

EVERY
MAN
HAS HIS
OWN
University

RUSSELL H. CONWELL

Copyright © 2024 IQ Self LLC. All rights reserved.

This work has entered the public domain due to copyright expiration or other applicable laws. It is being republished for public use and distribution. While this work is in the public domain, this specific edition and any additional content or annotations may be protected. Unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or transmission of these protected elements in any form is strictly prohibited. All rights reserved for such protected content.

The information in this document is provided in good faith and believed to be accurate. The reader assumes all responsibility for any consequences arising from the use or misuse of this information. The publisher and authors disclaim any liability for damages or losses, direct or indirect, resulting from the use of this content. All copyrights not explicitly held by the publisher belong to the respective authors, except for content that has entered the public domain.

This document's public domain content may be freely used, modified, and distributed. However, any protected elements (such as new annotations or additional content) are for personal use only. Modification, distribution, sale, quotation, or paraphrasing of any protected content without explicit consent from the copyright holder is forbidden. Violations may result in legal action.

Legal Disclaimer: The publisher shall not be held liable for any damages or losses, direct or indirect, arising from the use of the information contained in this document. Readers assume all risks associated with the utilization of the content. The publisher disclaims any warranties, expressed or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, or reliability of the information presented. The content in this document does not constitute professional advice in any field.

Readers acknowledge that the publisher is not providing legal, financial, medical, or other professional services. By accessing this document, the reader agrees that the publisher is not responsible for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies within the content. It is the reader's responsibility to seek qualified professional advice before making decisions based on the information provided.

Readers also agree to indemnify and hold harmless the publisher from any claims, losses, or damages resulting from their use of the information. Any modifications, distribution, or sale of protected content without explicit consent from the copyright holder is strictly prohibited. Violations may lead to legal action. This document is intended for educational and entertainment purposes only.

Note: This document presents an abridged version of "Every Man His Own University" by Russel H. Conwell for the sake of conciseness, focusing on the key themes and principles while maintaining the essence of the original work.

Table Of Contents

I. Every Man His Own University	3
II. ANIMALS AND "THE LEAST THINGS"	11
III. THE BOTTOM RUNG	18
IV. HOME READING	24
V. THOUGHTFULNESS	33
VI. INSTINCTS AND INDIVIDUALITY	38

I. EVERY MAN'S UNIVERSITY

A distinct university walks about under each man's hat. The only man who achieves success in the other universities of the world, and in the larger university of life, is the man who has first taken his graduate course and his post-graduate course in the university under his hat.

There observation furnishes a daily change in the curriculum. Books are not the original sources of power, but observation, which may bring to us all wide experience, deep thinking, fine feeling, and the power to act for oneself, is the very dynamo of power.

Without observation, literature and meditation are shower and sunshine upon unbroken soil. Only those schools and colleges are true schools and colleges which regard it as the chief business of all their teaching to persuade those under their charge to see more perfectly what they are looking at, to find what they should have been unable to observe had it not been for their school instruction.

You can't make a good arrow from a pig's tail, and you can seldom get a man worth while out of one who has gone through the early part of his life without having learned to be alert when things are to be seen or heard. John Stuart Blackie says that it is astonishing how much we all go about with our eyes wide open and see nothing, and Doctor Johnson says that some men shall see more while riding ten miles upon the top of an omnibus, than some others shall see in riding over the continent.

How to observe should be the motto, not only in the beginning of our life, but throughout our career. With the same intellectual gifts, interested in the same ideas, two men walk side by side through the same scenery and meet the same people.

One man has had much inspiration from the country traversed, and has been intent upon all that he has seen and heard among the people. The other has caught no inspiration from beauty or bird or blossom, and only the trivialities of the people have amused him.^[1]

A traveler in Athens or Rome, Paris or London, may be shown these cities by a professional guide, and yet gain only a smattering of what these cities hold in store for him, and remember little of what he has seen. Another traveler, unattended by a guide, but observant of everything that comes to his eyes and ears, will carry away stores from his visit to those cities, which shall be of life-long interest and be serviceable to all who shall travel his way.

The solitary but observant stranger in a country almost always profits most from his travels. He is compelled to notice boulevards and buildings, parks and people; and every day of his travels is a lesson in observation that accustoms him to remember all he has once seen. The newspaper correspondents of other days had no guide-books or guides, and they were entire strangers in the places they visited.

They relied entirely upon themselves to find their way, and to discover everything that was valuable and interesting. They found much that the modern guide either overlooks or disregards, and wrote for the papers at home what would most interest and instruct their readers.

When Henry M. Stanley first visited Jerusalem he insisted that the dragoman in charge of his party should keep all guides and guide-books out of his sight. In two days Stanley knew the streets and the location of the Temple and the Holy Sepulcher and all the notable places in that old city.

If Stanley is to-day known as one of the most intelligent of travelers, it is mainly because he excelled in daily observation, which every one who thinks for himself recognizes as the supreme acquisition of a liberal education. He often said that he knew Rome, Naples, and Vienna far better than he knew New York, where he had lived many years of his life.

In that he resembled the rest of humanity, who generally know less about what is notable in their home places, than observant visitors know who stay there only a short time during their travels. What we pay for in time and labor seems more valuable—nothing pay, nothing value.

A great foreign correspondent of his day, Henry W. Chambers, remained only six hours at Baalbek, near Damascus; yet he wrote the clearest description that probably ever was written of the magnificent temples at Baalbek—and he wrote these descriptions, too, at Hong-Kong, after many and varied experiences while visiting other places of greater importance.

Many archeologists and literary men before him had visited the moat of the great fortress at Baalbek. Still, they had never observed as Chambers observed, and so they missed seeing the arrow-heads and all the other warlike instruments used in those ancient days, which had lain unnoticed among those huge pillars and great foundation-stones.

Although General Lew Wallace lived a long time at Jerusalem, he only imagined that there might have been an inner dungeon underneath the great prison; so when he wrote Ben Hur he put his leprous heroine into this imaginary prison-house.

A school-teacher from northern England, with her tourist-candle, afterward found the doorway of this prison which Wallace had only imagined to be there. On their way from Egypt and Palestine to the Euphrates, travelers had for centuries passed over the same path in the desert; but it was reserved for a cutter of marble inscriptions, after all these centuries, to observe the Rosetta Stone, by the help of which archeologists can now read the inscriptions upon the tablets in the ancient palaces of Babylon and Ninevah.

Millions and millions had seen the lid of a teakettle bobbing up and down over the boiling water before that Scotchman, Watt, observed it while making watches. But he was the first of all those millions whose close observation led him to investigate this force of boiling water in the teakettle.

Then he applied this power to the steam-engine, which is still the great propelling force of the world. From the time of the Garden of Eden apples had fallen in the orchards of the world, through all the harvest-days. Of all the billions that had seen apples falling, only Sir Isaac Newton observed the law of gravitation that was involved in their falling.

