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ELBERT HUBBARD II

BERT HUBBARD

We are not sent into this world to do anything into which we can not put our hearts. We have certain work to do for our bread and that is to be done strenuously, other work to do for our delight and that is to be done heartily; neither is to be done by halves or shifts, but with a will; and what is not worth this effort is not to be done at all.

— *John Ruskin*

I am Elbert Hubbard's son, and I am entirely familiar with the proposition that "Genius never reproduces."

Heretofore, it has always been necessary to sign my name, "Elbert Hubbard II" — but now there is an embarrassment in that signature, an assumption that I do not feel.

There is no Second Elbert Hubbard. To five hundred Roycrofters, to the Village of East Aurora, and to a few dozen personal friends scattered over the face of the earth, I am Bert Hubbard, plain Bert Hubbard — and as Bert Hubbard I want to be known to you.

I lay no claim to having inherited Elbert Hubbard's Genius, his Personality, his Insight into the Human Heart. I am another and totally different sort of man.

I know my limitations.

Also, I am acquainted with such ability as I possess, and I believe that it can be directed to serve you.

I got my schooling in East Aurora.

I have never been to College. But I have traveled across this Country several times with my Father.

I have traveled abroad with him. One time we walked from Edinburgh to London to prove that we could do it.

My Father has been my teacher—and I do not at all envy the College Man.

For the last twenty years I have been working in the Roycroft Shops.

I believe I am well grounded in Business—also, in Work.

When I was twelve years old my father transferred Ali Baba to the garden—and I did the chores around the house and barn for a dollar a week. From that day forward I earned every dollar that ever came to me.

I fed the printing-press at four dollars a week. Then, when we purchased a gas-engine, I was promoted to be engineer, and given a pair of long overalls.

Two or three years later I was moved into the General Office, where I opened mail and filled in orders.

Again, I was promoted into the Private Office and permitted to sign my name under my Father's, on checks.

Then the responsibility of purchasing materials was given me.

One time or another I have worked in every Department of the Roycroft Shops.

My association with Elbert Hubbard has been friendly, brotherly. I have enjoyed his complete confidence—and I have tried to deserve it.

He believed in me, loved me, hoped for me. Whether I disappointed him at times is not important. I know my average must have pleased him, because the night he said Farewell to the Roycrofters he spoke well of me, very well of me, and he left the Roycroft Institution in my charge.

He sailed away on the "Lusitania" intending to be gone several weeks. His Little Journey has been prolonged into Eternity.

But the work of Elbert and Alice Hubbard is not done. With them one task was scarcely under way when another was launched. Whether complete or incomplete, there had to be an end to their effort sometime, and this is the end.

Often Elbert Hubbard would tell the story of Tolstoy, who stopped at the fence to question the worker in the field, "My Man, if you knew you were to die tomorrow, what would you do today?" And the worker begrimed with sweat would answer, "I would plow!"

That's the way Elbert Hubbard lived and died, and yet he did more—he planned for the future. He planned the future of the Roycroft Shop. Death did not meet him as a stranger. He came as a sometime-expected friend. Father was not unprepared.

The plan that would have sustained us the seven weeks he was in Europe will sustain us seven years—and another seven years.

Elbert Hubbard's work will go on.

I know of no Memorial that would please Elbert Hubbard half so well as to broaden out the Roycroft Idea.

So we will continue to make handmade Furniture, hand-hammered Copper, Modeled Leather. We shall still triumph in the arts of Printing and Bookmaking.

The Roycroft Inn will continue to swing wide its welcoming door, and the kind greeting is always here for you.

"The Fra" will not miss an issue, and you who have enjoyed it in the past will continue to enjoy it!

"The Philistine" belonged to Elbert Hubbard. He wrote it himself for just twenty years and one month. No one else could have done it as he did. No one else can now do it as he did.

So, for very sentimental reasons—which overbalance the strong temptation to continue "The Philistine"—I consider it a duty to pay him the tribute of discontinuing the little Magazine of Protest.

The Roycrofters, Incorporated, is a band of skilled men and women. For years they have accomplished the work that has invited your admiration. You may expect much of them now. The support they have given me, the confidence they have in me, is as a great mass of power and courage pushing me on to success.

This thought I would impress upon you: It will not be the policy of The Roycrofters to imitate or copy. This place from now on is

what we make it. The past is past, the future spreads a golden red against the eastern sky.

I have the determination to make a Roycroft Shop—that Elbert Hubbard, leaning out over the balcony, will look down and say, "Good boy, Bert—good boy!"

