Optimism: An Essay

by Helen Keller

Free public domain classic — Noveliopdf

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Optimism: An Essay

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Optimism: An Essay

Author: Helen Keller

Release date: March 13, 2010 [eBook #31622]

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/31622

Credits: Produced by Mark C. Orton, Irma Spehar and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive)

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OPTIMISM: AN ESSAY ***

Optimism

Helen Keller

Optimism An Essay By Helen Keller Author of “The Story of My Life”

New York T. Y. Crowell and Company Mdcccciii

Copyright, 1903, by Helen Keller Published November, 1903 D. B. Updike, The Merrymount Press, Boston

To My Teacher

Contents Part i Optimism Within11 Part ii Optimism Without25 Part iii The Practice of Optimism53

Part i. Optimism Within

Part i Optimism Within

C

ould we choose our environment, and were desire in human undertakings synonymous with endowment, all men would, I suppose, be optimists. Certainly most of us regard happiness as the proper end of all earthly enterprise. The will to be happy animates alike the philosopher, the prince and the chimney-sweep. No matter how dull, or how mean, or how wise a man is, he feels that happiness is his indisputable right.

It is curious to observe what different ideals of happiness people cherish, and in what singular places they look for this well-spring of their life. Many look for it in the hoarding of riches, some in the pride of power, and others in the achievements of art and literature; a few seek it in the exploration of their own minds, or in the search for knowledge.

Most people measure their happiness in terms of physical pleasure and material

possession. Could they win some visible goal which they have set on the horizon, how happy they would be! Lacking this gift or that circumstance, they would be miserable. If happiness is to be so measured, I who cannot hear or see have every reason to sit in a corner with folded hands and weep. If I am happy in spite of my deprivations, if my happiness is so deep that it is a faith, so thoughtful that it becomes a philosophy of life,—if, in short, I am an optimist, my testimony to the creed of optimism is worth hearing. As sinners stand up in meeting and testify to the goodness of God, so one who is called afflicted may rise up in gladness of conviction and testify to the goodness of life.

Once I knew the depth where no hope was, and darkness lay on the face of all things. Then love came and set my soul free. Once I knew only darkness and stillness. Now I know hope and joy. Once I fretted and beat myself against the wall that shut me in. Now I rejoice in the consciousness that I can think, act and attain heaven. My life was without past or future; death, the pessimist would say, “a consummation devoutly to be wished.” But a little word from the fingers of another fell into my hand that clutched at emptiness, and my heart leaped to the rapture of living. Night fled before the day of thought, and love and joy and hope came up in a passion of obedience to knowledge. Can anyone who has escaped such captivity, who has felt the thrill and glory of freedom, be a pessimist?

My early experience was thus a leap from bad to good. If I tried, I could not check the momentum of my first leap out of the dark; to move breast forward is a habit learned suddenly at that first moment of release and rush into the light. With the first word I used intelligently, I learned to live, to think, to hope. Darkness cannot shut me in again. I have had a glimpse of the shore, and can now live by the hope of reaching it.

So my optimism is no mild and unreasoning satisfaction. A poet once said I must be happy because I did not see the bare, cold present, but lived in a beautiful dream. I

do live in a beautiful dream; but that dream is the actual, the present,—not cold, but warm; not bare, but furnished with a thousand blessings. The very evil which the poet supposed would be a cruel disillusionment is necessary to the fullest knowledge of joy. Only by contact with evil could I have learned to feel by contrast the beauty of truth and love and goodness.

It is a mistake always to contemplate the good and ignore the evil, because by making people neglectful it lets in disaster. There is a dangerous optimism of ignorance and indifference. It is not enough to say that the twentieth century is the best age in the history of mankind, and to take refuge from the evils of the world in skyey dreams of good. How many good men, prosperous and contented, looked around and saw naught but good, while millions of their fellowmen were bartered and sold like cattle! No doubt, there were comfortable optimists who thought Wilberforce a meddlesome fanatic when he was working with might and main to free the slaves. I distrust the rash optimism in this country that cries, “Hurrah, we’re all right! This is the greatest nation on earth,” when there are grievances that call loudly for redress. That is false optimism. Optimism that does not count the cost is like a house builded on sand. A man must understand evil and be acquainted with sorrow before he can write himself an optimist and expect others to believe that he has reason for the faith that is in him.

I know what evil is. Once or twice I have wrestled with it, and for a time felt its chilling touch on my life; so I speak with knowledge when I say that evil is of no consequence, except as a sort of mental gymnastic. For the very reason that I have come in contact with it, I am more truly an optimist. I can say with conviction that the struggle which evil necessitates is one of the greatest blessings. It makes us strong, patient, helpful men and women. It lets us into the soul of things and teaches us that although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it. My optimism, then, does not rest on the absence of evil, but on a glad belief in the preponderance of good and a willing effort always to coöperate with the good, that it

may prevail. I try to increase the power God has given me to see the best in everything and every one, and make that Best a part of my life. The world is sown with good; but unless I turn my glad thoughts into practical living and till my own field, I cannot reap a kernel of the good.