All the great discoverers began with nearly the same meager powers for observation that the rest of the world has, but early in life came to value above all other mental powers this incalculable power to closely notice; and each made his realm of observation much richer for his discoveries.

Why do the majority of us go through life seeing nothing of the millions of marvelous truths and facts while only a few keep their eyes and ears wide open and every day are busy in piling up what they have observed!

The loss of our instincts seems to be the price we pay to-day for the few minor acquisitions we get from school and college; we put out our brains to make room for our learning. The man who assiduously cultivates his powers of observation and thus gains daily from his experiences what helps him to see farther and clearer everything in life that is worth seeing, has given himself a discipline that is much more important than the discipline of all the schools and the colleges without it.

The greatest text-books of the greatest universities are only the records of the observations of some close observer whose better powers of seeing things had been acquired mainly while he was taking his courses in that university under his hat.

The intellect is both telescope and microscope; if it is rightly used, it shall observe thousands of things which are too minute and too distant for those who with eyes and ears neither see nor hear.

The intellect can be made to look far beyond the range of what men and women ordinarily see; but not all the colleges in the world can alone confer this power—this is the reward of self-culture; each must acquire it for himself; and perhaps this is why the power of observing deeply and widely is so much oftener found in those men and those women who have never crossed the threshold of any college but the University of Hard Knocks.

The quickening power of science only he can know, from whose own soul it gushes free.

When we look back over our life and reflect how many things we might have seen and heard had we trained our powers of observation, we seem to have climbed little and to have spent most of our time upon plateaus, while our achievements seem little better than scratches upon black marble. Mankind has a greater esteem for the degrees conferred by the University of Observation and Experience than for all the other degrees of all other Universities in the world. The only thing that seems most to win the respect of real men and women for the degrees conferred by colleges is the fact that the graduates have first gained all that close observation and wide experience can confer.

The lives of the men and the women who have been worth while keep reminding us how vastly more important is this education from ceaseless observation than all the mere learning from school courses. It takes ten pounds of the stuff gotten from observation and experience to carry one pound of school learning wisely. The thinking man will never ask you what college you have gone through, but what college has gone through you; and the ability and habit of observing deeply and broadly is the preparation we all need that the college may go through us. Confucius of China, Kito of Japan, Goethe of Germany, Arnold of England, Lincoln and Edison of America, stand where they stand to-day in thought and action solely because they had in a masterly way educated their power of minute attention. In building up a huge business or in amassing enormous riches, such men as Rothschild, Rockefeller, and Carnegie show us especially how vitally important to all material success is steadfast attendance at the school of attention.

The colleges that to-day are advancing most rapidly in esteem are those which are recognizing more and more the importance of observation. They require their men to spend some portion of their college time in gaining experience in their various lines through observing the practical workings of their calling; medical students are in hospitals; students of law attend courts; theological students engage in mission work; and engineers are found in shops. Neither lectures nor speculations can take the place of these experiences; each is helpful to the other. When only one may be had, the experience from observing actual work is far more important. Opportunities for observation of practical matters, along with theory, is the modern idea toward which all the best modern institutions are tending in their efforts to fit men for the active business of life.

Nor has greatness from careful observation and large experience distinguished men of action alone. Shakespeare, Goethe, Bunyan, Burns, Whittier, Longfellow, James Whitcomb Riley, and a host of the great men of philosophy, science, and literature are where they are to-day in the esteem of their fellow men, and in their service to humanity, because they were the keenest among the men acute in observation.

[1] The failure to observe is strikingly proved by practical experiment in the psychological laboratory. Reproductions of a familiar or unfamiliar scene are placed in the observers' hands and they are instructed to study the reproductions carefully and to remember what they see. After 5 minutes careful study, the reproductions are taken away and a series of questions concerning them are put to the observers. The contradictory answers to these questions is strikingly eloquent of the all-too-human inability to observe. Hugo Munsterberg, the famous psychologist, made a number of psychological experiments to determine the limits of error in observation as these limits affect the credibility of witnesses in the court room. Some of his findings are summarized in "On the Witness Stand."

Your good newspaper reporter is a trained observer who describes exactly what he sees. Yet the manner in which even the trained observer fails to observe correctly is unfailingly demonstrated by the widely differing accounts of the same occurrence as reported in the various newspapers of a community.

One of the best ways to learn to observe correctly and in detail is to take a hasty glance at the display in a store window, pass on and attempt to recall that which you have seen, the number of objects, what they were, etc., and then check your observing faculties by returning to the window and listing its contents. Continued practice of this sort will greatly increase your observing powers. Perhaps the most famous known exponent of this method for training the observing faculties was Houdini, the famous magician, who describes the method in detail and his experiences in applying it in his memoirs.

II. ANIMALS AND "THE LEAST THINGS"

The benefits brought to humanity through the study of lower animal life are incalculable, and could not be told in one book. With all that vivisection and post-mortem dissection have revealed to scientific examiners, contagious and infectious diseases have been nearly removed from the human family.

We have been taught to live better from observing animal habits in searching for food, in building their habitats, in their mode of living, in their fear of man, and in the methods they adopt to preserve their health. All this knowledge has been gained for us, for the upbuilding of humanity, through the efforts of close observers.

They have studied the cat by the hearth, the dog by the door, the horses in the pasture and stall, the pigs in their pens, and the sheep in their folds. Closely associated with the investigators of animal life are those who have observed the origin, habits, and influence of birds, insects, and creeping things.

But what we have learned from animals in the past seems only a trifle in comparison with what they will teach when we go to them with more serious purpose and more carefully observe them. The leaders in all these investigations of animal life have all been distinguished for their power to discover in animals what has escaped other people.

Professor Darwin's close observation of the doves he fed at his door opened up to him important suggestions and laid the foundation for his great treatise, "The Origin of Species." When Professor Niles of the Boston School of Technology was a boy he caught a minnow while returning from school.

At his father's suggestion he put the fish into a simple aquarium and studied its movements. When it died he carefully examined its parts under a microscope—and this experience was the beginning of his vast knowledge of the animal realm.

While a Philadelphia clergyman was visiting a farmer in northern New Jersey, the family became perturbed because their dog had "gone mad." They fastened it in the kitchen and sought somebody to kill it by shooting at it through the window.

A neighbor observed the dog carefully and told them it was poisoned. He advised the family to loose it in order that it might get some antidote for itself in field or forest. He told them that cats, cattle, and horses are often compelled to find an antidote for some poisonous herb they have eaten, and that the animals know more about such things than any teacher in the medical schools.

As soon as the dog was unfastened, he hastened across the field to a brook and ate a weed that was growing beside the water. The dog soon returned to the house and ate heartily after a two weeks' fast.

