

**SELF-RELIANCE, INITIATIVE,
LOVE OF WORK AND
CONCENTRATION HELP THE
INDIVIDUAL TO OVERCOME
DIFFICULTIES**

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Self-Reliance, Initiative, Love of Work and Concentration Help the Individual to Overcome Difficulties by Edward Detras Bettens

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EDWARD DETRAS BETTENS

**SELF-RELIANCE, INITIATIVE,
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INDIVIDUAL TO
OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES**

TO
THE MEMORY
OF
MRS. LOUISE E. BETTENS

Serene and patient in Life's sunset hour,
With the calm twilight stealing on apace,
Reflected in her sweet benignant face,
Which shines in beauty like a cherished flower—
A dear devoted Mother keeps her dower
Of Goodness, Faith, Unselfishness and Grace;
Toil, disappointment, grief have left no trace
Save in her Love's forever widening power!

She has lived wisely through her many years;
Fulfilled her mission with unsparing zeal;
Enjoyed the spell of Letters and of Art;
She has seen rainbows in all storms of tears;
To ties of Friendship has been ever leal,
In perfect harmony of Mind and Heart.

NATHAN HASKELL DOLE.

TWO GREAT TEACHERS

E. D. Batterson

12-16-19

350836

NEW YORK, September 5, 1919.

THOMAS FENTON TAYLOR, Esq.*

DEAR TAYLOR:

"Why don't you justify to me, your opinion of Henry Adams as a teacher, is your question in your letter to me dated September 3rd, 1919?" Then you add "I took three one year courses in History with him."

The original Rochat and Bettens emigrants—my ancestors—settled in Virginia about the year 1800, Mr. Rochat coming from Paris, France, and Mr. Bettens from Switzerland. They had lived through the period of the French Revolution, and in Virginia, Thomas Jefferson was the great leader.

The spirit of inquiry, then prevailing in Europe and in the United States, was not objectionable to these two Emigrants, and perhaps I, one of their descendants today, am inclined to favor free inquiry into every subject. And this may explain why some teachers, very learned men, who base their instruction to a great extent on authority do not stand as high, in my estimation, as some other teachers who may be willing to put to the test any and every tradition, custom, and authority.

From the time of my birth April 11, 1848, in Vevay, Indiana, French and not English was taught me, and up to about my seventh year, I could not talk nor understand English. I do not recollect of attending any school, until about 1857, on arriving in Cincinnati, Ohio, I entered a District School on Sycamore Street, of which Mr. Reynolds was the Principal. At that time, my general knowledge of the studies taught to children of the age of nine, was about the same as that of the other pupils, except that I was woefully deficient in handwriting. Because of that deficiency I was dropped into a class, in school, lower than the one into which I was first entered as a pupil. Not one of the teachers of that District School do I remember, except its Principal, Mr. Reynolds.

From that District School, I entered the Second Intermediate School, where a Miss McGill was a teacher. During a lesson, or examination, in penmanship, Miss McGill came up behind me, looked over my shoulders, at my writing—and down on my hand, holding the pen, came her rattan, and a second stroke of the rattan followed, because of a blot on the copy book, caused, in fact, by the first stroke of the rattan! I forgive her. Her niece, a pupil in that Intermediate School, wished to go to her (the niece's) father's law office, and Miss McGill,

*Class of 1875 Harvard College.

asked me to be the niece's escort. From the school house to the lawyer's office, this niece and I walked, she hugging, as well as she could, the walls of the houses, and I walking along the edge of the curb stone.

Miss McGill is the only teacher of that Second Intermediate School of whom I have any recollection.

In the fall of 1864 I entered Woodward High School, Cincinnati, Ohio, the Principal of which was Mr. George W. Harper. I had been a pupil there about four weeks, when Mr. Harper told me that my marks in all of my studies, except mathematics, were satisfactory.

"I do not understand mathematics," I said to Mr. Harper. He then told me not to study any of my studies, except mathematics for the coming month. He would give me a perfect mark, for that month, in all of my studies, except mathematics. "Your trouble," he said, "is that the foundation for a knowledge of mathematics was not properly laid. Therefore, start from the very beginning of a mathematical education, and, during this month, work on mathematics only." I followed his advice, and on graduating from Woodward in June, 1868, I was awarded the Ray Silver Medal for excellence in mathematics—which medal I still have.

