

**ORGANIZATION IN  
DAILY  
LIFE: AN ESSAY**

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Organization in Daily Life: An Essay by Arthur Helps

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**ARTHUR HELPS**

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# ORGANIZATION

IN DAILY LIFE.

AN ESSAY.

*By Arthur Helps.*



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1862.

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## PREFACE.

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**T**HIS Essay, as the reader will see, was written some time ago; and both in it, and in the conversation which follows, the Author may have uttered sentiments and opinions which the events that have since occurred would modify. He thinks it better, however, not to attempt any such modification.

The two chief instances in which modification would have been necessary, are in reference to what is said about France and America.

In the interval of time that has elapsed since the writing of the essay, the conduct of France has been of a nature to attract the sympathy of other nations. In America, unhappily, the

reverse has occurred. The Northern States have persevered in an attempt at conquest, which may be noble in their own eyes, but which in ours offers no prospect of good. Let it be granted that success should ultimately attend their efforts in arms, we in Europe cannot but foresee a new train of difficulties arising out of that success. We think it is a conquest which even victories may rather hinder than promote. Then, there has been amongst them a violence of language, which, though it may mean much less than it says, must tend to alienate from them the sympathies of other nations, especially of England. Their policy, as regards international law and commercial intercourse, has been retrograde. Their Statesmen have shown a cruel averseness to admit, until the last moment, the wrongfulness of an act which civilized Europe, with marvellous unanimity, protested against. They have destroyed, or at least have endeavoured to destroy, one of the most precious of the possessions of the world—a harbour. And then they



say, 'Love us, admire us, sympathize with us, for we are your brethren.' But we cannot do so. A similar difficulty often occurs in private life. Your friend comes to you to tell you of some great wrong that he says he has endured; and, as he angrily relates his story, you find that it so little bears out his first statement, that you are compelled, if you are to be a friend to truth and justice as well as to him, to disapprove of his proceedings. If your friend is very loveable, you sometimes part from truth and justice, and, imposing silence on your judgment, become a hearty partizan of his. But the friendship of nations is not so close as that; and, even when joined in the most amicable relations, they are apt to view each other's conduct with somewhat of a judicial impartiality.

Then, the Northern States appeal to us, as Englishmen, by our hatred to slavery, to sympathize with them. But the trumpet of Freedom, as sounded by them, gives such an uncertain sound, that we cannot respond to its summons. We look around, and see the quiet,



persevering, self-sacrificing manner in which Russia is labouring to do away with the evil of serfdom ; but we do not discern anything like a prospect of such work as that, whether the North or the South prevail in America. At present how can we sympathize ?

Yet the regard of the two nations for each other is not lost. It remains with the Americans themselves to win back in all its fulness the affectionate regard of Great Britain. We feel that calamity is new to them, and that their rage is like that of a child which beats itself, and the ground, and all bystanders, on the occasion of its first misfortune. When mature counsels, patient thoughts, and generous acts are manifested by our American kindred, England will be the first to hail this change with supreme delight. And even now, in the breasts of such high-minded politicians as Mr. Gladstone, there is an anxiety to think the best of the Americans that can be thought, and to show the utmost forbearance towards a people whose usual clear sense is unhinged by great calamity.



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PREFACE

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It is quite probable that we do not put ourselves sufficiently, by the aid of imagination, into the place of the Northern Americans; and do not recognise fully how natural, and, to a certain extent, how noble an aspiration it is to maintain undiminished the limits of a great and nascent empire. If the position of a disengaged by-stander gives wisdom and justness of view, it also imparts a certain coolness and hardness which are eminently distasteful to the heated and animated partizan who is in the thick of the contest. Neutrality has its merits and its gains, but amongst these attractiveness cannot be reckoned. Men have loved their enemies, but never their critics. It behoves us not to forget these unenviable consequences of neutrality when we are commenting upon that which we deem to be most unjust anger on the part of the Americans towards ourselves.

And if they, on their side, could but know how little we are swayed by material interests in our conduct towards them; if they could but believe with what sincerity we deprecate the

present disastrous contest, not for our own sake, but for the sake of suffering humanity; if, in short, they could but perceive that they misunderstand us thoroughly;—the more generous men amongst them would hasten to re-knit those ties arising from like origin, kindred language, and similar modes of thought, which are now so unhappily threatened with disseverance. This great work remains for them to do. It is a sort of treason to human nature to suppose that it will not yet be done, and to conclude (which God forbid!) that our present differences are to prolong themselves and harden into an ignoble animosity, which would be the greatest evil that could be brought upon the world in our generation, and which would signalize itself as an abiding evil for generations yet to come.

LONDON,

*March, 1862.*