I have Youth and Strength.

I have Courage.

My Head is up.

Forward—all of us—March!

ELIZABETH B. BROWNING

I have been in the meadows all the day,
And gathered there the nosegay that you see;
Singing within myself as bird or bee
When such do fieldwork on a morn of May.
Irreparableness



ELIZABETH B. BROWNING

Writers of biography usually begin their preambles with the rather startling statement, "The subject of this memoir was born" — Here follows a date, the name of the place and a cheerful little Mrs. Gamp anecdote: this as preliminary to "launching forth."

It was the merry Andrew Lang, I believe, who filed a general protest against these machine-made biographies, pleading that it was perfectly safe to assume the man was born; and as for the time and place it mattered little. But the merry man was wrong, for Time and Place are often masters of Fate.

For myself, I rather like the good old-fashioned way of beginning at the beginning. But I will not tell where and when Elizabeth was born, for I do not know. And I am quite sure that her husband did not know. The encyclopedias waver between London and Herefordshire, just according as the writers felt in their hearts that genius should be produced in town or country. One man, with opinions pretty well ossified on this subject, having been challenged for his statement that Mrs. Browning was born at Hope End, rushed into print in a letter to the "Gazette" with the countercheck quarrelsome to the effect, "You might as well expect throstles to build nests on Fleet Street 'buses, as for folks of genius to be born in a big city." As apology for the man's ardor I will explain that he was a believer in the Religion of the East and held that spirits choose their own time and place for materialization.

Mrs. Ritchie, authorized by Mr. Browning, declared Burn Hill, Durham, the place, and March Sixth, Eighteen Hundred Nine, the time. In reply, John H. Ingram brings forth a copy of the Tyne "Mercury," for March Fourteenth, Eighteen Hundred Nine, and points to this:

"In London, the wife of Edward M. Barrett, of a daughter."

Mr. Browning then comes forward with a fact that derricks can not budge, that is, "Newspapers have ever had small regard for truth." Then he adds, "My wife was born March Sixth, Eighteen Hundred Six, at Carlton Hall, Durham, the residence of her father's brother." One might ha' thought that this would be the end on't, but it wasn't, for Mr. Ingram came out with this sharp rejoinder: "Carlton Hall was not in Durham, but in Yorkshire. And I am authoritatively informed that it did not become the residence of S. Moulton Barrett until some time after Eighteen Hundred Ten. Mr. Browning's latest suggestions in this matter can not be accepted. In Eighteen Hundred Six, Edward Barrett, not yet twenty years of age, is scarcely likely to have already been the father of the two children assigned to him." And there the matter rests. Having told this much I shall proceed to launch forth.

The earlier years of Elizabeth Barrett's life were spent at Hope End, near Ledbury, Herefordshire. I visited the place and thereby added not only one day, but several to my life, for Ali counts not the

days spent in the chase. There is a description of Hope End written by an eminent clergyman, to whom I was at once attracted by his literary style. This gentleman's diction contains so much clearness, force and elegance that I can not resist quoting him verbatim: "The residentiary buildings lie on the ascent of the contiguous eminences, whose projecting parts and bending declivities, modeled by Nature, display astonishing harmoniousness. It contains an elegant profusion of wood, disposed in the most careless yet pleasing order; much of the park and its scenery is in view of the residence, from which vantage-point it presents a most agreeable appearance to the enraptured beholder." So there you have it!

Here Elizabeth Barrett lived until she was twenty. She never had a childhood—'t was dropped out of her life in some way, and a Greek grammar inlaid instead. Of her mother we know little. She is never quoted; never referred to; her wishes were so whisperingly expressed that they have not reached us. She glides, a pale shadow, across the diary pages. Her husband's will was to her supreme; his whim her conscience. We know that she was sad, often ill, that she bore eight children. She passed out seemingly unwept, unhonored and unsung, after a married existence of sixteen years.

Elizabeth Barrett had the same number of brothers and sisters that Shakespeare had; and we know no more of the seven Barretts who were swallowed by oblivion than we do of the seven Shakespeares that went not astray.

Edward Moulton Barrett had a sort of fierce, passionate, jealous affection for his daughter Elizabeth. He set himself the task of educating her from her very babyhood. He was her constant companion, her tutor, adviser, friend. When six years old she studied Greek, and when nine made translations in verse. Mr. Barrett looked on this sort of thing with much favor, and tightened his discipline, reducing the little girl's hours for study to a system as severe as the laws of Draco. Of course, the child's health broke. From her thirteenth year she appears to us like a beautiful spirit with an astral form; or she would, did we not perceive that this beautiful form is being racked with pain. No wonder some one has asked, "Where then was the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children?"

