

Choosing the Noble Life, -

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Why should one choose the noble life? Is there any noble life? Is there any reason or sense in thinking that one kind of life is more to be desired than another. Why should you and I make any effort to be noble? Why should we not steal, if by so doing we can gain more of the things which bring us comfort, ease and luxury? Why should we not lie, and cheat in our conduct with men, if by so doing we can advance our own interests, and become the greater possessors of wealth and power? Why should we refrain from injuring another person if the suffering of another would in any way enhance our own

comfort, and welling! Is there any²
revise in our standards of volubility
and goodness, standards which
demand of us certain exactments
as to conduct?

But go one step more. Do we
as a nation of free live a good
life? Or are we merely
conventionally good; doing those few
things which seem expedient to
us in our efforts to maintain a
certain relationship with our fellow-
men. In our conduct guided by
anything more than a selfish
animal desire to ~~to~~ get and keep
~~without~~ at the least possible outlay
of labor, and expense, and hoping
for the greatest possible return. Do
we maintain our standards of
conventionality according to the
law of supply and demand, or

and never regard the question of ³
real virtues worth at all, or is there
really some sound moral sense of nobility
and goodness within us. that is
the organizing unit of our lives?
I do not ask whether our lives are
perfectly noble, or entirely virtuous
and without blemish, but I simply
ask whether there is any evidence
at all of nobility of sound moral
worth in our nature, such as would
elevate us above the low plain of
selfish greed, or conventional wrongs
and enable us to choose a noble
life, and order our conduct in
accord with the standard of
nobility.

Of course I can see very easily
that there are certain gross conven-
tionalities which give the appearance
of moral worth. I see among people

of a church a certain tendency to¹⁴
help, and assist each other, to recog-
nize the worth and value of each
other persons for his own sake, but
I observe also that this appearance
of virtue, and ~~for~~ brotherly love, is
in general conventional rather than
-wreal, outside of the fold of the
few, each one seems bound free
to refuse to help. to positively
injure another, if by so doing
he gains one iota of power, or
wealth. We find that some
good love and kindliness
among thieves. One thief will
hardly rob another, although
they count it high love to suc-
cessfully rob a stranger. One
is reminded of the chimerous
days of the highwayman, when

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robbed the rich, and gave alms
to the poor, as he views ~~the~~ the con-
duct of many of the pirates of
modern industry. Among these
robbers there is a certain honour,
which forbids them to touch or
injure the person of the craft, but
when they are outside of the craft
all is fair, and the spoils of the contest
fall into the hands of the victor.
while the one who has been defeated
by a hairs breadth is left to die
of hunger and thirst.

Indeed it is very easy to paint
the picture of our life in very
dark colours, and very deep shadows.
I might indeed show you that every
man has his price, and will sell
his soul for a man of fottage
or even for a less price than

that, I might as the pessimist ¹⁶
does lead you into the dark and
gloomy corners of society and
present for your inspection the
the greed, and the selfishness, and
the hypocrisy of men, until you
would cry with the worst bitter
pessimist, all is wrong, all is
black, all is foul, except you and
I. You would then suspect me,
and I should suspect you, but
of all the wonderful world about us
the only ~~for~~ person whose suspicion
is on our selves.

I say I might present you with
this gloomy picture, and leave
you beneath the cloud of suspicion
thus created, but I am not going
to do so. because it would
be false, because it would

be only the faint outline of life
the world as ~~seen~~ ~~expressed~~ recorded
on an uncluttered searching plate.

Go ^{to} that very pessimist, and begin
to search him, and diagnose his
troubles. You will find that he
believes that he himself sees with
a true eye, and regards himself
as living a noble life, of unquestio-
ned honesty. If you press him with
inquiries about his nearest friends
you will find that he regards them
as about as honest as himself. They
may have a few little faults that
cast a shadow enough over them to
wake them of interest. But they are
after all is said and done men of
very fine quality - and integrity.
He believes in them because he
knows them. The people whom

