that poetry is written. Sweetness and light and truth can be crystallized into prose, and prose well worthy to be borne in memory.

Take this from Emerson:

“The poet is the true landlord, sea lord, air lord! Wherever snow falls or water flows or birds fly, wherever day and night meet in twilight, wherever the blue heaven is hung by clouds or sown with stars, wherever are forms with transparent boundaries, wherever are outlets into celestial spaces, wherever is danger and awe and love—there’s Beauty, plenteous as rain shed for thee and though thou shouldst walk the world over thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble.”

“I took a walk the other day,” so Thoreau tells us, “on Spaulding’s farm. I saw the setting sun lighting up the opposite side of a stately pine wood. Its golden rays straggled into the aisles of the wood as into some noble hall. I was impressed as if some ancient and altogether admirable family had settled there in that part of Concord, unknown to me—to whom the sun was servant. I saw their path, their pleasuring ground through the woods in Spaulding’s cranberry meadow. The pines furnished them with gables as they grew. Their house was not obvious to vision, the trees grew through it. They have sons and daughters. They are quite well. The farmer’s cart path which leads directly through their hall does not in the least put them out, as the muddy bottom of the pool is sometimes seen through the reflected skies. They never heard of Spaulding, and do not know that he is their neighbor, notwithstanding I heard him whistle as he drove his team through their house. Nothing can equal the serenity of their lives. Their coat of arms is simply a lichen. It is painted on the pines and the oaks. They are of no politics. There was no noise of labor. I did not perceive that they were weaving or spinning. Yet I did detect, when the wind lulled and hearing was done away, the finest imaginable sweet musical hum as of a distant hive in May, which perchance was the sound of their thinking. They had no idle thoughts and no one without could say their work, for their industry was not in knots and excrescences embayed. Yet I find it difficult to remember them. They fade irrevocably even while I speak. It is only after a long and serious effort to recollect that I became again aware of their cohabitation. If it were not for such families as this I think I should move out of Concord.”

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In the arts of music and painting and sculpture, one may find not only professional satisfaction, but the strength that comes from higher living and more lofty feeling. In the study of history as biography, the acquaintance with the men and women of other times, those who have felt and thought and acted and suffered to make a freer world for you and me, like inspiration may be found. History is more than its incidents. It is the movement of man. It is the movement of individual men, and it is in giving illumination to personal and racial characters that the succession of incidents has its value. The picturesque individual, the man who could not be counted with the mass, the David, the Christ, the Brutus, the Caesar, the Plato, the Alfred, the Charlemagne, the Cromwell, the Mirabeau, the Luther, the Darwin, the Helmholtz, the Goethe, the Franklin, the Hampden, the Lincoln, all these give inspiration to history. It is well that we should know them, should know them all, should know them well—an education is incomplete that is not built about a Pantheon, dedicated to the worship of great men.

With all this comes that feeling of dedication to the highest purposes which is the essential feature of religion. Religion should be known by its tolerance, its broadmindedness, its faith in God and humanity, its recognition of the duty of action.

And action should be understood in a large way, the taking of one's part in affairs worth doing, not mere activity, nor fussiness, nor movement for movement's sake, like that of "ants on whom pepper is sprinkled." As the lesser enthusiasms fade and fail, one should take a stronger hold on the higher ones. "Grizzling hair the brain doth clear" and one sees in better perspective the things that need doing. It is thus possible to grow old as a "grand old man," a phrase invented for Gladstone, but which fits just as well our own Mark Twain. Grand old men are those who have been grand young men, and carry still a young heart beneath old shoulders. There are plenty of such in our country to-day, though the average man begins to give up the struggle for the higher life at forty. President White, President Eliot, President Angell,—few men have left so deep an impression on the Twentieth Century. Edward Everett Hale, the teacher who has shown us what it is to have a country. Senator Hoar, Professor Agassiz, Professor Le Conte, Professor Shaler,—all these, whatever the weight of years, remained young men to the last. When Agassiz died, the Harvard students "laid a wreath of laurel on his bier and their manly voices sang a requiem, for he had been a student all his life long, and when he died he was younger than any of them." Jefferson was in the seventies when he turned back to his early ambition, the foundation of the University of Virginia. The mother of Stanford University was older than Jefferson before she laid down the great work of her life as completed. When the heart is full, it shows itself in action as well as in speech. When the heart is empty, then life is no longer worth while. The days pass and there is no pleasure in them. Let us then fill our souls with noble ideals of knowledge, of art, of action. "Let us lay up a stock of enthusiasms in our youth, lest we reach the end of our journey with an empty heart, for we lose many of them by the way."