The clergyman had followed the dog and observed the plant which it had eaten. After the dog had returned to the house he uprooted the plant and took some of its leaves to a Philadelphia firm of chemists. Acting upon the firm's advice, he sent the leaves to the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, and they were found to be a valuable antidote for poison. Not only was humanity given a better medicine from this discovery, but the clergyman also derived a competency from it. This remedy for poisoning is often used in prescriptions; so even doctors sometimes "go to the dogs" for instructions.

Like Professor Agassiz and Sir Oliver Lodge, many find their best instructors in domestic animals. The fowls around the house and the barn may be whole universities for developing the sciences. Through her dependence on nature the hen is a more efficient instructor than the majority of college professors. She knows by instinct so much of the laws of nature that wise men may sit at her feet or her bill and learn. Perhaps she may seem a little foolish in proclaiming her achievements in egg-laying by a cackle, but her knowledge of the necessities of life, her careful oversight of her brood, the way she uses her feet and her wings, her foreknowledge of approaching storms, her means of defending herself when attacked by hawks, her knowledge of the formation of the egg and of the proper time to break the shell for the release of her chick—all these are worthy of the attention of even the greatest scientists.

In an address at a poultry-men's convention, Oliver Wendell Holmes said that chickens seem to have in them much more to study than did Darwin's doves. While Holmes was once summering at Kennebunkport, Maine, he trained five chickens to come at his call, to fly upon his head, and to leap with open bills to catch a kernel of corn. Before the season closed the chickens would come to his bedroom even after he had retired—making it necessary, as Doctor Holmes said, for the landlord to serve them up for dinner.

Doctor Holmes's parody on Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life" shows what a careful observer he was. While some of Longfellow's admirers resented the parody as a slight, Longfellow himself always treated it as complimentary. He once told James T. Fields that, in one couplet of the parody, Holmes had excelled the entire original poem:

Not like muffled drums be beating
On the inside of the shell.

Longfellow told Fields that there are always millions of men standing like chickens in the shell, with wings they know not how to use, having calls to a larger life outside of which they can see nothing; that some peck away until dead on the inside of the shell, while others, assisted by a friend on the outside, step out into a life beautiful and complete.

In the egg or molecule we get nearer to God than we do through the telescope or by encircling the earth. He who lived nearest the first cause gets the best inspiration for visions of all greater sights or events; so the cottage is a happier place than the palace for him who wishes to get better acquainted with what shall arouse finer thought and feeling.

The cottage is the best preparatory school for the mansion, provided always that the cottage course has been thorough. He who has worn his cottage life with manly dignity shall be the man to wear his mansion life with composure. Emerson said, "the entire system of things gets represented in every particle."

Uneasy is the head that wears the crown, and unfortunate is the man who gets a smattering of many things yet does not know even one small thing thoroughly. The power of little things to give instruction and happiness should be the first lesson in life, and it should be inculcated deeply. The chief need of this discontented and sinful world is to comprehend that in one blade of grass or the shading of an evening cloud there is sufficient reverence to fill the largest heart, and sufficient science to occupy the greatest passion.

We saw a delicate blue flower in the grass this morning which I had never noticed before. It seemed a different flower from each angle and, when put under a magnifying-glass, had colors I had never noticed before in flower or art. The field where it was growing had been familiar to me for threescore years and ten, yet the flower was entirely new to me. It was so dainty and attractive and inspiring that I felt I had lost something important to my spiritual growth all these years—something like the experience of Virgil, Guizot, Carlyle, Grotius, or like Tennyson in the "Holy Grail," who declares that he had left a real and wonderful life behind to follow the unknown. This little flower in the morning sunlight awakes thoughts of years long past—of the faces of marshaled hosts of battle, of eyes deep and calm with the smile of a loving mother's welcome, of the great forgiveness in a father's affection.

Had I found that flower seventy years before, I believe my appreciation of the Divine Power would have been greater, my heart would have been more satisfied, my soul more fully illuminated and pervaded by a holier peace. We lose ourselves in all attempts to grasp the cause of which this small flower is the result. It is impossible to find words to convey the strange emotions which this newly found flower aroused, and to tell of the distant realms my imagination visited while I meditated there. If we would free ourselves from the perplexing cares which our daily duties demand; if we would forget the worries of each day; if the losses and disappointments and the wrongs of many years did not press themselves upon us; if the demands of many duties and the demands upon our attention and the calls of friends did not interrupt—we could find in contemplating this wee flower of the field a fund of happiness which years of sorrow and misfortune could not destroy.

Bacon and Burke and Niebuhr discovered how much of grandeur can come into a life from the little things about us, but they all discovered it when it was too late to go back and live the ideal life of simplicity and individuality which was suggested to them by a drop of water and a humming-bird. The smallest things are the largest in importance, if they bring into our lives the largest thoughts and feelings and an incentive to largest actions for self and humanity. Why are we forever looking upon the horizon for what upon closer view lies at our feet? These little beauties of the field rebuke the wanderer and the eminent man when it says to all the world, with a sweet smile and a dainty pout, "You could have found more in my life than has ever been learned from the sages."

While Zinzendorf was stranded nearly a year upon a tiny island, his vigorous mind was forced to occupy itself in observing the objects upon the shore; his examinations of the colors in the clam-shell led him to say later in life, at a meeting of philosophers, that a lifetime study of these colors should develop more of the beautiful than all the manufactured color combinations then known.

Art has not yet been able to combine the shades shown in the shell of an oyster, and the wings of the June bug have been enlarged and copied by colored photography, and will greatly influence all art hereafter. Man's needs shall be best supplied by beginning at the source and following the Creator in developing them into things of beauty and service.

Although the Agricultural Department at Washington spent eight million dollars in the study of seeds and their growth by sending experts to roam over the world for investigations, yet the observations of Luther Burbank and many like investigators in the agricultural colleges throughout the country have made many more important discoveries. Their observations have brought about a greater increase of production to the acre than all the results of those who roamed the earth for the Government, and no one would say that their work was not a fair investment for the nation.

Observation convinces us that the sooner we get down to the simplicities of life, the longer and healthier and nobler shall life become. The healthiest are those with one loaf and a natural hunger along with it.

The noblest lives are those who are anxious to become as divine as it is possible for them to be, are ever alert for little deeds of kindness. How much richer life the poet lives who can sympathize with the field-mouse, like Burns! Who is lifted heavenward by the fringed gentian, like Bryant? Who gets the messages of peace from the frosted pumpkin, like Riley?

Like Shakespeare, we too may "find tongues in trees, books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything," if we will but use our eyes for seeing, our ears for hearing, our heads for understanding, and our hearts for feeling. The Poor Man's University gives its courses everywhere, and no entrance examination is requisite other than a mind willing to concentrate upon the sublime objects which, by the million, lie within our vision.

III. THE BOTTOM RUNG

Almost every day of his life an American is reminded that "necessity is the mother of invention." It needs only a little reflection and observation to realize how much American youth are blessed in the examples of their countrymen who have come from the humblest stations in life and have risen through sheer pluck and perseverance to honor and helpfulness.

