

## Riches without Wings.

In writing this oration it is the author's purpose to set forth the general indestructibility and need of character and education. The word character as here used is nearly synonymous with reputation - but it is broader. It includes honesty, esteem and in fact all the attributes which are brought to mind in the phrase, a man of character. By education is meant as Webster says "properly to draw forth. It implies not so much the communication of knowledge as the discipline of the intellect, the establishment of principles, and the regulation of the heart."

Education and character as used in this sense are truly riches without wings. They may be lost but if a person does lose them how often is it due to the fact that his other riches have gone before. How often it is true that insanity is brought about by loss of property, or, if unsuccessful in business, a man will sometimes stoop to do things he would not think of before.



You have heard many times of the bank defaulter or others who have wrongfully used money and lost it and who immediately sink lower and lower in the scale of humanity. Such men were once supposed to have the best character and such cases may be taken to prove its instability. But I claim they do not. The very fact of one's misuse of others' money proves there was a fault somewhere and it is probable this lack of honesty would have shown itself sooner if an opportunity had been offered. On the other hand there are men who when they have failed, or in some manner lost others' property, pay back every cent of it. Such men we honor and respect.

Friends are fickle and property vanishes away but a person's education and character, if it is a true character, will abide with him to the end. These two things are really riches. Without them a person can do nothing but the lowest kind of work and that which will give him the least return. Without education and character a man is at the bottom of the ladder



with a great mass of others. Many are striving to reach the round of education which will help them to reach that of reputation and so they may rise into fame.

We as a class have reached the round of education and all have character, but to be sure how good it is we must stand the test of the many temptations which will fall to our lot. We must prove to the world that we deserve a place and without industry and honesty this is a hopeless task. Our education if it has accomplished its whole object has taught us how to be industrious - our character makes us honest. We therefore have the foundation on which to build a useful life.

Character and education are necessary. The time when the attainment of great muscular strength was looked upon as the great end of life is past. Today we wish for it as a means not an end. The numerous devices perfected during late years have made this of secondary importance - for instance what an incredible change the steam engine



has accomplished. We have discovered that man has a higher and better force than muscular energy and so there is a tendency always noticeable, for it to decline and intellectual force to advance. This may in fact rightly be called an intellectual age. It is the time when great inventors, speakers and writers astonish the world with their wonderful combinations and keen perceptions.

But there is another and still higher moral force. In past years men of education were much scarcer than at present. Our schools, colleges and universities are annually giving to the world hundreds of talented men. The thought of competition for the best positions thus becomes of importance. There are places for all but in many cases the best character is indispensable. A young man to fill a place of trust must have proved himself worthy of it. As competition between educated people becomes more intense the tendency will be to require better and better character and even now this is of great importance.



Obtaining character and education is the grandest work a person can engage in. From their very nature they will make a man better. Not like many other things there is no point where he should stop - no point beyond which if he goes he will be degraded. The higher a person advances the better he becomes not only for himself but for others as they are necessary to make man of benefit to man. We cannot live simply for ourselves. We must meet with others and our success in life will largely depend on whether we have been a help or a hindrance to mankind.

Character and education develop the better tendencies of man's nature. They broaden his mind and make him better. From the very pleasure there is in living it is worth while to get an education. What an infinite change it makes in a man's views of the things around him. One can see a world of wonder and beauty where another sees nothing but the plain uninteresting objects.



From these various considerations it seems to me we must conclude that education and character are the most lasting, most valuable, most necessary and the best of all riches. With us they end but their effects may last forever. The most valuable part of these riches is that they can be obtained by all. With the advancement the world has made and the wonderful facilities now offered it is nearly impossible for a person to say with truth he had no opportunity to obtain an education. Living as we do when a student is honored because he works his way through college there is no reason why if a person really wishes an education he may not get it.

Character is a growth. It may be changed for good or bad while a person is young, but once formed it is likely to remain the same. Our conduct in our daily intercourse with others and the company we are in has a control over us we are little aware of, and an effect on our character we can seldom fully appreciate.



If education and character can be obtained by all and are so essential to our growth and ~~development~~, if without them a person has to stay in a comparatively low state is it surprising that we see multitudes of institutions for obtaining and preserving them? Consider the wonderful progress made during the last fifty years and notice what a close relation it has to the mental and moral growth of the people. But this work will not stop it is being recognized that these are the true riches and there is an unmistakable tendency for them to take precedence of all others.

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