Thus my optimism is grounded in two worlds, myself and what is about me. I demand that the world be good, and lo, it obeys. I proclaim the world good, and facts range themselves to prove my proclamation overwhelmingly true. To what is good I open the doors of my being, and jealously shut them against what is bad. Such is the force of this beautiful and wilful conviction, it carries itself in the face of all opposition. I am never discouraged by absence of good. I never can be argued into hopelessness. Doubt and mistrust are the mere panic of timid imagination, which the steadfast heart will conquer, and the large mind transcend.

As my college days draw to a close, I find myself looking forward with beating heart and bright anticipations to what the future holds of activity for me. My share in the work of the world may be limited; but the fact that it is work makes it precious. Nay, the desire and will to work is optimism itself.

Two generations ago Carlyle flung forth his gospel of work. To the dreamers of the Revolution, who built cloud-castles of happiness, and, when the inevitable winds rent the castles asunder, turned pessimists—to those ineffectual Endymions, Alastors and Werthers, this Scots peasant, man of dreams in the hard, practical world, cried aloud his creed of labor. “Be no longer a Chaos, but a World. Produce! produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a product, produce it, in God’s name! ’Tis the utmost thou hast in thee; out with it, then. Up, up! whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called To-day; for the Night cometh wherein no man may work.”

Some have said Carlyle was taking refuge from a hard world by bidding men grind and toil, eyes to the earth, and so forget their misery. This is not Carlyle’s thought.

“Fool!” he cries, “the Ideal is in thyself; the Impediment is also in thyself. Work out the Ideal in the poor, miserable Actual; live, think, believe, and be free!” It is plain what he says, that work, production, brings life out of chaos, makes the individual a world, an order; and order is optimism.

I, too, can work, and because I love to labor with my head and my hands, I am an optimist in spite of all. I used to think I should be thwarted in my desire to do something useful. But I have found out that though the ways in which I can make myself useful are few, yet the work open to me is endless. The gladdest laborer in the vineyard may be a cripple. Even should the others outstrip him, yet the vineyard ripens in the sun each year, and the full clusters weigh into his hand. Darwin could work only half an hour at a time; yet in many diligent half-hours he laid anew the foundations of philosophy. I long to accomplish a great and noble task; but it is my chief duty and joy to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. It is my service to think how I can best fulfil the demands that each day makes upon me, and to rejoice that others can do what I cannot. Green, the historian,[1] tells us that the world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker; and that thought alone suffices to guide me in this dark world and wide. I love the good that others do; for their activity is an assurance that whether I can help or not, the true and the good will stand sure.

I trust, and nothing that happens disturbs my trust. I recognize the beneficence of the power which we all worship as supreme—Order, Fate, the Great Spirit, Nature, God. I recognize this power in the sun that makes all things grow and keeps life afoot. I make a friend of this indefinable force, and straightway I feel glad, brave and ready for any lot Heaven may decree for me. This is my religion of optimism.

Part ii. Optimism Without

Part ii Optimism Without

O

ptimism, then, is a fact within my own heart. But as I look out upon life, my heart meets no contradiction. The outward world justifies my inward universe of good. All through the years I have spent in college, my reading has been a continuous discovery of good. In literature, philosophy, religion and history I find the mighty witnesses to my faith.

Philosophy is the history of a deaf-blind person writ large. From the talks of Socrates up through Plato, Berkeley and Kant, philosophy records the efforts of human intelligence to be free of the clogging material world and fly forth into a universe of pure idea. A deaf-blind person ought to find special meaning in Plato's Ideal World. These things which you see and hear and touch are not the reality of realities, but imperfect manifestations of the Idea, the Principle, the Spiritual; the Idea is the truth, the rest is delusion.

If this be so, my brethren who enjoy the fullest use of the senses are not aware of any reality which may not equally well be in reach of my mind. Philosophy gives to the mind the prerogative of seeing truth, and bears us into a realm where I, who am blind, am not different from you who see. When I learned from Berkeley that your eyes receive an inverted image of things which your brain unconsciously corrects, I began to suspect that the eye is not a very reliable instrument after all, and I felt as one who had been restored to equality with others, glad, not because the senses avail them so little, but because in God's eternal world, mind and spirit avail so much. It seemed to me that philosophy had been written for my special consolation, whereby I get even with some modern philosophers who apparently think that I was intended as an experimental case for their special instruction! But in a little measure my small voice of individual experience does join in the declaration of philosophy that the good is the only world, and that world is a world of spirit. It is also a universe where

order is All, where an unbroken logic holds the parts together, where disorder defines itself as non-existence, where evil, as St. Augustine held, is delusion, and therefore is not.