We are indebted mainly to the genius and the observation of poor men for the great inventions which have so much contributed to the comfort, the convenience, the cheerfulness, and the power of life. They have given us steam as a motive power, the locomotive, the telegraph, the typewriter, the telephone, the automobile, the victrola, the airship.

The great advances that have been made in agriculture through mowers, reapers, planters, and special seeds and fruits are entirely the results of their steadfast perseverance. Nobody ever earnestly reaches out for a thing until he feels that he needs it, consequently, the sons and daughters of the rich are seldom the benefactors of humanity in the way so many poor men and women have been through the inventions which have lightened the drudgery of millions of homes, as well as increased marvelously the productions of the soil and of the factory.

Had the talents of the rich been put to the test by hunger or cold or the many other incentives to vigorous thought and action which impel the poor, they also might have many inventions to their credit, for the longing of the normal soul furnishes the basis of all the worthy activities of life.

The greatest drawback for rich men's sons and daughters is in having all their wants supplied from the bank-account of indulgent parents. They are taught neither industry, economy, nor self-control, which often makes them a social menace. They lack appreciation for so many of the things in life which help to brighten the path of the poor, solely because they have never needed them.

A hungry boy who has stood on the outside of a bakery, clinging to a nickel and fighting a battle with himself whether to invest it in a bit of bread or to take it home to his mother, who has had neither breakfast nor dinner, fully understands the value of a dollar.

The superintendent of the Patent Office at Washington has confirmed the official report of the French Patent Office—that there has been no invention of especial value which has not been either found or improved upon by some poor man. The best life-preserver was invented by a sailor who had fallen overboard and had been nearly drowned.

An obscure native of a duchy bordered on three sides by powerful nations invented the quick-firing gun, which can fire six hundred shots while the ordinary gun is being loaded. It was a poor Cambridge machinist, whose family often suffered from lack of food, who invented the sewing-machine, which has changed the condition of home life throughout the world, and relieved women of one of their great household burdens.

The ship's chronometer was made practical for navigation by a man who had been lost at sea and despaired of ever again reaching the shore. The locomotive, which has contributed more than any other one thing to the spread of our people over our vast country, was given to the world by an Englishman, Stephenson, who in early life had been so poor that he had little schooling.

More than eight hundred agricultural inventions were patented in 1905 and 1906, and every one of them is the invention of some poor man or woman.

As inventors, women have in recent years become close competitors of men, and from kitchen utensils to floor covering have added much to home comfort and home furnishing. All the household articles exhibited lately in a large shop in Chicago were either invented or improved by women. They have invented many things for agriculture, for manufacturing, and for school furnishings—and not a few of the great patents which have been issued to men should have been issued to their wives.

Women have often awaked an idea which men have wrought out for practical purposes. The majority of the benefactors of the world made their discoveries to relieve some necessity which oppressed them personally. This is especially true of stock-breeding, where the improvements of observant men have so greatly increased the value of domestic animals.

The value of any study depends entirely upon what it has done for us and what we are doing with it. Lowell says that mere learning is as insignificant as the collection of old postage-stamps. Professor Virchow was obliged to try various foods in his experiments with his own cats, before he discovered what has ever since been of such benefit to all breeders of animals throughout the world.

From the earliest days the bee has offered a store of the most useful information, but it would never have been known had it not been for such patient observers as Huber, who, although blind, discovered more about bees than the world had ever known before his day, through the patient service of his wife and valet. The mouse in the field, the squirrel in the tree, the eagle in her nest, the fish in the brook, all have taught us valuable lessons in conduct. They have doubtless given hints which have enabled observant men to give mankind many a useful invention.

When we consider the many thousands of useful inventions which have added so much to the convenience and the happiness of life, and when we bring to mind how almost all of these have come from the humblest of the sons of men with none of the advantages of the so-called higher education, of which we hear so much to-day, we are forced to agree with Sir Walter Scott that the best part of every man's education is that which he gives himself independent of text-books other than the Book of Life.

Every real man and woman attends a school or college, not to learn, but to learn how to learn. This is the best work that schools of any description can do. It lays a firm foundation upon which the man who has learned how to learn can build his own superstructure. The men who have achieved success in the march of the ages are those who have been the architects of their own life.

Nobody cares a fig where we get our educational tools. The world is interested only in what we are doing with them. We must be self-made or never-made, whether we go to college or work in the fields. One teacher can be serviceable to a thousand of the sort who intend to make themselves, but a thousand teachers cannot help one of the other sort. Heredity and environment and will are the great deciding factors in every life.

Investigations as to the food values of meats, grains, fruits, vegetables, and other foods are now being made by the Government, by colleges, and other investigators. This is the movement of supreme importance for the uplift of humanity. But the most of this kind of investigating has been done in household kitchens. It is probable that many of the greatest discoveries as to food will hereafter be made in the same places by those who are inclined to observe. The need of closer scientific knowledge of the chemistry of digestion and the chemistry of food is vital; it should call forth the most self-sacrificing investigation.

It is said by those who have carefully studied the subject that ninety-one per cent. of all disease is attributable directly or indirectly to the stomach. Our ailments come mainly from our aliments. Nourishing food is an essential of a noble life. The stomach is the master of the house, and must be respected. A proper diet and a sound head are closely allied, and those who will rightly exercise their soul-powers must be watchful of the stomach.

Those who would rule and lead must have chest and stomach as well as head and will.

Nobody else has such opportunities for observing the effects of food, and for studying the happy results of nutritious food, as those have who prepare the meals in the kitchen. Proper nourishment is something which touches humanity on every side, and deserves the closest attention of the greatest minds. We can better afford to dispense with scientific experts in every other line which now engages them than to dispense with those who investigate the food question.

The idea among the myriads of American housekeepers, that it is ignoble drudgery to spend some of their time in their kitchens ministering to the health of those who are nearest and dearest to them and removing diseases from them through well-selected and well-cooked food, is being gradually overcome by many schools and colleges.

The sciences connected with food are now placed among the most important subjects in the curricula of these schools. It takes a master mind to handle the chemical combinations of the kitchen, which make hale and happy men and women, boys and girls.

Health is symmetry; disease is deformity; both are mainly the result of what we eat.

Food has killed more than the sword in every age, and is perhaps killing more to-day than ever before. Achievement in soul-growth and material-growth is involved in the question of proper food. If women forsake the throne that rightly belongs to the cook, men must assume it or Christian civilization shall cease.

To-day nobody can become so supreme a benefactor of humanity as the man or the woman who devotes intellect and all other power to the study of scientific eating. When we come rightly to understand all the vital questions that are involved in nutrition, we shall feel that the kings among men and the queens among women are to be sought in no higher place than in kitchens.

