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Speech on Duty

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"I slept and dreamed that life was beauty,
I woke and found that life was duty."

Few writers possess the gift of gathering into a full mosaic the flow of thought that other men of letters have scattered through their works.

Milton possessed this power in a pre-eminent degree. It is related of him that while a school boy, a prize was offered to the pupil who would write the best composition on our Lord's first miracle, the turning the water into wine. The day of collection came, the school master called for the productions, every boy's was ready except John Milton's, he had not attempted to write; the school teacher then used his reserved force - compelled. When this power was brought to bear on our old Epic poet, he scribbled on a slip of paper this sentence: - "The conscious water saw its loss and blushed;" it is needless to add who received the premium.

So it seems to me that the poet culled the sweetest phrase when

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he wrote: "I slept and dreamed that life was beauty,

I woke and found that life was duty.

No fitter theme could be found in the whole universe than a subject life, ~~not existence in the abstract which might refer to any~~ especially when it deals with existence not in the abstract, but being pinned down to concrete matter, and this concentrated mass assumes vast importance if it is endowed with the personal "Ego." Now if it is I who live, who have, who am a responsible moral agent, it behoves me to ascertain what states I may retain this living force, how best direct the powers given and under what conditions I can best enjoy myself.

Should I take the lowest phase of the subject I discover that existence is possible only under two states; that of wakefulness when both the voluntary and involuntary organs are acting, and that of sleep when only the

involuntary organs are in motion.

"Hush!" "The day is done, and the day
Falls from the wings of night.
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs
And as silently steal away." Balm
sleep descends and enfolds me
in her loving embrace I yield myself
to her, I lose ~~consciousness~~ ^{consciousness}, I sleep
aye, I dream! Is it like unto
the vision of Pharaoh, is my soul
burdened and weighed down with
anxiety? do I inquire for some
one to interpret it for me? Or is
it like the dream of Jacob, angels
descending and ascending the
ladder fixed between heaven and
earth? Perhaps my dream assumes
the proportions of physical suffering,
or maybe my heart is filled with
ecstasy over the joyfulness and
beauty of human life. Let me
reveal to you a few of the scenes
of my life that I acted while in
dreamland. 'Tis 7 o'clock P. M. I am
entering my own apartments in
the elegantly furnished home
of my parents; I tread on the

softest and most elegant carpets; I
 behold pictures by the grand
 masters. I see in my book-case the
 latest novels; I open my wardrobe
 and select one of the other party dress.
 I draw near to my dressing case, open
 my jewel casket, select the desired
 jewels, and lastly, apply the really
 essential elements to a lady's toilet
 rouge and powder. I descend to the
 parlor, meet my escort, the one all
 the girls are so jealous about,
 and am hurried away the ball,
 when there, I dance, eat ice, tete-
 tete in the conservatory, and talk
 airy nothings. Scene II. My bank
 account is unlimited. Scene III. The
 best theater will play tonight, I go
 and hear the latest sensational
 play. Act. II. My ideal has passed
 my parents have consented, I leave
 the paternal mansion to be the
 light of another home. Surely
 this merely animal gratification is
 not what the poet meant. No, he
 must have had in mind, day-reveries
 any way the sun is high in the
 heavens and I am in the land of

phantasy). This dream of beauty, has not for its end, self and self-gratification. I hear the cry of the distressed and suffering, I have at my command the means where withal to relieve their needs and with a liberal hand I succor them, or I picture myself the successful author of some popular work, enlightening and ennobling humanity; again, I am planning how by and by I shall act and work to make the home folks love and depend upon me; and so picture after picture my imagination colors.

Truly if the poet had only written, "I slept and dreamed that life was beauty," he would not have revealed half of life's phases, only the negative side of man's nature would have been disclosed and only the latent faculties would have been brought into play.

But adding, "I woke and found that life was duty," makes it complete, or as another has expressed it, "Dream, but Do." Oh! what delight it affords one to realize that he

Rejoice thou who hast broken the shackles
 of physical and mental lethargy.
 Low duty, then, be ^{found} defined, as by the
 chains of compulsion, for instance,
 "I must do this thing because
 people expect it of me, or I am
 under obligation to give this
 to my neighbor, for the favor
 he did me; this is not duty,
 but only common justice. What
 then is duty? Ethically, it is
 the moral obligation man is
 under to God, if the Lord is the
 motor force of all actions, who
 doubts that life will not assume
 the rainbow tints? Or duty in
 civil life may be summed up in
 this word, "doing." Longfellow
 realized this fact when he wrote
 "Tell me not in mournful numbers,
 Life is but an empty dream!
 For the soul is dead that slumbers,
 And things are not what they seem."

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;

Dust thou art, to dust thou returnest,
It was not spoken of the soul.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait."

Yea, it is doing to the uttermost point,
and yielding only to death, on the
mountain's summit is the Exultation
banner floating. Is the life that
has "onward" as its motto void
of happiness or beauty? Who will
be the one to cast the first
stone and say, aye! Is not
work the reflector of beauty, could
there be any loveliness without
this ceaseless power duty?

I rejoiced that I awoke and found
life duty. Not only do I find
that the grandest exponents of
literary genius have accepted
this truth as their guide, but that
the highest types of humanity
have it as their watch word.
The grandest man of present England
has duty, as his bulwark, and his
very countenance reveals moral

beauty and his every action betokens
 many grace and fixed determination;
 George Washington, our national hero,
 had it as his safe-guard; St. Paul
 was a strict adherent to this principle,
 and the typical example is the only
 Lord and Savior. Though he had
 no physical beauty and comeliness
 that men might desire him, yet
 He carried out so beautifully in
 his daily life "to do the will of
 my Father," that He has become
 the central figure of all history
 and the most perfect pattern of
 true manhood in the whole
 earth. So, if beauty is armed with
 virtue, it ~~troos~~ ^{troos} the soul, with a
 commanding but a sweet control.
 In ^{exaltation} ~~exaltation~~, I exclaim to duty:—

"Stem Daughter of the voice of God!
 O duty! if that name thou love
 Who art a Light to guide, a rod
 To check the erring, and reprove;
 Tho' who art victory and law
 When empty terror overawe;
 From vain temptations do't set free;
 And calmst the weary strife of
 frail humanity.