The meaning of philosophy to me is not only in its principles, but also in the happy isolation of its great expounders. They were seldom of the world, even when like Plato and Leibnitz they moved in its courts and drawing-rooms. To the tumult of life they were deaf, and they were blind to its distraction and perplexing diversities. Sitting alone, but not in darkness, they learned to find everything in themselves, and failing to find it even there, they still trusted in meeting the truth face to face when they should leave the earth behind and become partakers in the wisdom of God. The great mystics lived alone, deaf and blind, but dwelling with God.

I understand how it was possible for Spinoza to find deep and sustained happiness when he was excommunicated, poor, despised and suspected alike by Jew and Christian; not that the kind world of men ever treated me so, but that his isolation from the universe of sensuous joys is somewhat analogous to mine. He loved the good for its own sake. Like many great spirits he accepted his place in the world, and confided himself childlike to a higher power, believing that it worked through his hands and predominated in his being. He trusted implicitly, and that is what I do. Deep, solemn optimism, it seems to me, should spring from this firm belief in the presence of God in the individual; not a remote, unapproachable governor of the universe, but a God who is very near every one of us, who is present not only in earth, sea and sky, but also in every pure and noble impulse of our hearts, “the source and centre of all minds, their only point of rest.”

Thus from philosophy I learn that we see only shadows and know only in part, and that all things change; but the mind, the unconquerable mind, compasses all truth, embraces the universe as it is, converts the shadows to realities and makes tumultuous changes seem but moments in an eternal silence, or short lines in the

infinite theme of perfection, and the evil but “a halt on the way to good.” Though with my hand I grasp only a small part of the universe, with my spirit I see the whole, and in my thought I can compass the beneficent laws by which it is governed. The confidence and trust which these conceptions inspire teach me to rest safe in my life as in a fate, and protect me from spectral doubts and fears. Verily, blessed are ye that have not seen, and yet have believed.

All the world’s great philosophers have been lovers of God and believers in man’s inner goodness. To know the history of philosophy is to know that the highest thinkers of the ages, the seers of the tribes and the nations, have been optimists.

The growth of philosophy is the story of man’s spiritual life. Outside lies that great mass of events which we call History. As I look on this mass, I see it take form and shape itself in the ways of God. The history of man is an epic of progress. In the world within and the world without I see a wonderful correspondence, a glorious symbolism which reveals the human and the divine communing together, the lesson of philosophy repeated in fact. In all the parts that compose the history of mankind hides the spirit of good, and gives meaning to the whole.

Far back in the twilight of history I see the savage fleeing from the forces of nature which he has not learned to control, and seeking to propitiate supernatural beings which are but the creation of his superstitious fear. With a shift of imagination I see the savage emancipated, civilized. He no longer worships the grim deities of ignorance. Through suffering he has learned to build a roof over his head, to defend his life and his home, and over his state he has erected a temple in which he worships the joyous gods of light and song. From suffering he has learned justice; from the struggle with his fellows he has learned the distinction between right and wrong which makes him a moral being. He is gifted with the genius of Greece.

But Greece was not perfect. Her poetical and religious ideals were far above her practice; therefore she died, that her ideals might survive to ennoble coming ages.

Rome, too, left the world a rich inheritance. Through the vicissitudes of history her laws and ordered government have stood a majestic object-lesson for the ages. But when the stern, frugal character of her people ceased to be the bone and sinew of her civilization, Rome fell.

Then came the new nations of the North and founded a more permanent society. The base of Greek and Roman society was the slave, crushed into the condition of the wretches who “labored, foredone, in the field and at the workshop, like haltered horses, if blind, so much the quieter.” The base of the new society was the freeman who fought, tilled, judged and grew from more to more. He wrought a state out of tribal kinship and fostered an independence and self-reliance which no oppression could destroy. The story of man’s slow ascent from savagery through barbarism and self-mastery to civilization is the embodiment of the spirit of optimism. From the first hour of the new nations each century has seen a better Europe, until the development of the world demanded America.

Tolstoi said the other day that America, once the hope of the world, was in bondage to Mammon. Tolstoi and other Europeans have still much to learn about this great, free country of ours before they understand the unique civic struggle which America is undergoing. She is confronted with the mighty task of assimilating all the foreigners that are drawn together from every country, and welding them into one people with one national spirit. We have the right to demand the forbearance of critics until the United States has demonstrated whether she can make one people out of all the nations of the earth. London economists are alarmed at less than five hundred thousand foreign-born in a population of six million, and discuss earnestly the danger of too many aliens. But what is their problem in comparison with that of New York, which counts nearly one million five hundred thousand foreigners among its three and a half million citizens? Think of it! Every third person in our American metropolis is an alien. By these figures alone America’s greatness can be measured.