We are forever searching among the stars to discover kings, when they are far oftener found in cottages in the valley.

If universities fail to make the knowledge of the right nutrition practical and fail to bring it down where humble men and women may get it and apply it, the fault is their own. Someday a people grateful for the health they enjoy may elect a man to the Presidency of our nation, or set him upon some throne, because he is the best scientific cook in the land. Doctor Agnew of Philadelphia said that he had gained his most important knowledge of hospital work as an adviser of the dietitians while feeding his dog and his cat.

In speaking of the discovery of radium by Madame Curie, Professor Virchow said that he had often felt that our investigators had not taken sufficient notice of the force of animal electricity. The few experiments already made in applying to machinery electricity generated by the human body has opened up a field for observant scientists.

In many ways both birds and beasts contribute to the welfare of humanity, and the observing thinker will still find many more ways in which he can aid us. All forms of life can be harnessed to the car of civilization, and far more effective work shall be done than is being done to-day. As teachers and as subjects of practical investigation, animals supply a great university which almost every man and woman can attend.

IV. HOME READING

Carlyle says that a collection of books is a true university in these days. It might be added that often the smaller the collection the larger shall be the university.

Education derived from libraries is unsafe, for book-dissipation, as well as drunkenness, ends in debauchery. Toward the end of his long and wide-awake life Doctor Holmes advised a young correspondent to confine his reading to the Bible, Shakespeare, and a good dictionary.

The list of men who have been lifted to higher regions of thought and feeling and action from reading any one of these three would be too long to be compressed within the covers of one book. Books are like two-edged swords—dangerous unless one knows how to use them; they either lead up or drag down, and we sink or rise to the level of the books we read.

Every one reads, but how many read to advantage? Goethe, the greatest of all the very greatest Germans, said, "I have been learning how to read for the past fifty years, but have not yet succeeded."

The majority of readers resemble hour-glasses—their reading runs in and out, and leaves no traces; and some others are like housewives' jelly-bags—they pass all that is good, and retain only the refuse. At best, only a small percentage of our life is spent in school; the greater part of the remainder each must pass in the University of Daily Life, where our education is derived from experience gained through close observation in daily contact with our fellows, and from the fellowship of books.

Fellowship fits the relation perfectly, for there must be intimate intercourse such as this word implies, or nothing. It is with books as with life—a man profits little from being merely acquainted with ten thousand, and he may be incalculably injured from his intercourse with them; but a few choice friends—often the fewer the better—bring a steady growth of higher spiritual power greater than can be had from all other influences combined.

So it is with books. Acquaintance with a thousand often renders a capable man impotent. But a few choice friends with whom he frequently and earnestly communes lift him in strength of intellect and will and tenderness and sweetness of feeling to be the peer of the worthiest.

The beginning of New England was the golden age of scholarship in America, for many of the founders of these colonies had been reared in English universities. Such was the struggle in these bleak and barren colonies for existence during the first years, that in a few generations the majority of their posterity were strangers to almost all the books of power and knowledge with which their forefathers were acquainted, and were forced to glean all they harvested from the Bible and the almanac—especially the almanac.

The almanac was eagerly perused by every member of the family from the dawn of the year to its setting. The reputed thrift of the plain people in this corner of the great world is largely attributable to the lessons of the almanac—mainly Poor Richard's Almanac, which the Bostonian, Franklin, annually edited in Philadelphia for over a quarter of a century. His chief purpose was to drive home forcibly many lessons which might encourage the colonists to get the most out of their hard and isolated lives.

Peabody, the successful man of business and munificent philanthropist, said that an almanac and a jack-knife were the foundation of the education through which he ultimately did so much good for multitudes of his countrymen.

It should be interesting and instructive to know how many more, during the "jack-knife epoch" in New England and the generations since that time, have been indebted to one book for the pluck and perseverance by which they have carved out a place of honor for themselves. Never were books so eagerly, so often, and so carefully read as these poor almanacs. Never, perhaps, has any other book except the Bible been so potent an influence in shaping the life of a nation and shaping it to a high place among the nations, whose beneficent influences have humanized the world. Many a writer has reminded us that the almanac was the text-book studied by our ancestry in beginning the enormous agricultural, commercial, mercantile, manufacturing, and financial interests which in four generations have placed us in front of the richest nations of the earth.

Think of the many millions of dollars invested in library-buildings and the many millions more invested in the books they shelter! Think of the five hundred millions spent annually in public education, and the hundreds of millions that have been put into college buildings and college breeding!

Still, from all this stupendous investment there will never come men and women who will make any more out of their learning than thousands of men and women of colonial days who knew the contents of no books other than the Bible and the almanac.

The quality of the literary attainment of those reared in a library may be higher—and perhaps not; but wider and deeper self-knowledge, self-respect, self-confidence, self-culture, self-control, are the supreme objects of all life-struggle and educational struggle. Where a man gets the educational tools with which to accomplish all this is not at all important.

If an almanac can help one man to get the same life-result as another man gets from the polishing of the greatest universities in the world, the almanac is the peer of the university.

Whether materials as insignificant as the almanac have been used to attain just such results, the history of our country and of several other countries can readily prove. Three books made up the library of Lincoln, the rail-splitter, of Edison and Carnegie, the telegraph operators; but no three men of the nation were ever more successful in reaching the goals they set for themselves.

Books are to-day the great universal means of knowing, and knowing them depends upon reading them rightly. It is not so important how many books we read, but how we read them. A well-read fool is one of the most pestilential of blockheads. One book read avails more than a thousand skimmed.

Little reading and much thinking make a wise man; much reading and little thinking has bred the race which the plain people call "learned fools," and these are mainly responsible for any ridicule that is put upon the work of school and college.

In these days when the printing-press has largely superseded the pulpit and the platform, it is vitally important that men shall be taught how to read rightly and shall be helped to habits of right reading; and no school or college that is decently interested in the welfare of the people can disregard this one duty of teachers above all others.

Much of the best in thought and feeling and conduct shall depend hereafter upon the books which we read with careful observation. Every man who has read himself into higher realms is under bonds to make the source of so much bliss and blessedness as admirable and as desirable as possible to all who are strangers to the most pleasant and profitable paths of literature.

It is not the quantity of our reading, but the quality that makes it and us an influence for good to our fellows. A man who has read ten pages with real accuracy, says John Ruskin, is forevermore in some measure an educated person.

You might read all the books in the British Museum, yet be an utterly illiterate and uneducated person. Our reading without digestion and assimilation is as useless as our food without them. Bacon says that reading makes a full man; but fullness without digestion is dyspepsia.

The books whose reading impels us to live nobly and do noble service for others, are the books, and it is a wicked waste of time to read what is a negative quantity. Whoever masters one vital book can never become commonplace.

