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# SEARCH FOR FREEDOM

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I wanted somebody to blame for the situation; somebody besides the laborers themselves, and I became a very acceptable writer on an antagonistic plane of effort.

I believed that certain social and political reform was all that was necessary to enable men and women to rise in the scale of being, to much higher positions of thought and action than have ever yet been attained. And so I worked for the accomplishment of this end. That is, I did my little best for it. I was an unknown writer, and my influence was small; but I was in earnest and put my whole soul in my work, believing in it with great fervency.

But at every step I was disappointed: The people themselves for whom I was laboring were the greatest disappointment of all. They were dead to any sense of power within themselves, and were only alive to what they considered their wrongs. No thoughts of a higher intellectual growth stimulated them in their effort to obtain greater financial independence. Their ideas of liberty—if gratified—would lead in the direction of unbridled license. They knew nothing of freedom in the true sense of the word. They had no idea that their fetters were of their making, no less than their masters, and were all to be resolved into one

ment, the remembrance of him, his splendid manhood, his loyalty to his highest convictions of truth, and, indeed, his whole mentality would always stand before me in justification of my unshaken faith in the godhood of man.

I am conscious now that Major Smith himself was also losing interest in the people for whom he was laboring so faithfully; but at the time I went off the paper, he did not know it. He was still putting every effort of his strong, great life into his work, regardless of the fact that those for whom he thought and labored and sacrificed were so irresponsive and unthankful. He went out of the paper later, and has since applied his fine business ability to building up another enterprise, which has been wonderfully successful.

But when I left the *Express* he was displeased. He had the right to think me ungrateful. My action must have looked so to him. But I could not remain in the work. It is true that I was then incapable of analyzing the impulse which prompted me so powerfully to abandon it forever. I only recognized the impulse, and I was obedient to it.

I had come to feel my work degrading to the higher possibilities of my brain, although I was unable to get

be broken. Nothing should hold the outward-bound soul, and nothing could hold me. I would be free.

What a compelling force the ideal is! And yet on that November morning I had no glimpse of the ideal that usually presented so many allurements for attracting me from sober duty. It was simply the fact that I had reached the end of another experience, and must quit, and prospect for the beginning of the line of travel that did, undoubtedly, unite with it, and that I was willing to trust blindly in an effort to find.

I sat at my desk deliberately reasoning out the situation. Major Smith had spoken of my bread and butter as being involved in my new effort. I thought about this, and anathematized the suggestion. "What do I care for bread and butter unless it feeds me to the actualization of higher and better hopes?" I said. "I don't want bread and butter except on my own terms. I don't want life on its present inharmonious plane. If there is to be nothing better in it than I have seen and felt, then it may close to-day for all I care."

As I write these words I go back to that time; and I still believe the logic I then used to be one of the truest bits of wisdom that a growing soul can adopt. I did really lose all fear of want as completely as if

to my room and to pen and paper. I was fired by my sense of freedom; and what I wrote must have found an echo in hundreds of imprisoned spirits; for that article made my paper a success.

Late in the afternoon my landlord came to my room, embarrassed, but resolute. He wanted to know how matters stood.

"Have you been discharged by the chief?"

"No, I discharged myself. I am not going to be anybody's hired man any longer."

"Is your bread insured?"

"I don't concede your right to question me, but I believe I am glad you take the liberty. My bread is insured."

"How?"

"I am going to start a paper of my own, and I am going to make it a success. Sit down while I read you the first article I have written for it."

He did so, and I read the article. The subject was "I."

It was a wonderful article. I am sure of this from the effect it produced—not only on my landlord—but on others. It was a declaration of individuality; it would have been a protest against bonds, but for the fact that it sounded notes of freedom far above all

pleased with it that several times I got up in the night to look at it. I took it to the lithographer and had a plate made. It was sent to me by a boy several days later without the bill.

When my writing was quite finished I went to the largest publishing house in the city and ordered twenty thousand copies of the paper, to be delivered at my rooms on a certain day.

In the meantime I was addressing wrappers as fast as I could, and making other preparations for mailing sample copies.

On the third day after they were mailed I got \$11.00 on subscription. This was wealth. The next day brought more. Not long afterwards a rich man in Boston sent me a check for \$250.00. Another sent \$25.00, and others from \$5.00 to \$10.00. It was the clarion tones of that article on the "I," that caught the public. I wish I had the article now; but I have lost it. I have written several articles since then on the same subject, but the pure bell metal was lacking in the tone of all of them. Not one produced the effect that the first one did.

