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Little Journeys in the Higher Anticriticism.

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I. The Myth Hypothesis.

(Continued.)

"Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte."

Whately's *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte* was directed primarily against the skepticism of David Hume, but a few extracts from its pages will readily show how apt a reply it is to the mythological theory in every form. Archbishop Whately imitates the subject of his criticism to such an extent that one may read many passages and whole pages without being able to detect the slightest trace of the writer's irony. He speaks with a sober face throughout:—

"The celebrated Hume has pointed out the readiness with which men believe, on very slight evidence, any story that pleases their imagination by its admirable and marvelous character. Such hasty credulity, however, as he well remarks, is utterly unworthy of a philosophical mind; which should rather suspend its judgment the more in proportion to the strangeness of the account, and yield to none but the most decisive and unimpeachable proofs." It is reasonable, he concludes, to inquire into the evidence on which people in his day believed the extraordinary story of the exploits of one Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France. He notes, first of all, a great dissonance in the testimony:—

"According to some, he was a wise, humane, magnanimous hero; others paint him as a monster of cruelty, meanness, and perfidy: some, even of those who are most inveterate against him, speak very highly of his political and military ability; others place him on the very verge of insanity. But allowing that all this may be the coloring of party prejudice (which surely is allowing a great

The Road to Success, or Self-Improvement.

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(Concluded.)

XXI. RADIATE FORCE AND ENERGY ALSO IN OLD AGE.

There is no denying that this is a young man's age. We see young men at the helm everywhere. There certainly is a prejudice against those who show signs of age, because many of them are burned-out men, embers without heat. Many men deceive themselves by thinking that because they moved on so vigorously when young, they are still moving at the same speed. The slackening process has been so gradual that there was no jar or shock, and they have not realized that they have been gradually slowing down. The golden days of summer have come and gone. They grow less careful about personal appearance, and unconsciously drift into slovenly, slouchy habits; then they look old. Just this one habit of being good to ourselves, of being particular about our personal habits, of dress, of keeping ourselves well groomed, will make a difference of many years in our appearance.

Most men desire to live long, but few men would be old.

One of the most pitiable sights is a man of middle age going around as if he were an old man, with unkempt whiskers and hair. Outwardly he is rude and uncouth, even savage. His very appearance is cause enough to let him alone and not to employ him.

But what shall become of us in our autumnal months? What shall we do when things are sobering fast and the sere and yellow days are upon us?

Old men must brace up, dress well, look prosperous, walk and talk like young men, and show no indication of weakness, no mark of age. Let the end of your life be fairly crowded with bright gems of youthful acts. Do not admit or show that your age hampers you. Beat the yearning impulse and youthful fire back with a will of iron. How can a man expect to gain victory when he admits that he is already beaten in the race of life, when his mental attitude is not that of the conqueror, but of the conquered? Instead of making a favorable impression, he leaves a doubtful one. No one wants an employee who has lost his freshness and fire, who confesses by his conversation, his appearance, his manner, and his every movement that he is "too old."

Before the Civil War people looked aged at fifty. The men wore long beards and long hair and did not carry themselves well. At middle age women looked like grandmothers. All this has changed. People now dress much more youthfully than they used to. Men do not wear long, gray beards and long, white hair. And the man who would keep young must not dress like an old man and go about with stooping shoulders and a shuffling gait. A good barber and a good tailor can cut off many years in the appearance of these prematurely old-looking men. The dentist, too, can help us to retain a youthful appearance.

There are men in the sixties and seventies who can fill almost any position because they radiate energy, life; because they are good, pleasing men, interesting, youthful in spirit. They are esteemed by all who know them. They are trim, buoyant, enthusiastic, fresh, responsive. They have not allowed their hope or vivacity to die out of them. Some men remain fresh, aggressive, independent, self-sufficient, all their lives. They always impress you with a fresh youthfulness and vigor ordinarily found in young manhood. Their nerves have been braced by long familiarity with danger, and their movements have all the precision of clockwork. Often they make more rapid strides than

youth. Everywhere we see old men who are filling responsible positions quite as ably as young men. Some are young at eighty. They are as fresh and spontaneous, as joyous and youthful as children; they are to the young men what the tree is to the sapling.

No employer wants a whiner, a man who does not think himself any good, who has no backbone, no courage, no pluck, who is always telling his age, who is always pouring out tales of hard luck and reiterating how everything has gone against him. If he wants anybody, he will take you even if you have gray hairs, if you show that you are still resourceful and ambitious and conduct yourself well, yea, many employers are anxious to hold on to old men because their great experience and wisdom often more than compensate for their lack of the vitality and buoyancy of youth. The employers often benefit by keeping them, for experience is the best teacher. They have perfect confidence in them.

There is a powerful rejuvenating influence in always appearing young and trying to feel young. Make this experiment. Walk as though you were young — with a light, springy step. Don't drag your feet as though age were creeping over you. Don't let your movement or your brain lag. Keep up your buoyancy, agility, and swiftness. Radiate force and energy also in old age. "For none of us liveth to himself." Also aged folk must shine as lights in the world. Why should you fear old age? Does not old age possess sundry general advantages?