It is true, America has devoted herself largely to the solution of material problems—breaking the fields, opening mines, irrigating deserts, spanning the continent with railroads; but she is doing these things in a new way, by educating her people, by placing at the service of every man's need every resource of human skill. She is transmuting her industrial wealth into the education of her workmen, so that unskilled people shall have no place in American life, so that all men shall bring mind and soul to the control of matter. Her children are not drudges and slaves. The Constitution has declared it, and the spirit of our institutions has confirmed it. The best the land can teach them they shall know. They shall learn that there is no upper class in their country, and no lower, and they shall understand how it is that God and His world are for everybody.

America might do all this, and still be selfish, still be a worshipper of Mammon. But America is the home of charity as well as of commerce. In the midst of roaring traffic, side by side with noisy factory and sky-reaching warehouse, one sees the school, the library, the hospital, the park-works of public benevolence which represent wealth wrought into ideas that shall endure forever. Behold what America has already done to alleviate suffering and restore the afflicted to society—given sight to the fingers of the blind, language to the dumb lip, and mind to the idiot clay, and tell me if indeed she worships Mammon only. Who shall measure the sympathy, skill and intelligence with which she ministers to all who come to her, and lessens the ever-swelling tide of poverty, misery and degradation which every year rolls against her gates from all the nations?

When I reflect on all these facts, I cannot but think that, Tolstoi and other theorists to the contrary, it is a splendid thing to be an American. In America the optimist finds abundant reason for confidence in the present and hope for the future, and this hope, this confidence, may well extend over all the great nations of the earth.

If we compare our own time with the past, we find in modern statistics a solid

foundation for a confident and buoyant world-optimism. Beneath the doubt, the unrest, the materialism, which surround us still glows and burns at the world's best life a steadfast faith. To hear the pessimist, one would think civilization had bivouacked in the Middle Ages, and had not had marching orders since. He does not realize that the progress of evolution is not an uninterrupted march.

"Now touching goal, now backward hurl'd, Toils the indomitable world."

I have recently read an address by one whose knowledge it would be presumptuous to challenge.[2] In it I find abundant evidence of progress.

During the past fifty years crime has decreased. True, the records of to-day contain a longer list of crime. But our statistics are more complete and accurate than the statistics of times past. Besides, there are many offences on the list which half a century ago would not have been thought of as crimes. This shows that the public conscience is more sensitive than it ever was.

Our definition of crime has grown stricter, our punishment of it more lenient and intelligent. The old feeling of revenge has largely disappeared. It is no longer an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The criminal is treated as one who is diseased. He is confined not merely for punishment, but because he is a menace to society. While he is under restraint, he is treated with humane care and disciplined so that his mind shall be cured of its disease, and he shall be restored to society able to do his part of its work.

Another sign of awakened and enlightened public conscience is the effort to provide the working-class with better houses. Did it occur to any one a hundred years ago to think whether the dwellings of the poor were sanitary, convenient or sunny? Do not forget that in the "good old times" cholera and typhus devastated whole counties, and that pestilence walked abroad in the capitals of Europe.

Not only have our laboring-classes better houses and better places to work in; but employers recognize the right of the employed to seek more than the bare wage of

existence. In the darkness and turmoil of our modern industrial strifes we discern but dimly the principles that underlie the struggle. The recognition of the right of all men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, a spirit of conciliation such as Burke dreamed of, the willingness on the part of the strong to make concessions to the weak, the realization that the rights of the employer are bound up in the rights of the employed—in these the optimist beholds the signs of our times.

Another right which the State has recognized as belonging to each man is the right to an education. In the enlightened parts of Europe and in America every city, every town, every village, has its school; and it is no longer a class who have access to knowledge, for to the children of the poorest laborer the school-door stands open. From the civilized nations universal education is driving the dull host of illiteracy.

Education broadens to include all men, and deepens to reach all truths. Scholars are no longer confined to Greek, Latin and mathematics, but they also study science; and science converts the dreams of the poet, the theory of the mathematician and the fiction of the economist into ships, hospitals and instruments that enable one skilled hand to perform the work of a thousand. The student of to-day is not asked if he has learned his grammar. Is he a mere grammar-machine, a dry catalogue of scientific facts, or has he acquired the qualities of manliness? His supreme lesson is to grapple with great public questions, to keep his mind hospitable to new ideas and new views of truth, to restore the finer ideals that are lost sight of in the struggle for wealth and to promote justice between man and man. He learns that there may be substitutes for human labor—horse-power and machinery and books; but “there are no substitutes for common sense, patience, integrity, courage.”

