

**THE ART OF LIFE
SERIES. THE USE OF
THE MARGIN**

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The art of life series. The Use of the Margin by Edward Howard Griggs

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EDWARD HOWARD GRIGGS

**THE ART OF LIFE
SERIES. THE USE OF
THE MARGIN**

The Use of the Margin

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

THE NEW HUMANISM

A BOOK OF MEDITATIONS

MORAL EDUCATION

HUMAN EQUIPMENT


THE ART OF LIFE SERIES
Edward Howard Griggs, Editor

The Use of the Margin

BY
EDWARD HOWARD GRIGGS

*WITH AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE SERIES*

NEW YORK
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1912



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INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

OF ALL problems, those of human living are most absorbingly interesting, just because they never reach a final solution. In all our living is an unavoidable element of experiment. If we wait until we know how to live before we begin, we never begin. If we do not make friends until we know all about the laws of friendship and all the subtle elements involved in the adjustment of one personality to another, we die friendless. If we do not choose a vocation until we know all the laws determining the active expression of our capacities in some avenue of work, we fail to find our call.

Thus it is necessary to dare something courageously in all actively growing human life. The most we can hope for is light enough to take the next step; and

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then we must take it bravely, trusting that, if we do, the light will still be one step in advance.

This element of experiment in all human living means that life can never be reduced to exact science, but will always belong in the field of art. Now art is the most discouraging and the most exalting thing we know: the most discouraging because we never come to an end, every achievement being only a new failure on the basis of which we must try again. But art is also the most exalting thing we know—for exactly the same reason: we may always do better if we try; we reach no finished conclusion; each attainment is an inspiration to fresh endeavor, and we may go on limitlessly in the growth of the spirit through the succession of forms.

Science, moreover, can be taught; but art must be learned in practice. Granted a good mind in teacher and student, the facts and laws of science may be given

over from one mind to another; but the most that a teacher of art can hope to accomplish is to suggest and stimulate activity and, by the sparing use of criticism, correct faults, while the art must be acquired by the student solely through his own effort and activity.

May we not add that the highest and most universal fine art, gathering up all the others under itself and giving them place and meaning, is the art of living? The most glorious picture ever painted is in the color of life, on the background of time and nature, in the shape of a good deed. The most wonderful of songs, beyond all that ever came from brain of poet or lips of singer, is made up of melodious days in the sweet harmony of a beautiful lifetime.

The aim of this series of brief books is to illuminate this never-to-be-finished art of living. There is no thought of solving the problems or giving dogmatic theories of conduct. Rather the purpose