Thoroughness is the master-passion in reading, as in every other undertaking. Those who have accumulated wisdom, culture, power, riches, are always prominent for their indefatigable, painstaking thoroughness; nothing to them is a trifle, for "trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle." Those who have thought most and felt most and done most from their reading have brought this master passion to it.

When we begin to become acquainted with all the worthy men and women who trace the beginning of their worth to the careful reading of one book, it seems almost a loss to the world to have the libraries of the world so large.

If they were all respectable occupants of their shelves, it might be condoned; but the copyright of millions of books is the only right, human or divine, for their existing at all. Many a country boy at the fireside during the long winter evenings has received inspiration from repeatedly reading one or two worthy books; these have spurred him on to fight his way valiantly through college, and from there to the heights in some worthy life-work.

If we are true to all that manhood involves, there is no self-deception in the conviction that each one of us is born for kingship. Supreme kingship "consists in a stronger moral state and a truer thoughtful state than that of other men, which enables us to guide and raise the misguided and the illiterate." Every thoughtful man and woman ultimately discovers that "all education and all literature are useful only so far as they confirm this calm and beneficent kingly power." Emerson's "man-thinking" is the supreme among human beings.

The best that can be known and experienced lies asleep in books, and one of the chief purposes for getting an education is to give us the well-made head and the finer feeling to awake this best knowledge and experience in these sleeping princes.

De Quincey reminds us that all the greatest books may be divided into the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. They have all been written in utmost sincerity by the right-minded and the strong-minded; they disclose boundless fields for soul-refreshment and soul-expansion.

In the march of civilization, the men and the nations that have forged farthest ahead since Gutenberg invented printing are the men and the nations that have had most to do with the few books of knowledge and power of the greatest and the wisest.

There can be no better test of a man's thought and feelings and actions than the books he reads and the books he keeps around him; and there is none so desolate as the poor rich man who lives in a great bookless house, and "has never fed upon the dainties that are bred in books," as John Milton says.

The very presence of books is refining, and the right kind of man would as soon think of building his house without windows as of furnishing it without books. In every well-regulated home of intelligent men and women the library is always one of the annual items of expenditure.

When we have learned how to consult the books of knowledge and power, they let us mingle with the best society of all ages; they make the mightiest men and women of words and deeds our advisers; they bring us the gold of learning and the gems of thought; and they furnish us with the soul-food which brings the proper kind of soul-growth.

Such books are the safest of companions, for they protect us from vice and the inferior passions; more than ever they are to-day indispensable for all who are striving to do the higher work of civilization and Christianity.

Every real book we really read gives us greater faith in the goodness and the nobility of life. As Lowell says, "Adds another block to the climbing spire of a great soul." The other sort which "swarm from the cozy marshes of immoral brains," the sort also who "rack their brains for lucre," do the devil's work for him, and are as baneful as the company of fools and vulgarians.

Show an observant man your bookshelves, and he'll tell you what you are. The man who does not love some great book is not worth the time we spend in his company; we are fortunate if we are not in some way contaminated by him.

If we knew the road they have traveled, we should likely find that those of modern times who have merited the crown of kings and queens for their stronger moral state and their truer thoughtful state have had most to do with some literature of knowledge and power; that they especially oftenest consulted the books of the greatest and wisest in their difficulties, and had been spurred on by their messages to the thoughts and the deeds which made them worthy.

It is fortunate that to-day the greatest of books are the common property of the printers of the world, for they are on this account the cheapest, and many of them can be had for the price of a poor man's dinner.

It needs many a page to record even the names of the men and women who have become somebody and have done something just from reading some one worthy book which had fallen into their hands. Many believe that Franklin is the greatest American that has yet appeared, and he has said that "Cotton Mather's essays to do good gave me a turn of thinking which, perhaps, had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life."

As we become better acquainted with some of the great books in all departments of literature, we are surprised to find how few of them have been written by college men. This by no means belittles the good that may come from a true college course, but it does seem to emphasize that great books need some other environment for their growth than exclusive college courses.

Perhaps the need is solitude, communion with nature, and frequent intercourse with the world's greatest and best in thought and feeling and action for the work. College-bred men are in a marked minority among the authors whose great books have been and are a potent force in shaping thought and conduct in the world.

It is notable how few of these have anything commendatory to say about the influence which their college life had upon them and their accomplishments; many even of the text-books of schools and colleges have come from men whose powers were shaped by no school. How many text-books of medicine and law were prepared by physicians and lawyers whose knowledge was gleaned mainly from keen observation and long experience and deep thought!

It was no mere college education, but the sharpest home observation and strictest adherence to their instincts and their individuality that made forceful writers of Mark Twain, the Mississippi pilot; Bret Harte and William Dean Howells, the typesetters; James Whitcomb Riley, the itinerant sign-painter; Joel Chandler Harris and Eugene Field, the newspaper reporters; and Walt Whitman, the carpenter.

Of the four thousand and forty-three Americans with over twenty millions of dollars to their credit, only sixty-one had even a high-school course. Many among them, however, had high-class mentality and secured a comprehensive practical education.

They have evidently been as alert to perceive the treasures hidden for them in the world of great books as they have been to perceive the treasures hidden for them in their various enterprises. So we find that they have consulted the master spirits of books after their daily tasks were done, while myriads of those who scoff and sneer at them now because of their millions were feasting, frolicking, and dissipating.

Among the highest types of American manhood to-day a large majority are the new-rich men. Whatever else may be said about them, all the world acknowledges that it is the parvenus in every land who do the largest part of the greatest work.

The larger our horizon becomes, the stronger is our conviction that the man himself is mainly the architect of his own fate; others may give an occasional lift, but it is almost entirely his own work.

The college can do something for the head-piece, and it should also give something for the heart-side and the power to dare and to do; but all the external training in the world can never attain for the man what he can attain through his own individual efforts—provided he has lofty aims, firm resolutions, closely observes, and strictly adheres to all his best inborn powers.

There was no college for David, Homer, Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Alexander, Cæsar, Dante, Luther, Shakespeare, Napoleon, Washington, Franklin, Goethe, Jesus, and tens of thousands of great or lesser men than these. They all marked out their own course, planned their own spiritual palaces; all the barbed-wire entanglements in the world did not retard their indomitable courage, self-reliance, and self-help.

Perhaps the chief use of all learning establishments, except those which have to do with what the Germans call bread studies, is to awaken the pupil's self-respect, which is the basis of all virtue, and to cultivate the powers that shall fit the pupil to consult for himself the knowledge and power books of the greatest and the wisest.

They also can in these days do yeoman's service in giving the bread studies through which men shall be better able to do the world's work and thereby earn better wages.

V. THOUGHTFULNESS

President Wolsey, head of a great university, said that one of the chief purposes of the college is to cultivate the power to think. The college man who neglects to cultivate this valuable power until he enters upon his college career, instead of beginning it in the kindergarten and continuing it unremittingly throughout his entire preparatory course and daily living, will be liable to make sorry work of this part of his cultivation, or any other part, while he is in college.