Arkwright was fifty years of age when he began to learn English grammar and improve his writing and spelling. Benjamin Franklin was past fifty before he began the study of science and philosophy. Milton in his blindness was past the age of fifty when he sat down to complete his world-renowned epic. Wondrous is his potent power and youthful strength in creating pictures in a few lines. To him the invisible becomes visible; darkness becomes light; silence describes a character; a word acts as a flash of lightning, which displays a fascinating scene.

Scott at fifty-five took up his pen to redeem a liability of six hundred thousand dollars. "Yet I am learning," said Michael Angelo, when threescore years and ten were past, and he had long attained the highest triumphs of his art. Victor Hugo and Wellington were both in their prime after they had reached the age of threescore years and ten. Gladstone ruled England with a strong hand at eighty-four, and was a marvel of literary and scholarly ability. The *Odyssey* was the creation of a blind old man, but

it has maintained its flight across gulfs of time and is still full of the lifeblood of immortal youth.

Dr. Johnson's best work, *The Lives of the Poets*, was written when he was seventy-eight. Defoe was fifty-eight when he published *Robinson Crusoe*. James Watt learned German at eighty-five. Humboldt completed his *Cosmos* at ninety, a month before his death. What a power was Bismarck at eighty! Unknown at forty, Grant was one of the most famous generals in history at forty-two. Some of Longfellow's, Whittier's, and Tennyson's best works were written after they were seventy; but you might as well think of pushing a brick out of a wall with your forefinger as attempt to remove a word out of any of their finished passages brimming with powerful energy and youthful freshness.

It is foolish to expect everything from young men. It is a great mistake to think that old men have no energy. Not all young men are hustlers. And old men are more experienced. Sometimes young ministers reject a call because of too much work, while old ministers accept it and fill the position brilliantly. Psalm 92, 14: "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age."

A congregation was vacant for nine months, but was not willing to call a pastor over fifty years of age. When time passed on, they agreed to be served temporarily by an old pastor, aged seventy-two. They were, however, so much pleased with him that soon they accepted him as their regular pastor — and he worked among them with great success. During the Lenten season he preached twice a week; forty new members joined; over six thousand dollars were signed for the renovation of the church.

These examples must suffice to show that even old age may do good and powerful work. They constitute but a small, though an important portion of the mass of evidence which might be brought forward. The lives of these great men remind us that we, too, can make our lives sublime; and when we depart, we can leave behind us noble footprints on the sands of time.

We are, therefore, obliged to admit that also old age is capable of doing great things. Cicero said well that men are like wine: age sours the bad, and improves the good.

If a man has not squandered his life forces, if he has lived simply and sanely, the very rightness of his wisdom, the strength of his judgment, the accumulation of his expert knowledge, the broadening of his mind, the brightening of his whole nature, the enriching of his experience ought much more than compensate for

his little loss of youthful freshness. Our autumnal months sometimes offer us nobler fruits than spring and summer, fruits of abounding charity, fruits of rich reconciliations, fruits of divine grace, fruits that revive and restore the soul. And our winter months also yield their fruits, fruits of wonderful richness and marvelous virtue, delicious fruits, such as the joy of the Lord, the peace and consolations of God, and "hope that maketh not ashamed." The life properly lived, the good, Christian life, the life of a virtuous, able man, grows constantly larger and richer to the very end.

You will not be forsaken in old age. The Psalmist says: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Ps. 37, 25. We read: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13, 5. "Be not afraid, only believe." Mark 5, 36. There is the promise: "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation." Ps. 91, 16. And the promise: "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Ps. 103, 5. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Is. 40, 31.

We have His word: "And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." Is. 46, 4. We read in the Holy Scriptures: "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even forevermore." Ps. 121, 8. He does that still to-day. Is not this success worth while?

And now, in conclusion, let me say: If you made a botch of the past, if you feel that it was a failure, don't drag these ghosts along with you to handicap you and destroy your happiness all through the future. Don't let these things sap any more of your vitality, waste any more of your time, or destroy any more of your happiness. Undertake to grapple with difficulties. Free yourself from everything which handicaps you, keeps you back, and makes you unhappy. Drop everything that is a drag, that hinders your progress. Don't let that failure of yesterday crush you. Wasted yesterdays may be redeemed. Enter upon to-morrow with a free mind. Wipe out from your memory everything that has been unpleasant. You will find that just in proportion as you increase your courage your ability will increase. Let your energy be unceasing, your perseverance indomitable. Be courageous like the

Wittenberg monk, who — while suffering much sickness and bodily pain — braved the scepter and the crozier together. No matter what other people may think about your ability, never allow yourself to doubt that, by the help of God, you can do or become what you long to.