But this brave spirit did not much complain. She had a will as strong as her father's, and felt a Spartan pride in doing all that he asked and a little more. She studied, wrote, translated, read and thought.

And to spur her on and to stimulate her, Mr. Barrett published several volumes of her poems. It was immature, pedantic work, but still it had a certain glow and gave promise of the things yet to come.

One marked event in the life of Elizabeth Barrett occurred when Hugh Stuart Boyd arrived at Hope End. He was a fine, sensitive, soul—a poet by nature and a Greek scholar of repute. He came on Mr. Barrett's invitation to take Mr. Barrett's place as tutor. The young girl was confined to her bed through the advice of physicians; Boyd was blind.

Here at once was a bond of sympathy. No doubt this break in the monotony of her life gave fresh courage to the fair young woman. The gentle, sightless poet relaxed the severe hours of study. Instead of grim digging in musty tomes they talked: he sat by her bedside holding the thin hands (for the blind see by the sense of touch), and they talked for hours—or were silent, which served as well. Then she would read to the blind man and he would recite to her, for he had the blind Homer's memory. She grew better, and the doctors said that if she had taken her medicine regularly, and not insisted on getting up and walking about as guide for the blind man, she might have gotten entirely well.

In that fine poem, "Wine of Cyprus," addressed to Boyd, we see how she acknowledges his goodness. There is no wine equal to the wine of friendship; and love is only friendship—plus something else. There is nothing so hygienic as friendship.

Hell is a separation, and Heaven is only a going home to our friends.

Mr. Barrett's fortune was invested in sugar-plantations in Jamaica. Through the emancipation of the blacks his fortune took to itself wings. He had to give up his splendid country home—to break the old ties. It was decided that the family should move to London. Elizabeth had again taken to her bed. The mattress on which she lay

was borne down the steps by four men; one man might have carried her alone, for she weighed only eighty-five pounds, so they say.

Crabb Robinson, who knew everything and everybody, being very much such a man as John Kenyon, has left on record the fact that Mr. Kenyon had a face like a Benedictine monk, a wit that never lagged, a generous heart, and a tongue that ran like an Alpine cascade.

A razor with which you can not shave may have better metal in it than one with a perfect edge. One has been sharpened and the other not. And I am very sure that the men who write best do not necessarily know the most; Fate has put an edge on them—that's all. A good kick may start a stone rolling, when otherwise it rests on the mountain-side for a generation.

Kenyon was one type of the men who rest on the mountain-side. He dabbled in poetry, wrote book-reviews, collected rare editions, attended first nights, spoke mysteriously of "stuff" he was working on; and sometimes confidentially told his lady friends of his intention to bring it out when he had gotten it into shape, asking their advice as to bindings, etc. Men of this type rarely bring out their stuff, for the reason that they never get it into shape. When they refer to the novel they have on the stocks, they refer to a novel they intend to write. It is yet in the ink-bottle. And there it remains—all for the want of one good kick—but perhaps it's just as well.

Yet these friendly beings are very useful members of society. They are brighter companions and better talkers than the men who exhaust themselves in creative work and at odd times favor their friends with choice samples of literary irritability. John Kenyon wrote a few bright little things, but his best work was in the encouragement he gave others. He sought out all literary lions and tamed them with his steady glance. They liked his prattle and good-cheer, and he liked them for many reasons—one of which was because he could go away and tell how he advised them about this, that and the other. Then he fed them, too.

And so unrivaled was Kenyon in this line that he won for himself the title of "The Feeder of Lions." Now, John Kenyon—rich, idle, bookish and generous—saw in the magazines certain fine little poems by one Elizabeth Barrett. He also ascertained that she had pub-

lished several books. Mr. Kenyon bought one of these volumes and sent it by a messenger with a little note to Miss Barrett telling how much he had enjoyed it, and craved that she would inscribe her name and his on the fly-leaf and return by bearer. Of course she complied with such a modest request so gracefully expressed; these things are balm to poets' souls. Next, Mr. Kenyon called to thank Miss Barrett for the autograph. Soon after, he wrote to inform her of a startling fact that he had just discovered: they were kinsmen, cousins or something—a little removed, but cousins still. In a few weeks they wrote letters back and forth beginning thus: Dear Cousin.