It was the mood I was in that made the first one what it was. I was free; for the time being I had achieved an extraordinary height in human experience,

exist in the human organism, and that time, introspection and patient effort will develop it.

And if developed, what then? This question did not face me for immediate solution. It was a question that shaped itself in the years that followed. Neither did it actually begin with the experience I have recorded. There were years of close observation and earnest, though broken and disjointed thought that led up to it.

I wonder now how far back it was when I conceived the idea that man had it in him to conquer all things, even death? It must have been born with me. It made me a physical coward and a mental hero. This seemed a great misfortune for a long time. But now when life is passing completely from a belief in the physical to a belief in the mental, it will be a misfortune no longer.

For years after I left the church I kept reading the Bible, with the belief that I could find a new meaning to it. I went through it again and again. At last I thought I saw that it held the concentrated hopes of many ages, all pointing to the time when man should overcome death. And I concluded that this was why it was preserved as holy writ. It was the vital spark of a hundred dead generations, going forward to rein-



it. In his conception we perceive the dawn; the great truth in its earliest effort to come forth through a mentality not yet grown big enough to give birth to it in its fullness.

"Where there's a will there's a way." To put the broadest construction upon this old adage, knocks down all the bars in existence, and liberates man to the freedom of the universe. We have the will. The will is prophecy of the way. The will could not exist if the way did not. The two are co-relative; they are the Siamese twins of advancement.

To describe briefly our present effort in this place will close the volume.

We are here to learn, and we are here to teach. We have made some marked improvements in the place already, and more are contemplated. It is our intention to build a school that will take pupils of all ages from the baby of the Kindergarten up to the gray-headed student of life's forces and prospects; for the gray head is as much of a baby in his capacity of farther unfoldment on the present side of life as the baby is. Age is no abridgement to any person's chances, if he will only begin to do his own thinking. The awakening of the reasoning powers, and the direction of them toward the investigation of man,

through which all may pass—if they choose to learn how to do so—into higher conditions of existence than they now deem possible. It is a doorway from the entire realm of the world's past dim, uncertain, but always belittling, beliefs of itself, into a realm of unbroken personal consciousness of such potency as to destroy utterly all cognition of those shadows upon human intelligence called disease, old age and death.

People cannot make this change without knowing how to do it; and the establishment of this school is to teach them how. It will be a school for the higher education of the race. Teachers will be educated here who will go out in the world to establish branch schools like the parent institution.

When one looks abroad over the entire social organization of the race, he cannot fail to see how the old and effete beliefs of ages of past ignorance are bolstered up.

This system of bolstering up is a perfect thing in its way, and it would be difficult to improve on it. Look at the schools and colleges all over the land for the sole use of perpetuating the old, dead ideas; look at the thousands of churches with their ministers and their wealth, that meet Sunday after Sunday for the exclusive purpose of preventing the birth of free and original thought.

How long would it be before the whole world would blossom upward toward the sun of all intelligence in a way to produce the fruit of perfect righteousness (rightness) throughout every department of life, if the vast machinery of the present system of organized effort for the perpetuation of useless creeds were devoted to the attempt to bring forth the undeveloped capacity of the race?

This mighty capacity is the unknown quantity waiting solution in order to bring all the broken cords of life into harmony and establish heaven here on earth.

Who cares for a heaven of the future? Who does not know that so far as practical happiness is concerned that there is no future? We only have what each moment yields. We may look forward toward the future, but the thoughts thus projected out of ourselves weaken us in the present, and bring the future no nearer. To live each moment as it passes is the only way to live; all else is life deferred, ending in death.

But this sketch of my "Search for Freedom" is nearing its close. Have I found what I have been searching for?

Yes I have. I am emancipated from every belief

seeking happiness. At least, we did not know that they were seeking it right here and now; but they are. We thought they were denying themselves present happiness for the sake of laying up treasures in heaven; but we were mistaken. It is becoming natural for them to draw away from promises for the future in order to get more out of the present than they have ever yet had; and so the charm of a place that acknowledges the pursuit of happiness as its highest claim is making itself felt far and near; and all the people who come here speak of the health-giving element they find in the atmosphere, and tell how every moment seems fraught with power and blessing.

At present our town is called Sea Breeze; but after a while we shall give it another name. As citizens of the only spot on earth devoted to a search for happiness right here in this world and right now, it surely deserves a better name, and when the improvements we are making shall have ripened into beauty commensurate with the natural beauty of the place, we will accept the name that even now by a sort of general consent is being bestowed upon it—that of "The City Beautiful." The two words "happiness" and "beauty" are our beacon lights. Every effort we