he knows only by hearsay, there are 8.
the black and unregenerate
and lost beyond redemption.
Mr. A. of unquestionable integrity
knows Mr. B. very intimately. In
the opinion of Mr. A. Mr. B. is an
exceptionally fine man. in fact
a remarkably good, noble person.
No! Mr. A. does not know Mr. D
very well, but cannot resist
throwing a suspicion over him.
As for Mr. X. he is a worst lifeless
scoundrel. But Mr. B. of undoubted
excellence, knows Mr. C. a very
fine honorable man. Mr. C. knows
Mr. D. regards Mr. D. as a
unusually high type of wicked.
Oh yes. Mr. D. knows Mr. X. Strange
how people should ever come

to suspect Mr. X. Mr. D. has known
him for years, and while he has
not had all the advantages of life
that many have had, he is at least
one of the finest, and most
whole soul'd men that Mr. D.
ever knew.

Thus it goes, your friend is simply
blinded by a fog, which prevents
him from seeing clearly the people
who are a short distance from him.
Trace the outline of his block and
glorious world, from war to war,
and you will find your way
into the prisons, into the dark
and hidden hells of life, and
even there you will find that
there is a spark of nobility in
the soul, that the most degraded
will at times become noble.

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and is not without his confessor, who
will declare that in spite of the
blackness of his life, he is at heart
one of the finest men that ever
lived. So when we get outside
of the narrow confines of our provin-
cialism, and really break down
the high board fence of our back
yard, and come to know the
things that live in the Alley, we find
that after all is said and done, the
world is not so black as it is
painted. The man who says that
all is wrong, and that nature
is defaced, is either sick or
ignorant. When the light of
knowledge is turned on, you find
that the fog disappears.

That is why I then am not going
to paint the picture black, and
tear out of our minds the things

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that make life rich and wholesome.
We may call the cheer board of life
black, we may call it white, super-
fect, and unconfuted is this world
we live in, imperfect and in-
confuted are the people who live
there; but even in the dark is the
spark of whiteness, and life itself
speaks of greatness. Life's experience
that lift us out of the gloom of
pessimism, into the healthy
vital atmosphere of activity. ~~We~~
We are leaving behind the faith
that rests upon false gods, and
mild invocations of a superstition
youth, and entering upon a faith
in the reality of a world ordered
by a great good will. ~~As Jesus~~

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of Tzoyreth looked upon the world of
Palestine ~~two~~ years ago, and saw there
the same kind of a nature that we see,
a humanity, less perfect, more animal,
more corrupt, more selfish, ~~degraded~~
and inactive, and delinquent thus
we see to day. - ~~as~~ he looked upon
all this, and saw there the evidence
of an outward reality, ~~to~~ which
corresponded to the inward ideal
of his mind, and ~~then~~ accepted
a faith, and chose a noble
life based upon this faith, that
like of the field speaks to us, of
that the heart ~~of~~ ~~was~~ low of
nobility speaks in us, and that
the father and son work together
for the attainment of an end

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ordered by the great unseen good-
will, whom he called father.

We to-day are entering upon a new
life faith, resting not upon
these some great truths, that nature
speaks to us, that Freedom speaks
in us, and the universal speaks
through us.

In this faith we chose to live
the noble life, rather than the
ignoble, the unselfish life
rather than the selfish, & the
free life rather than the unfree,
not because we fear an eternal
punishment, not because we
are told by priest or church, not
because it is expedient, not
because it brings pleasure
and comfort. Not because

our own nature, our own experience
 our own inward being speaks
 to us of nobility. That inward
 consciousness of ~~the~~ the greatness
 of war, that voice of duty, which
 has ~~inspired~~ been the motivating power
 of every noble life, that spark
 of the Divine within the soul,
 which gave the Spartan Hero
 courage, and compelled the
 Spartan mother as she sent her son
 to war to come back with his
 shield, or on it; that spark of
 nobility which her sent young
 a warrior to the slaughter, and
 young a hero to a noble death.
 that spark which, however fine
 have been the flocks of foreign
 and brutally in all the ages

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we always held its place in human
life, and we always been
the ~~#~~ former that has done the
work of the world; that still speaks
to us, the still thrill of with
the form of a great mission, still
bids us consecrate ourselves to
a noble, even though it be at
the cost of suffering. Never
would we be won. did he
choose the good life out of fear
for the unctions of the evil, or
the commands of the good angels.
but won is won when he chooses
the good ^{noble} life, because he feels
within him the infallible com-
mand of the dignity, the nobility
the divinity of his own nature.
Won is won when he chooses