Who can doubt the vastness of the achievements of education when one considers how different the condition of the blind and the deaf is from what it was a century ago? They were then objects of superstitious pity, and shared the lowest beggar’s lot. Everybody looked upon their case as hopeless, and this view plunged them

deeper in despair. The blind themselves laughed in the face of Haüy when he offered to teach them to read. How pitiable is the cramped sense of imprisonment in circumstances which teaches men to expect no good and to treat any attempt to relieve them as the vagary of a disordered mind! But now, behold the transformation; see how institutions and industrial establishments for the blind have sprung up as if by magic; see how many of the deaf have learned not only to read and write, but to speak; and remember that the faith and patience of Dr. Howe have borne fruit in the efforts that are being made everywhere to educate the deaf-blind and equip them for the struggle. Do you wonder that I am full of hope and lifted up?

The highest result of education is tolerance. Long ago men fought and died for their faith; but it took ages to teach them the other kind of courage,—the courage to recognize the faiths of their brethren and their rights of conscience. Tolerance is the first principle of community; it is the spirit which conserves the best that all men think. No loss by flood and lightning, no destruction of cities and temples by the hostile forces of nature, has deprived man of so many noble lives and impulses as those which his intolerance has destroyed.

With wonder and sorrow I go back in thought to the ages of intolerance and bigotry. I see Jesus received with scorn and nailed on the cross. I see his followers hounded and tortured and burned. I am present where the finer spirits that revolt from the superstition of the Middle Ages are accused of impiety and stricken down. I behold the children of Israel reviled and persecuted unto death by those who pretend Christianity with the tongue; I see them driven from land to land, hunted from refuge to refuge, summoned to the felon's place, exposed to the whip, mocked as they utter amid the pain of martyrdom a confession of the faith which they have kept with such splendid constancy. The same bigotry that oppresses the Jews falls tiger-like upon Christian nonconformists of purest lives and wipes out the Albigenses and the peaceful Vaudois, "whose bones lie on the mountains cold." I see the clouds part slowly, and I hear a cry of protest against the bigot. The

restraining hand of tolerance is laid upon the inquisitor, and the humanist utters a message of peace to the persecuted. Instead of the cry, “Burn the heretic!” men study the human soul with sympathy, and there enters into their hearts a new reverence for that which is unseen.

The idea of brotherhood redawns upon the world with a broader significance than the narrow association of members in a sect or creed; and thinkers of great soul like Lessing challenge the world to say which is more godlike, the hatred and tooth-and-nail grapple of conflicting religions, or sweet accord and mutual helpfulness. Ancient prejudice of man against his brother-man wavers and retreats before the radiance of a more generous sentiment, which will not sacrifice men to forms, or rob them of the comfort and strength they find in their own beliefs. The heresy of one age becomes the orthodoxy of the next. Mere tolerance has given place to a sentiment of brotherhood between sincere men of all denominations. The optimist rejoices in the affectionate sympathy between Catholic heart and Protestant heart which finds a gratifying expression in the universal respect and warm admiration for Leo XIII on the part of good men the world over. The centenary celebrations of the births of Emerson and Channing are beautiful examples of the tribute which men of all creeds pay to the memory of a pure soul.

Thus in my outlook upon our times I find that I am glad to be a citizen of the world, and as I regard my country, I find that to be an American is to be an optimist. I know the unhappy and unrighteous story of what has been done in the Philippines beneath our flag; but I believe that in the accidents of statecraft the best intelligence of the people sometimes fails to express itself. I read in the history of Julius Cæsar that during the civil wars there were millions of peaceful herdsmen and laborers who worked as long as they could, and fled before the advance of the armies that were led by the few, then waited until the danger was past, and returned to repair damages with patient hands. So the people are patient and honest, while their rulers stumble. I rejoice to see in the world and in this country a new and better patriotism than that

which seeks the life of an enemy. It is a patriotism higher than that of the battle-field. It moves thousands to lay down their lives in social service, and every life so laid down brings us a step nearer the time when corn-fields shall no more be fields of battle. So when I heard of the cruel fighting in the Philippines, I did not despair, because I knew that the hearts of our people were not in that fight, and that sometime the hand of the destroyer must be stayed.

Part iii. The Practice of Optimism

Part iii The Practice of Optimism

T

he test of all beliefs is their practical effect in life. If it be true that optimism compels the world forward, and pessimism retards it, then it is dangerous to propagate a pessimistic philosophy. One who believes that the pain in the world outweighs the joy, and expresses that unhappy conviction, only adds to the pain. Schopenhauer is an enemy to the race. Even if he earnestly believed that this is the most wretched of possible worlds, he should not promulgate a doctrine which robs men of the incentive to fight with circumstance. If Life gave him ashes for bread, it was his fault. Life is a fair field, and the right will prosper if we stand by our guns.

Let pessimism once take hold of the mind, and life is all topsy-turvy, all vanity and vexation of spirit. There is no cure for individual or social disorder, except in forgetfulness and annihilation. “Let us eat, drink and be merry,” says the pessimist, “for to-morrow we die.” If I regarded my life from the point of view of the pessimist, I should be undone. I should seek in vain for the light that does not visit my eyes and the music that does not ring in my ears. I should beg night and day and never be satisfied. I should sit apart in awful solitude, a prey to fear and despair. But since I consider it a duty to myself and to others to be happy, I escape a misery

worse than any physical deprivation.