And I am glad of this cousinly arrangement between lonely young people. They grasp at it; and it gives an excuse for a bit of closer relationship than could otherwise exist with propriety. Goodness me! is he not my cousin? Of course he may call as often as he chooses. It is his right.

But let me explain here that at this time Mr. Kenyon was not so very young—that is, he was not absurdly young; he was fifty. But men who really love books always have young hearts. Kenyon's father left him a fortune, no troubles had ever come his way, and his was not the temperament that searches them out. He dressed young, looked young, acted young, felt young.

No doubt John Kenyon sincerely admired Elizabeth Barrett, and prized her work. And while she read his mind a deal more understandingly than he did her poems, she was grateful for his kindly attention and well-meant praise. He set about to get her poems into better magazines and to find better publishers for her work. He was not a gifted poet himself, but to dance attendance on one afforded a gratification to his artistic impulse. He could not write sublime verse himself, but he could tell others how. So Miss Barrett showed her poems to Mr. Kenyon, and Mr. Kenyon advised that the P's be made bolder and the tails to the Q's be lengthened. He also bought her a new kind of manuscript paper, over which a quill pen would glide with glee: it was the kind Byron used. But best of all, Mr. Kenyon brought his friends to call on Miss Barrett; and many of these friends were men with good literary instincts. The meeting with these strong minds was no doubt a great help to the little lady, shut up in a big house and living largely in dreams.

Mary Russell Mitford was in London about this time on a little visit, and of course was sought out by John Kenyon, who took her sightseeing. She was fifty years old, too; she spoke of herself as an old maid, but didn't allow others to do so. Friends always spoke of her as "Little Miss Mitford," not because she was little, but because she acted so. Among other beautiful sights that Mr. Kenyon wished to show gushing little Mary Mitford was a Miss Barrett who wrote things. So together they called on Miss Barrett.

Little Miss Mitford looked at the pale face in its frame of dark curls, lying back among the pillows. Little Miss Mitford bowed and said it was a fine day; then she went right over and kissed Miss Barrett, and these two women held each other's hands and talked until Mr. Kenyon twisted nervously and hinted that it was time to go.

Miss Barrett had not been out for two months, but now these two insisted that she should go with them. The carriage was at the door, they would support her very tenderly, Mr. Kenyon himself would drive—so there could be no accidents and they would bring her back the moment she was tired. So they went, did these three, and as Mr. Kenyon himself drove there were no accidents.

I can imagine that James the coachman gave up the reins that day with only an inward protest, and after looking down and smiling reassurance Mr. Kenyon drove slowly towards the Park; little Miss Mitford forgot her promise not to talk incessantly; and the "dainty, white-porcelain lady" brushed back the raven curls from time to time and nodded indulgently.

Not long ago I called at Number Seventy-four Gloucester Place, where the Barretts lived. It is a plain, solid brick house, built just like the ten thousand other brick houses in London where well-to-do tradesmen live. The people who now occupy the house never heard of the Barretts, and surely do not belong to a Browning Club. I was told that if I wanted to know anything about the place I should apply to the "Agent," whose name is 'Opkins and whose office is in Clifford Court, off Fleet Street. The house probably has not changed in any degree in these fifty years, since little Miss Mitford on one side and Mr. Kenyon on the other, tenderly helped Miss Barrett down the steps and into the carriage.

I lingered about Gloucester Place for an hour, but finding that I was being furtively shadowed by various servants, and discovering further that a policeman had been summoned to look after my case, I moved on.

That night after the ride, Miss Mitford wrote a letter home and among other things she said: "I called today at a Mr. Barrett's. The eldest daughter is about twenty-five. She has some spinal affection, but she is a charming, sweet young woman who reads Greek as I do French. She has published some translations from Æschylus and some striking poems. She is a delightful creature, shy, timid and modest."

The next day Mr. Kenyon gave a little dinner in honor of Miss Mitford, who was the author of a great book called, "Our Village." That night when Miss Mitford wrote her usual letter to the folks down in the country, telling how she was getting along, she described this dinner-party. She says: "Wordsworth was there—an adorable old man. Then there was Walter Savage Landor, too, as splendid a person as Mr. Kenyon himself, but not so full of sweetness and sympathy. But best of all, the charming Miss Barrett, who translated the most difficult of the Greek plays, 'Prometheus Bound.' She has written most exquisite poems, too, in almost every modern style. She is so sweet and gentle, and so pretty that one looks at her as if she were some bright flower." Then in another letter Miss Mitford adds: "She is of a slight, delicate figure, with a shower of dark curls falling on either side of a most expressive face; large tender eyes, richly fringed by dark lashes; a smile like a sunbeam, and such a look of youthfulness that I had some difficulty in persuading a friend that she was really the translator of Æschylus and the author of the 'Essay on Mind.'"

