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BUILDING CHARACTER.

BY WILLIAM CLAUDIUS CHANCE.

Some years ago a great bridge was being constructed across the St. Lawrence river. But on account of defective materials and an insecure foundation this great structure fell. And as a result there were not only hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of material practically lost, but between seventy-five and an hundred human souls were compelled to take their chambers in the silent halls of death.

Such a sad event is conclusive proof that the main object in building earthly structures is to combine fit materials in a manner that they may retain every form to which they are assigned. If the building is constructed properly upon a sufficient foundation it will hold its position and bear pressure acting in the direction of gravity to the extent that the ground on which it stands and the materials of which it is composed will sustain. If the building is to be permanent its foundation must be firm. Every piece of construction must be complete within itself. The materials must be those of the best, and those which are not subject to influences beyond the control of man. Otherwise the building will be as a house erected upon the sand; when the storm comes great will be the fall of the building.

By using the very best materials and making firm the foundations the Egyptians were enabled to erect monuments so faultless in construction, and so beautiful in design, that they became not only master builders, but creators of art and beauty.

Good materials and solid foundations enabled the tower of Babel, the Temple of Solomon, the Great Wall extending fifteen hundred miles along the Northern coast of China, to stand for many ages as some of man's most remarkable handiworks. Time has effaced the beauty carved upon these great buildings, the tower and the temple have crumbled to the dust, despite the fact that the very best materials available were used.

It may not be the ability of all to plan specifications or draw designs, or erect such earthly structures, but there is yet another building in which every one is expected to be concerned. A

building, which, if constructed with the same regard for the selection of the best materials, will stand through all ages, giving power and possibility to the human race. This building is Character. It is the true test of civilization.

Nothing great can be expected from the man who is careless about this building, or the kind of materials with which it must necessarily be built.

Thoughts, habits and speech are materials for character building. If the thoughts are pure, the character will be pure and radiant. If the thoughts are foul the character will be wretched. No man begins an evil career until he has begun evil thinking. An evil thought is the first step to destruction. It forms evil habits, and evil habits form evil character. The world pays its highest tribute to the man who can shape his thoughts to be the most value to the community. Thus thoughts are the great forces underlying all that go to build character. Unconsciously man is forming habits every moment of his life. Some are habits of a desirable nature and some are not. It is wholly within his power to determine what type of habits shall take form in his life. Those that are ruinous and destructive will come upon him unbidden. Those that lead to prosperity and happiness must be sought after and labored for, before they lie as glittering treasures in his possession.

Man has been given a tongue to express his thoughts. His habits of expression have much to do with forming character. Every word he speaks is for the most part the revelation of his inner life. Thus as has been truly said: "In the power of the tongue are life and death."

Having gained possession of these elements the power of living to the highest in all things pertaining to life is available. Man becomes an example, and an inspiration to all. Through which the weak and faltering are encouraged and strengthened. As the sculptor transforms the block of marble into human form, so may man create within his companion his ideal of life, and transform him into better citizenship. He leaves an impress upon every life he touches. He may never be a millionaire able to contribute to charity, but he can become a millionaire of ideas, good deeds and kindness, and with a noble spirit cast a light of hope and happiness over the most humble home, and thus be the means of directing the human soul along the path of righteousness.