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We hear much in these days of the wickedness of power, of the evil behavior of men in high places, of men in low places, and men whom the people have been perforce obliged to trust. This is no new thing, though the struggle against it, the combination of the forces of reform and blackmail, of dreamers and highwaymen, is offering some new phases.

There is a kind of music popular with uncritical audiences and with people who know no better, which answers to the name of “ragtime.” It is the music of those who do not know good music or who have not the moral force to demand it. The spirit of ragtime is not confined to music: graft is the ragtime of business, the spoils system the ragtime of politics, adulteration the ragtime of manufacture. There is ragtime science, ragtime literature, ragtime religion. You will know each of these by its quick returns. The spirit of ragtime determines the six best sellers, the most popular policeman, the favorite congressman, the wealthiest corporation, the church which soonest rents its pews.

But it does not, control the man who thinks for himself. It has no lien on the movements of history, its decrees avail nothing in the fixing of truth. The movements of the stars pay it no tribute, neither do the movements of humanity. The power of graft is a transient deception. Emerson’s parable of the illusions gives the clue to our time, to all time, in its contrast of the things which appear with the things that abide.

“There is no chance and no anarchy in the Universe,” says Emerson, “all is system and gradation. Every god is there sitting in his sphere. The young mortal enters the hall of the firmament; there he is alone with them alone, they pronouncing on him benedictions and gifts, and beckoning him up to their thrones. On the instant and incessantly fall snow storms of illusions. He fancies himself in a vast crowd which sways this way and that and whose movements and doings he must obey. He fancies himself poor, orphaned, insignificant. The mad crowd drives hither and thither, now furiously commanding this thing to be done, now that. What is he that he should resist their will and think and act for himself? Every moment new changes and new showers of deceptions to baffle and distract him. And when, by and by, for an instant the air clears and the cloud lifts a little, there are the gods still sitting around him on their thrones—they alone with him alone.”

The last paragraphs of this little essay were written within a huge hotel of steel and stone in the heart of a bustling city, in the most gracious of lands and under the bluest of skies. A great commercial city it was, a wondrous city, full of all manner of men—eager, impulsive, loving, enthusiastic men; men cunning and grasping, given over to all “high, hard lust and wilful deed;” carefree, joyous men living in the present and taking their chances for the future; men who have whistled all the airs

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that fluttering birds and frolicking children have learned to sing; workmen of all grades, quiet, courageous and self-respecting, and weak, disgruntled and incapable; bright-eyed, clear-headed, sagacious men, such men as build a state; hopeless, broken, disappointed men, who have made this city of hope their last resort; gamblers, parasites, bartenders, agitators, self-seekers, haters of men and haters of organization, impossibles, men uncontrolled and uncontrollable, of every nation and with every dialect of the civilized world—and of uncivilized worlds also;—the most cosmopolitan of all American towns, the one fullest of the joy of living, the one least fearful of future disaster, “serene, indifferent to fate,” thus her own poets have styled her, and on no other city since the world began has fate, unmalicious, mechanical and elemental, wrought such a terrible havoc. In a day this city has vanished; the shock of a mighty earthquake forgotten in an hour in the hopeless horror of fire; homes, hotels, hospitals, hovels, libraries, museums, skyscrapers, factories, shops, banks and gambling dens, all blotted out of existence almost in the twinkling of an eye; millionaires, beggars, dancers and workers, men great and small, foolish and courageous, with their women and children of like natures with them, fleeing together by the thousands and hundreds of thousands to the hills and the sand-dunes, where on the grass and the shifting sands they all slept together or were awake together in the old primal equality of life. Never since man began to plan and to create has there been such a destruction of the results of human effort. Never has a great calamity been met with so little repining. Never before has the common man shown himself so hopeful, so courageous, so sure of himself and his future. For it is the man, after all, that survives and it is the will of man that shapes the fates.

It is the lesson of earthquake and fire that man cannot be shaken and cannot be burned. The houses he builds are houses of cards, but he stands outside of them and can build again. It is a wonderful thing to build a great city. Men can do this in a quarter century, working together each at his own part. More wonderful still is it to be a city, for a city is composed of men, and now, ever and forever the man must rise above his own creations. That which is in the man is greater than all that he can do.

“Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud
Under the bludgeonings of chance,
My head is bloody but not bowed.



Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul!"