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the noble life, because he feels
the force of the time honored truth
of "noblesse oblige." ~~to~~ when
he feels that his nature is to
nobly to be ignoble, to great
to be mean; to pure, to be stained,
to noble to be chagured in
the mind; when he feels that he
is called to too great a work, to
too grand a mission, to ~~be~~ allow
himself to waste the precious
moments in wasteful and degrading
indulgences, ~~too~~ when he feels
himself too noble, too divine too
self respecting to enjoy the ~~fruits~~
satisfaction of his own desires
to indulge in and luxury. when
he knows that his own satisfaction
is purchased by the suffering

and degradation of work another. 117

~~Because you are not~~. In
these days when the voice of the
Gods of Childhood is dying, when
the superstitious fear of punishment
no longer works ~~the child~~, as
~~we once~~ serves as a whip to
lark the coming child into obed-
ience and order. In these days
when we are passing from the
old restraints to the new ideals,
of work and accomplishment,
we are called with the great voice
of duty from within, and
crying need from with^{out} to
choose the noble life, not
merely the conventionally good life
not merely the life that conforms
to existing standards of morality

and honesty and service, but the ⁷⁸
noble life which shall keep us re-
sist a noble being. In business
to choose the noble life that shall
never permit us to diminish one
hair breadth from the conduct
which belongs to a noble being.
In labor to choose the noble life
~~which~~ which shall not permit
us by act of omission or commission
to fall one inch below the high
standard of noble obligation. In
social relation to choose the noble
life, that shall not permit us
to injure, or crush even the least
of our fellow men. For long
we have been living under
the impression that were

is a degraded, deformed human
 being, and ~~the~~ whose only hope
 was to escape by some mechanism
 a life of temporal ~~or~~ degradation
 and eternal punishment. Let
 us leave that sad and gloomy
~~fantasy~~ nightmare behind us.
 The spirit's spark that enlivens
 the clod is divine, In the
 image of the great god we'll
 be re-fashioned, too noble
 to debase ourselves, too great
 to listen to the echoes of the
 my gone age, Before us are
 great and noble deeds to be done,
 fine, and sweet lives to be lived.
 lives worth of him who bears
 the image of Divinity in his

20.
very nature. Out of fear, out
of superstitious obedience I would
never ask one to close the noble
life, but out of the greatness of our
nature, with its infinite possibilities,
we choose the good life. This is the
great need of to day. ~~that~~. From every
corner of the civilized world we
hear the sounds of destruction of
that house of a religion, built upon
the shifting sands. ~~the~~ of time
of superstition. What turmoil and
strife may attend its downfall we
do not. But to day when the
sands are being washed away
from the foundations, by the great
flood of modern life, the call
is for a man and woman who

shall still stand upon the ancient
foundation, where all the prophets of
history have stood. where Jesus
of Nazareth stood. where every
great teacher has stood, and
proclaim as of old, that truth which
is the experience of every noble
life. Which expressed it in these
words. "What doth the Lord require
of thee but to do justly, and to
love mercy. and to walk humbly
with thy God. Jesus expressed
it in these words. Thou shalt
love the Lord thy God with all thy
heart, and with all thy mind
and with all thy soul. and thy
neighbor as thyself." Emerson
because he believed that virtue

speaks to us, and the Freedom ⁽²²⁾
speaks in us, and the over
speaks through us, again uttered
the same great truth. Against
they self at first hand with
Society.

We who can discover the laws
of nature, we who can feel the
power, and the thrill of fellowship
with human beings, and penetrate
the inner secrets of humanity, we
who can feel the mystic presence
of the unseen, think you we
are ~~born~~ born to live a life of
degrading self-indulgence, and
ease. Every noble instinct
infolks of your nature answers
you no? a thousand times no, the
wells of within you that charge

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mysterious form with which lads
you out of the very nobility of your
being choose the noble life, and
work together with the thousand
Goodwill for the realization of
that new heaven, and new earth
where the dim, and vague outlines
of which are never entirely out of
the range of our vision.

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