Who shall dare let his incapacity for hope or goodness cast a shadow upon the courage of those who bear their burdens as if they were privileges? The optimist cannot fall back, cannot falter; for he knows his neighbor will be hindered by his failure to keep in line. He will therefore hold his place fearlessly and remember the duty of silence. Sufficient unto each heart is its own sorrow. He will take the iron claws of circumstance in his hand and use them as tools to break away the obstacles that block his path. He will work as if upon him alone depended the establishment of heaven on earth.

We have seen that the world's philosophers—the Sayers of the Word—were optimists; so also are the men of action and achievement—the Doers of the Word. Dr. Howe found his way to Laura Bridgman's soul because he began with the belief that he could reach it. English jurists had said that the deaf-blind were idiots in the eyes of the law. Behold what the optimist does. He controverts a hard legal axiom; he looks behind the dull impassive clay and sees a human soul in bondage, and quietly, resolutely sets about its deliverance. His efforts are victorious. He creates intelligence out of idiocy and proves to the law that the deaf-blind man is a responsible being.

When Haüy offered to teach the blind to read, he was met by pessimism that laughed at his folly. Had he not believed that the soul of man is mightier than the ignorance that fetters it, had he not been an optimist, he would not have turned the fingers of the blind into new instruments. No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new heaven to the human spirit. St. Bernard was so deeply an optimist that he believed two hundred and fifty enlightened men could illuminate the darkness which overwhelmed the period of the Crusades; and the light of his faith broke like a new day upon western Europe. John Bosco, the benefactor of the poor and the friendless of Italian cities, was another

optimist, another prophet who, perceiving a Divine Idea while it was yet afar, proclaimed it to his countrymen. Although they laughed at his vision and called him a madman, yet he worked on patiently, and with the labor of his hands he maintained a home for little street waifs. In the fervor of enthusiasm he predicted the wonderful movement which should result from his work. Even in the days before he had money or patronage, he drew glowing pictures of the splendid system of schools and hospitals which should spread from one end of Italy to the other, and he lived to see the organization of the San Salvador Society, which was the embodiment of his prophetic optimism. When Dr. Seguin declared his opinion that the feeble-minded could be taught, again people laughed, and in their complacent wisdom said he was no better than an idiot himself. But the noble optimist persevered, and by and by the reluctant pessimists saw that he whom they ridiculed had become one of the world's philanthropists. Thus the optimist believes, attempts, achieves. He stands always in the sunlight. Some day the wonderful, the inexpressible, arrives and shines upon him, and he is there to welcome it. His soul meets his own and beats a glad march to every new discovery, every fresh victory over difficulties, every addition to human knowledge and happiness.

We have found that our great philosophers and our great men of action are optimists. So, too, our most potent men of letters have been optimists in their books and in their lives. No pessimist ever won an audience commensurately wide with his genius, and many optimistic writers have been read and admired out of all measure to their talents, simply because they wrote of the sunlit side of life. Dickens, Lamb, Goldsmith, Irving, all the well-beloved and gentle humorists, were optimists. Swift, the pessimist, has never had as many readers as his towering genius should command, and indeed, when he comes down into our century and meets Thackeray, that generous optimist can hardly do him justice. In spite of the latter-day notoriety of the "Rubáiyát" of Omar Khayyám, we may set it down as a rule that he who would be heard must be a believer, must have a fundamental optimism in his

philosophy. He may bluster and disagree and lament as Carlyle and Ruskin do sometimes; but a basic confidence in the good destiny of life and of the world must underlie his work.

Shakespeare is the prince of optimists. His tragedies are a revelation of moral order. In “Lear” and “Hamlet” there is a looking forward to something better, some one is left at the end of the play to right wrong, restore society and build the state anew. The later plays, “The Tempest” and “Cymbeline,” show a beautiful, placid optimism which delights in reconciliations and reunions and which plans for the triumph of external as well as internal good.

If Browning were less difficult to read, he would surely be the dominant poet in this century. I feel the ecstasy with which he exclaims, “Oh, good gigantic smile o’ the brown old earth this autumn morning!” And how he sets my brain going when he says, because there is imperfection, there must be perfection; completeness must come of incompleteness; failure is an evidence of triumph for the fulness of the days. Yes, discord is, that harmony may be; pain destroys, that health may renew; perhaps I am deaf and blind that others likewise afflicted may see and hear with a more perfect sense! From Browning I learn that there is no lost good, and that makes it easier for me to go at life, right or wrong, do the best I know, and fear not. My heart responds proudly to his exhortation to pay gladly life’s debt of pain, darkness and cold. Lift up your burden, it is God’s gift, bear it nobly.

