

# **STUDIES IN CHARACTER**

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Studies in character by Carol Norton

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**CAROL NORTON**

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CHARACTER**



# Studies in Character

BY

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*Author of "Woman's Cause," "The New World,"  
"Poems and Verses"*



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## STUDIES IN CHARACTER.

WE are all better not worse than we picture ourselves to be. Self-depreciation is often mistaken for humility, while on the other hand self-exaggeration frequently usurps the throne of genuine self-knowledge. True character, and the knowledge thereof, invariably lies within the intermediate space between the extremes of human estimate of individual worth. Above the person, frail, imperfect and human, towers the noble individual whose Ego is the Deity, whose abiding place is perfection, and whose destiny is immortal dominion over the lesser creations of infinite Mind. Honesty to one's self is as important as to one's fellow men. Dignified and sincere self-confidence, if built upon a foundation of spiritual strength and demonstrable ability, is not egotism but symmetrical individualism. Men rise in the

scale of being through trust in their divine characteristics, which in some instances abide like certain treasures near the surface of their minds, while in other cases virtue, and the strength it begets, lie deep in the nature, latent in consciousness. Most men manifest certain cardinal virtues with conspicuous force, even if such virtues are surrounded with many weeds of human nature. If men are approached, dealt with, and reasonably trusted upon the basis of these visible strong points, they usually respond to our advances, give us their confidence, and allow us to help them. Society and life is founded upon a basis of divine reciprocity. We are rich as we give; we live in proportion to the unselfishness of our love, and we become poor in the ratio that we indulge habits of introspection, self-centered interest and personal gain. Pure selfless love increases through reflection and radiation, not through processes of exclusiveness or personality. Heaven is to us an individual kingdom of immortal bliss, if we seek it for its own glory of idealism. But if fear be the motive power that

actuates our steps toward its portals, it has for us "no glory, no light nor sunshine pure." Good is its own best friend and rewarder, and vice and dishonesty their own worst enemies and destroyers. Men come closest to their true selves in the sober moments of life, under the chastening shadows of sorrow and loss; also through the operation of contrasting their own with stronger and grander natures. Comparisons are often helpful, frequently discouraging, sometimes harmful. Life is made up of states and stages of comparison. The laws of progression and evolution involve constant comparisons of the attainments and possessions of yesterday with the added gains of to-day. Involuntarily our thoughts enter into processes of comparison. To the extent only that this habit begets increased activity and optimism can it be said to be a legitimate one. The ever-present to-day is the raw material out of which to-morrow is made. Our pasts are dead, lifeless, and are of value to us in the practical now of to-day only as their deep lessons have been intelligently assimilated. The