

tion of ability are those having so little ability as to be useless, and those big-headed fools who are determined to go it alone to their self-evident disadvantage, which is a sign of insane inability.

**No Obligation to Humanity.**

No person is born with an obligation to parents, state, country, or anything else, though ignorance may assert and reassert that "at our coming into the world we contract an enormous debt to humanity which we can never discharge." Supreme nonsense! Humanity itself denies such an assertion when it holds the child irresponsible until it arrives at an age when it assumes the child to be capable of intelligently entering upon obligations. How can a child or person be held for responsibilities in which it played no part? If a man or woman, after having been declared responsible by law, enters into marriage, or any other relation, then and then only is he or she held responsible. A man owes nothing to his parents for being born. He is mighty lucky if he is bred well enough to be self-survivingly useful to others. Self-made men are the results of accidental good breeding. They did not make themselves. They are simply lucky accidents so far as they are concerned. They no more make themselves what they are than do the idiots, imbeciles and other unfortunates. Do they owe anything to their parents? It must not be forgotten that parental (largely parental) responsibility has been forced on parents by society and is little more natural to man than to the beasts of the field. Men are not over anxious to maintain their illegitimate children, yet such are often far more the results of what the world calls love, far more naturally created than those born in wedlock. Society will make a great advance when it gives all children equal rights to the support of their parents and equal hereditary rights to property.

**Humanity Does Nothing for the Individual.**

Whatever past generations have done they did for themselves. That we derive benefits therefrom has nothing to do with them. If A builds a handsome estate he does it to gratify himself, vanity included. Little cares he whether "it benefits the town," though it tickles his vanity to be told so. A dies and B buys his place and gets it cheaper than he could build one (fools build houses and wise men buy them); does B owe anything to A for having built the house? If so he is under still more obligations to him for having died, which A certainly did not do to benefit B. Not one of us is working for future generations. *Vanitas vanitatem*. When a rich man dies and "leaves millions to the public," if we only knew him it would be found that he was putting up margins on post-mortals dividends. If

he thinks to please God, superstition rules him and he is in reality offering a bribe to the eternal. Often he does it out of vanity, fearing to pass into forgetfulness. At other times he does it to advertise his wealth. Not one does it out of unadulterated love for humanity. Most of these beneficences are due to a mixture of cowardly superstition, vanity or gross egotism. Carnegie illustrates all three conditions combined. Men have left millions to the public who in their lives held it in supreme contempt. "Love of humanity," in a genuine sense, was foreign to their natures.

**"Self-Made" Contradicts the Obligation.**

If these millionaire public benefactors were sincere in their claims that they owed so much to humanity why are they so boastfully pestiferous in pushing their self-madeism down the throats of their less fortunate brethren? Mighty few of them have been so successful in their own fabrication as to be able to continue their kind in their own children. They are generally "short-bred" and have no pedigree in the line ability sense. Only inability is under any debt to humanity, for without it it would die. When a child grows to citizenship he inherits certain ready-made obligations which were originally made to be mutually beneficial to all concerned. Whether they are actually beneficial to him depends on his ability to make them so. Humanity, *per se*, will have just as much use for him as he is capable of making it useful to him and no more. That it takes care of inability is due mostly to superstition—another form of putting up margins on post-mortals dividends—and just as little from necessity as it can possibly help. Inability would die a natural death but for the nursing it gets from superstitious ignorance. The amount of actual good feeling in humanity would not run a state orphan home if left to itself to do. The hardest thing in the world to do is to look the truth in the face and admit it. Hundreds have said to the writer: "I believe what you say. Every word of it is true; but what is the use of saying it?" One man recently said: "I like your writings in THE CONSERVATIVE immensely, but you are a thundering fool for writing them unless you can live independently of the public." THE CONSERVATIVE is trying to be honest and desires honest readers. True virtue is not self-renunciation; it is intelligent confidence in self-integrity.

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**DESTRUCTION OF USEFUL BIRDS.**

The Audubon Society of Washington will ask congress to pass a "bird law." As an argument for protection of our feathered friends it will show that the egret has been hunted out to the point of

extermination from the marshes where it has taken refuge; that the cardinal, the Baltimore oriole, and the great blue heron are nearly extinct. Worse than all, it will be shown that the turkey buzzard is being sacrificed to such an extent to furnish the large single feather now worn so much by young ladies that the health of the country is menaced by the loss of its services as a scavenger. If their beauty, their song and their tender memories enshrined in art and poetry fail to touch the heart of fashion's devotees and save the birds from destruction, perhaps utilitarian consideration may induce women to at least spare us the foul and ugly but useful buzzard. —Woman's Tribune.

**MONTESQUIEUISMS.**

"The mechanic who gives his art as an inheritance to his children has left them a fortune which is multiplied in proportion to their ability."

"A man is not poor because he has nothing but because he does not work. (The poorest man in the community is he who has no ability to work. Modern altruism makes him rich by working for him.)"

"As men have given up their natural independence to live under political laws they have given up the natural community of good to live under civil laws. By the first they acquired liberty, by the second property."

"Men who have absolutely nothing, such as beggars, have many children. These people multiply in a rich or superstitious country, because they do not support the burden of society, but are themselves the burden."

"At Rome the hospitals placed every one at his ease except those who labor, except those who were industrious, except those who have land, except those who were engaged in trade. Transient help is far better than perpetual charities."

"The human mind feels such an exquisite pleasure in the exercise of power; even those who are lovers of virtue are so excessively fond of themselves that there is no man so happy as not still to have reason to mistrust his honest intentions; and, indeed, our actions depend on so many things that it is infinitely easier to do good than to do it well."

"It is a paralogism to say that the good of the individual should give way to that of the public. This can never take place, except when the government of the community, or, in other words, the liberty of the subject is concerned. This does not affect such cases as relate to private property; because the public good consists in every one's having his property, which was given him by the civil laws, invariably preserved."