The man of letters whose voice is to prevail must be an optimist, and his voice often learns its message from his life. Stevenson’s life has become a tradition only ten years after his death; he has taken his place among the heroes, the bravest man of letters since Johnson and Lamb. I remember an hour when I was discouraged and ready to falter. For days I had been pegging away at a task which refused to get itself accomplished. In the midst of my perplexity I read an essay of Stevenson which made me feel as if I had been “outing” in the sunshine, instead of losing heart over a

difficult task. I tried again with new courage and succeeded almost before I knew it. I have failed many times since; but I have never felt so disheartened as I did before that sturdy preacher gave me my lesson in the “fashion of the smiling face.”

Read Schopenhauer and Omar, and you will grow to find the world as hollow as they find it. Read Green’s history of England, and the world is peopled with heroes. I never knew why Green’s history thrilled me with the vigor of romance until I read his biography. Then I learned how his quick imagination transfigured the hard, bare facts of life into new and living dreams. When he and his wife were too poor to have a fire, he would sit before the unlit hearth and pretend that it was ablaze. “Drill your thoughts,” he said; “shut out the gloomy and call in the bright. There is more wisdom in shutting one’s eyes than your copybook philosophers will allow.”

Every optimist moves along with progress and hastens it, while every pessimist would keep the world at a standstill. The consequence of pessimism in the life of a nation is the same as in the life of the individual. Pessimism kills the instinct that urges men to struggle against poverty, ignorance and crime, and dries up all the fountains of joy in the world. In imagination I leave the country which lifts up the manhood of the poor and I visit India, the underworld of fatalism—where three hundred million human beings, scarcely men, submerged in ignorance and misery, precipitate themselves still deeper into the pit. Why are they thus? Because they have for thousands of years been the victims of their philosophy, which teaches them that men are as grass, and the grass fadeth, and there is no more greenness upon the earth. They sit in the shadow and let the circumstances they should master grip them, until they cease to be Men, and are made to dance and salaam like puppets in a play. After a little hour death comes and hurries them off to the grave, and other puppets with other “pasteboard passions and desires” take their place, and the show goes on for centuries.

Go to India and see what sort of civilization is developed when a nation lacks faith

in progress and bows to the gods of darkness. Under the influence of Brahminism genius and ambition have been suppressed. There is no one to befriend the poor or to protect the fatherless and the widow. The sick lie untended. The blind know not how to see, nor the deaf to hear, and they are left by the roadside to die. In India it is a sin to teach the blind and the deaf because their affliction is regarded as a punishment for offences in a previous state of existence. If I had been born in the midst of these fatalistic doctrines, I should still be in darkness, my life a desert-land where no caravan of thought might pass between my spirit and the world beyond.

The Hindoos believe in endurance, but not in resistance; therefore they have been subdued by strangers. Their history is a repetition of that of Babylon. A nation from afar came with speed swiftly, and none stumbled, or slept, or slumbered, but they brought desolation upon the land, and took the stay and the staff from the people, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, and none delivered them. Woe, indeed, is the heritage of those who walk sad-thoughted and downcast through this radiant, soul-delighting earth, blind to its beauty and deaf to its music, and of those who call evil good, and good evil, and put darkness for light, and light for darkness.

What care the weather-bronzed sons of the West, feeding the world from the plains of Dakota, for the Omars and the Brahmins? They would say to the Hindoos, “Blot out your philosophy, dead for a thousand years, look with fresh eyes at Reality and Life, put away your Brahmins and your crooked gods, and seek diligently for Vishnu the Preserver.”

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement; nothing can be done without hope. When our forefathers laid the foundation of the American commonwealths, what nerved them to their task but a vision of a free community? Against the cold, inhospitable sky, across the wilderness white with snow, where lurked the hidden

savage, gleamed the bow of promise, toward which they set their faces with the faith that levels mountains, fills up valleys, bridges rivers and carries civilization to the uttermost parts of the earth. Although the pioneers could not build according to the Hebraic ideal they saw, yet they gave the pattern of all that is most enduring in our country to-day. They brought to the wilderness the thinking mind, the printed book, the deep-rooted desire for self-government and the English common law that judges alike the king and the subject, the law on which rests the whole structure of our society.

It is significant that the foundation of that law is optimistic. In Latin countries the court proceeds with a pessimistic bias. The prisoner is held guilty until he is proved innocent. In England and the United States there is an optimistic presumption that the accused is innocent until it is no longer possible to deny his guilt. Under our system, it is said, many criminals are acquitted; but it is surely better so than that many innocent persons should suffer. The pessimist cries, “There is no enduring good in man! The tendency of all things is through perpetual loss to chaos in the end. If there was ever an idea of good in things evil, it was impotent, and the world rushes on to ruin.” But behold, the law of the two most sober-minded, practical and law-abiding nations on earth assumes the good in man and demands a proof of the bad.