When Miss Mitford went back home, she wrote Miss Barrett a letter 'most every day. She addresses her as "My Sweet Love," "My Dearest Sweet," and "My Sweetest Dear." She declares her to be the gentlest, strongest, sanest, noblest and most spiritual of all living persons. And moreover she wrote these things to others and published them in reviews. She gave Elizabeth Barrett much good advice and some not so good. Among other things she says: "Your one fault, my dear, is obscurity. You must be simple and plain. Think of

the stupidest person of your acquaintance, and when you have made your words so clear that you are sure he will understand, you may venture to hope it will be understood by others."

I hardly think that this advice caused Miss Barrett to bring her lines down to the level of the stupidest person she knew. She continued to write just as she chose. Yet she was grateful for Miss Mitford's glowing friendship, and all the pretty gush was accepted, although perhaps with good large pinches of the Syracuse product.

Of course there are foolish people who assume that gushing women are shallow, but this is jumping at conclusions. A recent novel gives us a picture of "a tall soldier," who, in camp, was very full of brag and bluster. We are quite sure that when the fight comes on this man with the lubricated tongue will prove an arrant coward; we assume that he will run at the first smell of smoke. But we are wrong—he stuck; and when the flag was carried down in the rush, he rescued it and bore it bravely so far to the front that when he came back he brought another—the tawdry, red flag of the enemy!

I slip this in here just to warn hasty folk against the assumption that talkative people are necessarily vacant-minded. Man has a many-sided nature, and like the moon reveals only certain phases at certain times. And as there is one side of the moon that is never revealed at all to dwellers on the planet Earth, so mortals may unconsciously conceal certain phases of soul-stuff from each other.

Miss Barrett seems to have written more letters and longer ones to Miss Mitford than to any of her other correspondents, save one. Yet she was aware of this rather indiscreet woman's limitations and wrote down to her understanding.

To Richard H. Horne she wrote freely and at her intellectual best. With this all-round, gifted man she kept up a correspondence for many years; and her letters now published in two stout volumes afford a literary history of the time. At the risk of being accused of lack of taste, I wish to say that these letters of Miss Barrett's are a deal more interesting to me than any of her longer poems. They reveal the many-sided qualities of the writer, and show the workings of her mind in various moods. Poetry is such an exacting form that it never allows the author to appear in dressing-gown and slip-

pers; neither can he call over the back fence to his neighbor without loss of dignity.

Horne was author, editor and publisher. His middle name was Henry, but following that peculiar penchant of the ink-stained fraternity to play flimflam with their names, he changed the Henry to Hengist; so we now see it writ thus: R. Hengist Horne.

He found a market for Miss Barrett's wares. More properly, he insisted that she should write certain things to fit certain publications in which he was interested. They collaborated in writing several books. They met very seldom, and their correspondence has a fine friendly flavor about it, tempered with a disinterestedness that is unique. They encourage each other, criticize each other. They rail at each other in witty quips and quirks, and at times the air is so full of gibes that it looks as if a quarrel were appearing on the horizon—no bigger than a man's hand—but the storm always passes in a gentle shower of refreshing compliments.

Meantime, dodging in and out, we see the handsome, gracious and kindly John Kenyon.

Much of the time Miss Barrett lived in a darkened room, seeing no one but her nurse, the physician and her father. Fortune had smiled again on Edward Barrett—a legacy had come his way, and although he no longer owned the black men in Jamaica, yet they were again working for him. Sugar-cane mills ground slow, but small.

The brilliant daughter had blossomed in intellect until she was beyond her teacher. She was so far ahead that he called to her to wait for him. He could read Greek; she could compose in it. But she preferred her native tongue, as every scholar should. Now, Mr. Barrett was jealous of the fame of his daughter. The passion of father for daughter, of mother for son—there is often something very loverlike in it—a deal of whimsy! Miss Barrett's darkened room had been illumined by a light that the gruff and goodly merchant wist not of. Loneliness and solitude and physical pain and heart-hunger had taught her things that no book recorded nor tutor knew. Her father could not follow her; her allusions were obscure, he said, wilfully obscure; she was growing perverse.