I entered Harvard College, as a Freshman, in September, 1869. About the month of December, 1869, in Stoughton Hall, Room 2, Harvard College, I was preparing for a coming examination in mathematics, when my classmate, J. O. Shaw, asked me to tutor him for that examination, offering to pay me \$1.50 per hour. I was dumbfounded, and offered to let him study with me, without any payment, as I did not think that I was competent to be a teacher in mathematics. He refused to agree to this, saying that he, and other of my classmates, had remarked how, in the classroom, I showed not only my proficiency in mathematics, but my ability to make the solution of the mathematical problems intelligible to these classmates. Then, for the first time, I became a tutor, and from the money earned as such tutor, my expenses in Harvard College for seven years up to January, 1877, and my brother Tom's expenses in Harvard College for five years up to the fall of 1875, and my mother's expenses from June, 1873 to January 1, 1877, were paid except, as the scholarships received by Tom and me from Harvard College helped to pay some of those expenses.

To whom am I indebted for being able to earn these moneys as a tutor in mathematics?

To George W. Harper, Principal of Woodward High School,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Therefore, Mr. Harper, in my estimation, stands head and shoulders over all of the teachers that I have ever had (excluding Experience as a Teacher), unless Mr. Henry Adams, Assistant Professor of History, in Harvard College, can challenge the supremacy of Mr. Harper.

During my Junior and Senior years in Harvard College, I had two courses of History under Mr. Adams, one in a class of about forty-five fellow classmates, where Modern European History was taught. The recitation room for that class was in University Hall.

The other class had about seven of my classmates; the subject of study was Early Germanic Institutions; the class met in Mr. Adams' private room, in Wadsworth House—and it was in every way a very informal hour of instruction. Mr. Adams would, at times, smoke a cigarette, or sip some sherry—but his seven pupils never enjoyed either of those privileges in his room. Mr. Adams was a man with whom no one could take undue familiarities. What was his method of instruction?

“Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.”

—I Thessalonians v : 21.

In that small class of seven, nothing was taken for granted. The most famous authoritative writer, or book, meant nothing to Mr. Adams, nor to the Seven Pupils, unless after examination he and they agreed, with the writer or the book.

To Mr. Harper I am indebted for having been able to earn the money as a tutor of mathematics as above stated.

To Mr. Adams, I am, in part, indebted, for the way that I have met numberless alleged truths, fortified by tradition, custom or authority, and for my ability, to-day, to look, unafraid, at traditions, customs and authority, and to be willing to

“Prove all things;” and to “hold fast that which is good.”

Therefore to-day, there loom up before me, as the two greatest of all my teachers (excluding Experience the greatest of all)

GEORGE W. HARPER and
HENRY ADAMS.

Have I answered the question you asked me in your letter of the 3rd instant?

Sincerely,

EDWARD D. BETTENS.

A GIFT OF VALUE TO THE WORLD

A fine life and character, such as that of Saint Francis of Assisi, is, in the opinion of many persons, far more valuable to the world than the gifts of all of the temples, cathedrals, churches and church endowments that the world has ever received.

To bring to the knowledge of the world an admirable life and fine character—that of

MRS. LOUISE E. BETTENS

—a sketch of such life and character, included in books, has been widely distributed among colleges, libraries, art museums, clubs and individuals.

For the same reason a room in the Phillips Brooks House, Harvard College, has been named "The Louise E. Bettens Room"; a "Louise E. Bettens Fund" has been created in the William Hayes Fogg Art Museum, Harvard College, and some other gifts have been made to Harvard College; and her Library, and some of her book cases, pictures and bronzes have been given to Woodward High School, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The book "The Library of Mrs. Louise E. Bettens" is meant to extend the general knowledge of the life and character of Mrs. Louise E. Bettens, and in particular, to enable readers of that book to see what writers, and what books, exerted some influence in forming her character.

Fine lives and characters are a blessing to the world. Material gifts help educational institutions to perform a duty that they owe to their country and to their pupils, *but what is valuable to the world are these fine lives and characters*, rather than the material gifts.

The true memorial of Mrs. Louise E. Bettens is her life and character and not the gifts to Harvard College, nor to Woodward

High School—these gifts serving only as sign posts to direct the traveler to the true path leading, through life, to strength of mind, contentment, serenity and even happiness.

“Let me express my warm appreciation and commendation of the memorial which you propose to establish in the Woodward High School at Cincinnati,” writes a friend to me. “I have, as you know, visited the ‘Louise E. Bettens Room’ in the Phillips Brooks House at Harvard, a room the dignified simplicity of which greatly pleased me, and I have no doubt that when the memorial at Woodward is finished, and the visitor asks for a memento of your mother, it will be sufficient for the custodian to quote the inscription to the memory of Sir Christopher Wren on the walls of St. Paul’s in London—

“SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS, CIRCUMSPICE.”