

acter of different persons are explained in a precisely similar way. In a man with a liability to a special sort of emotion, whole ranges of inhibition habitually vanish, which in other men remain effective, and other sorts of inhibition take their place. When a person has an inborn genius for certain emotions, his life differs strangely from that of ordinary people, for none of their usual deterrents check him. Your mere aspirant to a type of character, on the contrary, only shows, when your natural lover, fighter, or reformer, with whom the passion is a gift of nature, comes along, the hopeless inferiority of voluntary to instinctive action. He has deliberately to overcome his inhibitions; the genius with the inborn passion seems not to feel them at all; he is free of all that inner friction and nervous waste. To a Fox, a Garibaldi, a General Booth, a John Brown, a Louise Michel, a Bradlaugh, the obstacles omnipotent over those around them are as if non-existent. Should the rest of us so disregard them, there might be many such heroes, for many have the wish to live for similar ideals, and only the adequate degree of inhibition-quenching fury is lacking.<sup>146</sup>

When I throw myself into an adventure in which I hope to find it, my heart palpitates with the uncertainty; I could wish at once to have it appear and yet to delay. A sort of painful and delicious shiver shakes me; my entire nature runs to meet the peril with an impetus that my will would in vain try to resist. (Juliette Adam: *Le General Skobelev*, *Nouvelle Revue*, 1886, abridged.) Skobelev seems to have been a cruel egoist; but the disinterested Garibaldi, if one may judge by his "Memorie," lived in an unflagging emotion of similar danger-seeking excitement.

The difference between willing and merely wishing, between having ideals that are creative and ideals that are but pinings and regrets, thus depends solely either on the amount of steam-pressure chronically driving the character in the ideal direction, or on the amount of ideal excitement transiently acquired. Given a certain amount of love, indignation, generosity, magnanimity, admiration, loyalty, or enthusiasm of self-surrender,

<sup>146</sup> The great thing which the higher excitabilities give is *courage*; and the addition or subtraction of a certain amount of this quality makes a different man, a different life. Various excitements let the courage loose. Trustful hope will do it; inspiring example will do it; love will do it, wrath will do it. In some people it is natively so high that the mere touch of danger does it, though danger is for most men the great inhibitor of action. "Love of adventure" becomes in such persons a ruling passion. "I believe," says General Skobelev, "that my bravery is simply the passion and at the same time the contempt of danger. The risk of life fills me with an exaggerated rapture. The fewer there are to share it, the more I like it. The participation of my body in the event is required to furnish me an adequate excitement. Everything intellectual appears to me to be reflex; but a meeting of man to man, a duel, a danger into which I can throw myself headforemost, attracts me, moves me, intoxicates me. I am crazy for it, I love it, I adore it. I run after danger as one runs after women; I wish it never to stop. Were it always the same, it would always bring me a new pleasure.

the result is always the same. That whole raft of cowardly obstructions, which in tame persons and dull moods are sovereign impediments to action, sinks away at once. Our conventionality,<sup>147</sup> our shyness, laziness, and stinginess, our demands for precedent and permission, for guarantee and surety, our small suspicions, timidities, despairs, where are they now? Severed like cobwebs, broken like bubbles in the sun –

*Wo sind die Sorge nun und Noth  
Die mich noch gestern wollt' erschlaffen?  
Ich scham' mich dess' im Morgenroth."*

The flood we are borne on rolls them so lightly under that their very contact is unfelt. Set free of them, we float and soar and sing. This auroral openness and uplift gives to all creative ideal levels a bright and caroling quality, which is nowhere more marked than where the controlling emotion is religious. "The true monk," writes an Italian mystic, "takes nothing with him but his lyre."

We may now turn from these psychological generalities to those fruits of the religious state which form the special subject of our present lecture. The man who lives in his religious centre of personal energy, and is actuated by spiritual enthusiasms, differs from his previous carnal self in perfectly definite ways.

The new ardor which burns in his breast consumes in its glow the lower "noes" which formerly beset him, and keeps him immune against infection from the entire groveling portion of his nature. Magnanimities once impossible are now easy; paltry conventionalities and mean incentives once tyrannical hold no sway. The stone wall inside of him has fallen, the hardness in his heart has broken down. The rest of us can, I think, imagine this by recalling our state of feeling in those temporary "melting moods" into which either the trials of real life, or the theatre, or a novel sometimes throws us. Especially if we weep! For it is then as if our tears broke through an inveterate inner dam, and let all sorts of ancient peccancies and moral stagnancies drain away, leaving us now washed and soft of heart and open to every nobler leading. With most of us the customary hardness quickly returns, but not so with saintly persons. Many saints, even as energetic ones as Teresa and Loyola, have possessed what the church traditionally reveres as a special grace, the so-called gift of tears. In these persons the melting mood seems to have held almost uninterrupted control. And as it is with tears and melting moods, so it is with other exalted affections. Their reign may come by gradual growth or by a crisis; but in either case it may have "come to stay."

<sup>147</sup> See the case on p. 58, above, where the writer describes his experiences of communion with the Divine as consisting "merely in the *temporary obliteration of the conventionalities* which usually cover my life."