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. The prophets of the world have been of good heart, or their standards would have stood naked in the field without a defender. Tolstoi’s strictures lose power because they are pessimistic. If he had seen clearly the faults of America, and still believed in her capacity to overcome them, our people might have felt the stimulation of his censure. But the world turns its back on a hopeless prophet and listens to Emerson who takes into account the best qualities of the nation and attacks only the vices which no one can defend or deny. It listens to the strong man, Lincoln, who in times of doubt, trouble and need does not falter. He sees success afar, and by strenuous hope, by hoping against hope, inspires

a nation. Through the night of despair he says, “All is well,” and thousands rest in his confidence. When such a man censures, and points to a fault, the nation obeys, and his words sink into the ears of men; but to the lamentations of the habitual Jeremiah the ear grows dull.

Our newspapers should remember this. The press is the pulpit of the modern world, and on the preachers who fill it much depends. If the protest of the press against unrighteous measures is to avail, then for ninety-nine days the word of the preacher should be buoyant and of good cheer, so that on the hundredth day the voice of censure may be a hundred times strong. This was Lincoln’s way. He knew the people; he believed in them and rested his faith on the justice and wisdom of the great majority. When in his rough and ready way he said, “You can’t fool all the people all the time,” he expressed a great principle, the doctrine of faith in human nature.

The prophet is not without honor, save he be a pessimist. The ecstatic prophecies of Isaiah did far more to restore the exiles of Israel to their homes than the lamentations of Jeremiah did to deliver them from the hands of evil-doers.

Even on Christmas Day do men remember that Christ came as a prophet of good? His joyous optimism is like water to feverish lips, and has for its highest expression the eight beatitudes. It is because Christ is an optimist that for ages he has dominated the Western world. For nineteen centuries Christendom has gazed into his shining face and felt that all things work together for good. St. Paul, too, taught the faith which looks beyond the hardest things into the infinite horizon of heaven, where all limitations are lost in the light of perfect understanding. If you are born blind, search the treasures of darkness. They are more precious than the gold of Ophir. They are love and goodness and truth and hope, and their price is above rubies and sapphires.

Jesus utters and Paul proclaims a message of peace and a message of reason, a belief in the Idea, not in things, in love, not in conquest. The optimist is he who sees that

men's actions are directed not by squadrons and armies, but by moral power, that the conquests of Alexander and Napoleon are less abiding than Newton's and Galileo's and St. Augustine's silent mastery of the world. Ideas are mightier than fire and sword. Noiselessly they propagate themselves from land to land, and mankind goes out and reaps the rich harvest and thanks God; but the achievements of the warrior are like his canvas city, "to-day a camp, to-morrow all struck and vanished, a few pit-holes and heaps of straw." This was the gospel of Jesus two thousand years ago. Christmas Day is the festival of optimism.

Although there are still great evils which have not been subdued, and the optimist is not blind to them, yet he is full of hope. Despondency has no place in his creed, for he believes in the imperishable righteousness of God and the dignity of man. History records man's triumphant ascent. Each halt in his progress has been but a pause before a mighty leap forward. The time is not out of joint. If indeed some of the temples we worshipped in have fallen, we have built new ones on the sacred sites loftier and holier than those which have crumbled. If we have lost some of the heroic physical qualities of our ancestors, we have replaced them with a spiritual nobleness that turns aside wrath and binds up the wounds of the vanquished. All the past attainments of man are ours; and more, his day-dreams have become our clear realities. Therein lies our hope and sure faith.

As I stand in the sunshine of a sincere and earnest optimism, my imagination "paints yet more glorious triumphs on the cloud-curtain of the future." Out of the fierce struggle and turmoil of contending systems and powers I see a brighter spiritual era slowly emerge—an era in which there shall be no England, no France, no Germany, no America, no this people or that, but one family, the human race; one law, peace; one need, harmony; one means, labor; one taskmaster, God.

If I should try to say anew the creed of the optimist, I should say something like this: "I believe in God, I believe in man, I believe in the power of the spirit. I believe it is

a sacred duty to encourage ourselves and others; to hold the tongue from any unhappy word against God's world, because no man has any right to complain of a universe which God made good, and which thousands of men have striven to keep good. I believe we should so act that we may draw nearer and more near the age when no man shall live at his ease while another suffers." These are the articles of my faith, and there is yet another on which all depends—to bear this faith above every tempest which overfloods it, and to make it a principle in disaster and through affliction. Optimism is the harmony between man's spirit and the spirit of God pronouncing His works good.

The End

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Life and Letters of John Richard Green. Edited by Leslie Stephen.

[2] Address by the Hon. Carroll D. Wright before the Unitarian Conference, September, 1903.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OPTIMISM: AN ESSAY ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything

for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or

associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

• You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60

days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.” • You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works. • You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work. • You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at

www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.