The specialists who teach in colleges, and who are generally more interested in their specialties than in the science and art of education, may not be conscious of this, and yet the many educational wrecks that have come from colleges should long ago have brought this point most forcibly to their attention.

Indeed, the power to think and the practice of thinking until it has become second nature, are so essential for success in any worthy career in life, that it is truer to say that one of the chief purposes of life itself is to cultivate and exercise the power to think, and keep right on thinking until close thinking shall become a habit.

The power to think clearly, broadly, and successfully is not necessarily the prerogative of those only who have lived in a college environment, as the biographies of our own four thousand multi-millionaires in this country so cogently prove, for few of them ever darkened the doors of a college.

Some among them may have been bereft of all the nobler sentiments for which Christianity and America stand, but they never could have piled up their millions in every department of activity without having thought so long and so hard that they ultimately acquired a habit of thinking that should put to shame myriads in every land who have had all the advantages of universities. The power to think, and to think in a masterly way, need not be confined to the professor's chair. Any sphere of action which does not bring in to the worker an increase of thinking power is harmful, from university to street-sweeping.

A machine is the only worker that can do its work well without thinking about it. All the successful men the world has ever known have been men who thought incessantly; they have been mainly self-educated in their extraordinary power to think; their success in all the various tasks which they set for themselves oftener resulted from their hard thought than from their hard work.

Defeat and failure have never overtaken the man whose head and hands were partners.

When we think without work or work without thought, we reach only half of what belong to us. A man should especially ween himself from this kind of halfness. We should be ashamed to find ourselves working without thought, as we should be ashamed to find ourselves idle in a world where there is always so much to be done and so little time allotted to each for accomplishing worthy work.

The employees that are most valuable to their employers and are most valued by them are those always whose heads and hands are yoke-mates. When hands and head and heart are on the job, it is difficult to imagine what heights of success and service shall be attained. The farmer boy hoeing corn and digging potatoes will do better work in quantity and quality if he thinks about his work as hard as he hoes or digs.

There can be little danger of failure for any young man who begins his life-work with the resolution that he will always give his best thought to even the most insignificant task that he assumes; and all the schools in the world cannot furnish him any advantage that can compare with this resolution steadily followed. Nor must the habit of thinking be exercised only upon work.

We all have more leisure than work, and many a high-minded thinker has reminded us that a man is best to be judged, not by his profession, but by his leisure. Elihu Burritt acquired a knowledge of fifty languages during the years he earned his livelihood as a village blacksmith; he also found time for extensive reading as well as time for interest in social reforms, in the advancement of which he won the reputation of being one of the most powerful and persuasive orators of his day.

All his stupendous acquirements were gained during the hours between his tasks which thousands of other village blacksmiths were accustomed to spend in gossip or in the tavern.

Volumes could be filled with only brief accounts of the men and women throughout the ages who have made the world better for their living, just because they wisely and thoughtfully employed the leisure hours which their contemporaries trifled away. The shortest life may be long in noble thought and action, if we lose no time; and little of it is ever lost by those who thoughtfully employ their leisure.

Thoughtful men and women are always doubly valuable, no matter whether their work is what the world calls high-class or low-class. The streets are better swept by such a man, and the potatoes are better hoed; the floor is better scrubbed by such a woman, and the clothes are better washed.

If our work does not afford us the chance to think while we are employed upon it, we owe it to ourselves and to humanity to toss it aside quickly. The lawyer, the physician, or any other professional man is no more a man in the sight of God and his country than the stone-mason who lays the foundations for their houses and raises the superstructures; and they are under no greater obligation to use their thinking powers than he is. The place we occupy in life is unimportant; the way we fill the place is everything; the stone-mason, Ben Jonson, built stone walls and houses by day, and at night built dramas and other poetry which have been surpassed only by his contemporary, Shakespeare.

Many of the greatest achievements known to history have been the work of men and women whose life-tasks were entirely different from the lines in which they became eminent; Shakespeare was an actor and one of the most successful business men of London, but he is known as the greatest poet the world has yet produced; George Eliot had charge for several years of her father's farm home, as well as the poultry and dairy, and won prizes for these at the country fair, but this did not prevent her from laying, during these seven years, the foundation which helped her to build herself into one of the greatest women known to history.

Herschel's being a musician and Mary Somerville's having charge of her home and her children did not prevent both of them from doing marvelous work in astronomy. Audubon became a final authority on birds solely because while on his hunting-trips he thought more than the other hunters who accompanied him.

One of the greatest merchants and capitalists in Boston began life selling handkerchiefs through the country. He became expert in flax products, and through this grew rich; he so studied kindred fibrous plants that his partners boasted that he had succeeded in marketing handkerchiefs made of twenty different fibrous plants. The most successful piano manufacturer now living was originally an employee of a steel mill that manufactured wire for making piano-strings.

An every-day man gave careful thought to corn, and wrote an article for a magazine upon its value and upon the way it should be prepared for food; and this article was so worthy that it won for him a degree from a university.

Every waking moment of every man contains food for thought. If some live fuller lives every twenty-four hours than others live in a year, it is because they think faster and higher, wider and deeper, and because the discipline they get from this thought keeps them from wasting their time on trivial or worthless matter.

A puddler in Youngstown, without education beyond the district school, began to think about the iron that was softened in the furnace before him, and asked questions of the older employees and the foreman; then he read upon the subject and became so capable in mining and iron manufacturing that when the Youngstown plant was sold to the great steel corporation he was the largest stockholder in forty-seven great companies manufacturing iron.

Some men's hearts grow as hard as their gold while they are amassing riches; but his heart seems to have softened in proportion to the increase of his riches; his life is given to numberless good deeds, chief among which has been his endeavor to impress upon all workmen the necessity of letting both their heads and hearts assist their hands.

Neither man nor boy, woman nor girl, need despair of doing great things and being great men and women, if they will constantly carry out this advice. He is really the best-educated man whose attention is primarily directed to his soul-growth, to his power of thinking, for feeling, and for noble action.

VI. INSTINCTS AND INDIVIDUALITY

"God has given us a full kit of watchmaker's tools" and if, after all the centuries of civilization, "we are doing thinker's work with them," something must be wrong with the educational methods.

When God sent us here he packed us with all we need for high-class manhood—our instincts and our individuality especially well done up; but often in the unpacking by the schools we have been sadly marred; and these God-given endowments seem to have been frequently thrown upon the rubbish-pile. They seem to have dulled our instincts and to have despised our individuality, in order to make room for our acquirements.

Like all that emanates from God, instincts and individuality have been bestowed for a wise purpose; they are indispensable endowments if we shall become the kind of man God seems to have had in mind when he sent us here.

What justification have the teachers of civilization for failing to perfect these powers? What right have the little men of the schools to drive them entirely out of their scheme of education?

