

A BOOK OF MEDITATIONS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649024124

A Book of Meditations by Edward Howard Griggs

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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**A BOOK OF
MEDITATIONS**



Albert Hervey

A BOOK *of*
MEDITATIONS

By
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The New Humanism

THIRD EDITION

NEW YORK

1903

B. W. HUEBSCH

Time Sweeps On

[Florence, December 3, 1896]

THE pink color fades from the light fleeces of cloud, the twilight descends over the city, in the street the crier calls the evening papers, the throng hastens homeward in the dusk:

Men work or rest, but Time sweeps on!

The glory of Italy crumbles from the walls where fading frescoes decay, it broods over old churches and palaces like the fading light over the darkening city, it is buried in the countless pictures in which it descends from the past:

The sun shines and is silent, but Time sweeps on!

The Greek is a splendid memory, the Egyptian and Assyrian a dim legend, the palaces of Nineveh are fallen, the splendors of Alexandria are sunk beneath the mud of the Nile. The Jew prays beside the weeping wall that sorrowfully whispers the past of Solomon, Babylon is lost in the mist, and Tyre and Carthage are but the vibrant echoes of a forgotten dream:

Nations rise and fall, but Time sweeps on!

Where the Britons, clothed in skins, met under some ancient oak, there vast and gloomy cities vomit their poisonous breath. Where Alexander led his adventurous soldiers or Cleopatra

TIME SWEEPS ON

met the legions of Rome, there English and German traders barter the machine-woven stuffs of to-day. Where cities stood the sand whirls in wild triumph, and the gardens in which lovers sang echo to some night beast of prey. The golden palace of Theodoric is shrunk to the fragment of a wall. The tomb of an emperor is the play-house of the mob. Causes for which men fought and died are forgotten, and the fighters, too, are locked in the vast embrace :

Men live and die, but Time sweeps on!

The figures carved upon the graves of the Crusaders are worn smooth by innumerable feet. The walls of Venetian palaces which echoed to the laughter of gorgeous women are lipped by the silent kisses of the dead canals. The Forum where Cato and Cicero walked is sunk below the level of the street and littered with the stone waste of what once were temples :

Men hate and love, but Time sweeps on!

On, on, relentlessly, unhurried by our passionate desires, unchecked by our wild regret, remorselessly, unheedingly, Time sweeps on. Carrying us with it in its merciless and exultant flood, or leaving us stranded like foam-bubbles upon the shore ; sweeping vast civilizations into arrogant being, and surging over their last dying traces :

Time ever sweeps on, and on, and on!

THE SPIRIT

[Paris, December 29, 1896]

SUBTLE are the rhythms and harmonies of the spirit. The call of a bird at twilight, the shimmer of light through the forest leaves, the glow that echoes the sun in the evening sky, the pearls of dew on the morning grass—why do these waken such memories and make musical such secret chords of the heart? The rhythms of the spirit are past comprehension, yet life's sweetness and pain are woven of their invisible harmonies.

THE MYSTERY

[Rome, December 15, 1898]

MYSTERY upon mystery! Out of the dark the child wakens, with strange wonder in his eyes. His play is the echo of life, and he hastens from it to the love and work of the day. The youth reaches back into the dim human past, out into the abyss of nature, above into the blue mystery of the heavens. In the full light of day the man struggles. The hunger for bread, the thirst for fame, the desire to care for those he loves, press upon him. Like the plough across the field he is driven into the narrow furrow of life. The forest invites him and the heaven shines upon him. He has crossed the field and enters the cool shade of the wood. The brooks murmur of miracles and the birds twitter the mysteries of the forest. He passes down the hill-side and comes to the changeless river. He crosses it into the night beyond. Mystery upon mystery! Retreating ever before us, clothing itself with darkness or veiling itself with light; hinted in the shimmer of olive-leaves and the cooing of countless doves; behind the wide eyes of children and the shut lips of pain; brooding just beyond the tragic destiny, and echoing back from the smile of joy! Mystery upon mystery!

OPPORTUNITY

[Chautauque, August 14, 1900]

WHY can one not realize constantly that *to-day* is the opportunity for sublime living. Consecrate some fragment of time every day to the quiet effort to see things in relation: do not depend upon the mere accident of distance to give truth.