Increase your confidence, courage, and firmness in every possible way. Pray to God for assistance. He hears our prayer. God is good. His ear attends to the sighs that rend our bosom. You say He sends us trials? Often the most distressing trials in the end have proved to be blessings. Be sure that what God will give us in answer to our prayers will always be good and really meet our wants. He is our Father and has our true interests at heart better than we can imagine. We reclaim waste lands. We can reclaim waste lives. We pick up scraps of paper and metal and make them over. The same can be done with scraps of careers. But will God forgive? He will for Jesus' sake. "We deserve but grief and shame," yet His Word proclaims to us rich pardon, peace, and life. Mercy and pardon are the great words in the gospel of hope. They cover all the past. The past shall be as though it had not been, and the future shall be fair and bright. The question is not, "Can God forgive?" but, "Will He forgive?" The answer is: "He will have mercy, and He will abundantly pardon." "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea," and if we penitently seek it, it will gather all our imperfections, faults, mistakes, and failures into its pardoning flood. God's forgiveness transforms our remembrance, and the past becomes the minister of immortal hope.

Of course, the offense must not be wilfully repeated. There must be repentance and reform. And you can do it by the help of God.

Say to yourself, "Now, this thing is up to me. I must make good, I must show the man in me or the coward. There is no backing out." "Your ideals are getting dull, and the worst of it all is that, when you do a poor job and are careless and indifferent, you do not feel as troubled, as you used to. You are not making good. This lethargy, this inertia, this indifference will seriously cripple your career. You are taking things easy. Nobody ever amounts to much who lets his energies flag, his standards droop, and his ambition ooze out. This take-it-easy sort of policy will never do. *You are capable of something much better than what you are doing.* You must start out to-day with the firm resolution

to do better. Bestir yourself; get the cobwebs out of your head; brush off the brain ash. Think, think, think to some purpose! Do not mull and mope like that. You are only half-alive, man; get a move on you!" If others have done this, you can do it. Assert your manhood, your individuality. Go about as though you were a conqueror. Gain victory, and let nothing snatch it out of your hand. Begin a thing and push it to a finish.

The trouble is that we do not put the right estimate upon our possibilities. We berate ourselves, discourage, belittle, efface ourselves, because we do not see the larger man that is to grow in us. Never acknowledge in your thought that you are a failure, that luck is against you, that you don't have the same opportunity that other people have. Avoid a morose, gloomy, capricious disposition. This is a huge obstacle on the road to success. Rather let in the sun of cheerfulness, hope, and optimism. Say to yourself, "I am a man, and I am going to do the work of a man. I am determined to do it." Force your mind toward your goal. *Try* to do it and then *do* it. Do not doubt your success. Never doubt it as long as God still lives.

Old people sometimes are afraid to undertake a certain thing. When aged Jacob was afraid to undertake the journey to Egypt, God told him: "Fear not to go down into Egypt. I will go down with thee." This assurance drives fear away. The divine presence transforms any road, and His help makes any burden light. He turns all life's discords into harmonies. He says to us: "It is I, be not afraid." He is with us. We can never perish, neither shall any man pluck us out of His hand. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He will rescue us from any trouble that may befall us. His companionship gives us the happy assurance that we are on the road to success, and fills our hearts with a glowing confidence and a strong determination.

The reason why so many men fail is because they do not commit themselves with a determination to win at any cost. They do not have that superb confidence which never looks back, which burns all bridges behind it. We often find it difficult to do that. If we doubt our ability to do what we set out to do; if we lack boldness; if we have a timid, shrinking nature; if we think that we lack the necessary energy and power to do things, we can never win until we change our whole mental attitude and learn to be brave and have great courage, hope, faith, and confidence.

General Grant once described a certain army he saw on his

trip around the world as "marching with the swing of conquest." Those who saw our first American troops passing through London declare that they had the easy swinging gait of men who are accustomed to overcoming natural obstacles, of souls who walk the earth as those who have already won it. There is a great difference between the physical appearance of one who has fought victoriously and of one who has failed to fight or who has been beaten. The one is erect and proud, the other hangs his head in sorrow, if not in shame. This feeling changes fight to flight.

Our life, first of all, must be brave. Fear, doubt, and timidity must be turned out of your mind, or you will be a failure. There cannot be a shadow of doubt of this. We must have a positive conviction that we can attain success. There must be vigor in our expectation, in our determination, in our endeavor. We must resolve with the energy that does things. Not only must the desire for the thing we long for be kept uppermost, but there must be strongly concentrated intensity of effort to attain our object. Above all, our mind must be stayed on God; we must depend solely on Him for help and support; we must always and everywhere petition Him whose resources are abundant and rich. Then we are on the road to success, and our efforts will be crowned with victory.

To achieve this, we must ask God for the power of His Holy Spirit. "Your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." Luke 11, 13. Without His aid we cannot accomplish anything. He illuminates our darkened understanding and fills our paralyzed will with the strength of new resolve. He brings new life into our hearts and blessed comfort to our troubled souls. He has songs for the night, cordials for the oppressive day, everything that heart can wish or need. This is the highest gift which God can bestow upon man. Where it has been once bestowed, all other gifts will follow in the wake.

Thou holy Fire, sweet Source of rest,
Grant that, with joy and hope possessed,
I always in Thy service stay,
And trouble drive me not away.
Lord, by Thy power prepare my heart,
To my weak nature strength impart.

And if a longer life
Be here on earth decreed me,
And Thou through many a strife
To ripe old age wilt lead me,

Thy patience in me shed,
Avert all sin and shame,
And crown my hoary head
With pure, untarnished fame.