John Ruskin complains in *Kings' Treasuries* that "Modern education for the most part signifies giving people the faculty of thinking wrong on every conceivable subject of importance to them." If this is even partly true, there is no pursuit to-day that demands from the man who is working in it more presence of mind and more self-direction, than the business of getting real education.

Those who are to-day conducting what we are foolish enough to permit them to call education are often both blind and deaf to all that efficient education implies. To seek direction from them is like asking the road from a blind man. Many are also connected with the schools apparently as others are connected with hod-carrying and street-sweeping—to procure a livelihood.

Often their highest conception of the work is edgeucation, to make sharp blades of the intellects for what they call "getting along in the world." Then many of the instructors in schools and colleges are merely specialists, mainly interested in their specialties, and using the class-room as a stepping-stone to their own purposes. Extreme specializing is narrowing—it does to the specialist what blinkers do to the horse's eyes. Excessive pursuit of single objects of thought atrophies many faculties, but education is the complete development and discipline of all the faculties.

Perhaps these are some of the causes why so many original and thinking men and women are so hostile to present-day schools, and accuse them of mainly being "places that polish pebbles and dim diamonds," and say so many other harsh and cutting things about them.

Learning seems to be the chief occupation of those who profess to educate. Learning for its own sake plays a very insignificant part in the spiritual equipment of God's children; to a true education it seems at best only what the carpenter's kit is to the carpenter—a means to an end. Like all other lumber, its importance depends entirely upon what is built out of it.

These original and thinking men and women have often said hard things of mere learning and of those who dole it out at so much a unit, because they believe that undue stress is laid upon it. They sometimes say that universities are not educating institutions, but merely seats-of-learning; and often they are very narrow seats, difficult for self-respecting people to stiffen their backs enough to sit upon.

But it's the study, not the studies, that educates; studies make learned men, but not often wise men, such as real education always makes; not all learned heads are sense-boxes; the very learned man may be a very learned fool. The learned frequently put out their reasoning powers to make room for their learning; it requires ten pounds of sense to take care of one pound of learning.

Solomon made a book of proverbs, but a book of proverbs never made Solomon. Sense without learning is a thousand times superior to learning without sense; and in the stately edifice of life, school and college are only the basement walls; wisdom and learning are not necessary companions.

The great things that have conducted to the betterment of the world have been done by men who have been loyal to their individuality and true to their instincts—never by the merely learned. Too often do we find these little learned men "displaying themselves offensively and ridiculously in the haunts of bearded men," and making the angels weep by their strutting and their swelling.

Knowing is only a small part of life; doing is nearly all of life; and the best done is done through education—the education which is the product of what is inborn as well as of what is acquired; the education which enables men and women to perceive and to cherish the beautiful in art, in literature, in morals and in nature.

While true education busies itself with acquirements, it is even more concerned that the instincts and the individuality God appears to regard of supreme importance shall attain all that it is possible for them to have. These original and thinking men and women who say so many things in condemnation of make-believe education and mere learning boldly and lovingly acclaim the helps from true education—they remind us that it is soul-husbandry, spiritual perfection, torch and sword and shield, the be-all and the end-all of life, the fountain of all noble living, and the only real promoter of civilization.

They claim that education of this sort simplifies life; facilitates self-conquest; intensifies individuality; unfolds and uplifts manhood; breeds habits of thinking, feeling, and doing; debestializes, emancipates, humbles, and civilizes; that it searches for truth, loves the beautiful, desires the good, and does the best.

We have no quarrel with the education that accomplishes all these, for it fosters the instincts and the individuality for which we are pleading. We have always believed that just this kind of education is the heritage of every American, and that the loss of such an education is the greatest calamity that can befall any one.

All our life have we yearned that all might have this boon, and the best of our manhood years have been ceaseless labor and struggle to give "the weak and friendless sons of men" all of its advantages.

The test of any system of education is the kind of man it turns out. It is wisdom to measure the system by those it fails to educate rather than by those it does educate—by its tortoises rather than by its hares.

The real educator is always vastly more concerned with the divinity than with the depravity of those intrusted to him; he believes firmly that the instincts and the individuality which God has given each of us are the priceless part of all our spiritual equipment—that anything we may acquire toward this end which fortifies these God-given treasures is cheap—even if bought by an entire life-service; that any acquirement that modifies these or destroys them is a triple curse and a dire menace to humanity, for individuality is the genius of Christianity and of America.

The system of education which makes light of the cultivation of the instincts, which seems to be the sole dependence of all conditions of men except the over-civilized, the system of education which is blinded to all that is implied in an educated individuality—these are the only systems with which we have any quarrel.

Well-made, rather than well-filled heads are what is needed and should be demanded, without which it is impossible for any one of us to have the right conception of life, or to attain all that we were intended to be or to do. To guard and develop the instincts of the child, to preserve and fortify his individuality, is to give him sword and shield for the battle of life.

God intends each individual to be an individual, or this should not have been so deep-rooted in all; to be just like every one else is to be predestined for inferiority and failure. To do our duty consistently and steadfastly demands that all our God-like and God-given qualities shall first of all be educated.

That best becomes a man which his individuality intended him to be, and those are always successful in making a life and a living who play the game of life with the cards their individuality gives them. God made a world for each separate man, and within that world he must live, if he will live effectually; we must first of all be ourselves, must see to it that whatever else is neglected the plants God has put into the individual shall be cultivated—the crop may not be large, but we are accountable for the cultivation, not for the crop. We must be ourselves, and do our own work.

There can be no greater wisdom and no greater service than that of helping another so that he may duly live in that special world which God has created for him. The most insignificant man can be complete if he is entirely true to his instincts and to his individual character.

If we are incomplete, it is because we are living after some other method. We have all been stamped with individuality, but many seem to do their utmost to soak off the stamp. How different should the life of all the world be if each one only kept in his frame, and would not permit any one to try to make him part of, the picture for which his personality never intended him!

Next Steps...

Get Free Classic Self-Help Books

Discover timeless wisdom at [MattSanti.com](https://mattsanti.com). Explore free classic self-help books with practical workbooks. No sign-ups or hidden fees—pure, invaluable content at your fingertips.

Explore the Blog and Videos

For more personal growth insights and tips, visit our blog and watch our videos. The blog offers daily in-depth articles on productivity, emotional well-being, giving you the tools for a fulfilling life.

Prioritize Your Life!

Elevate your self-improvement journey with our Prioritization Accelerator video course. Identify what matters, streamline your routine, and focus on key goals. Learn practical strategies to transform time and energy management.

Subscribe to the Newsletter

Stay up to date with the latest resources, training, and expert advice by subscribing to our weekly newsletter. Get exclusive content like new book releases, webinar invites, and special offers for continuous life optimization.

Ready to embark on your journey toward personal growth and success? Visit [MattSanti.com](https://mattsanti.com) today to get started!