

# Life's Transmutations

By  
Robert W. Sloan

This is the vital hour! The immediate concern is, of all concerns, the most momentous. Of every condition of life the one now pressing for attention is, beyond all of the past and all of the future, paramount. Unless the world rouse to the clarion call of the message now borne to mankind, unless that upon which the heart at this hour is set be achieved, the world is doomed and chaos is come again. Oh, the wizardry of it! The wonder of it! That illimitable want of fair perspective in man—that profound want of just proportion!

Had it been given to mankind to behold unborn events as with an historian's eye, life had been as emotionless as hewn stone; as expressionless as a dead wall. So it was ordained—was ordained that man should toil until he sank into oblivion, beset by the inswelling importance of the purpose of his creation and pompous assumption of his vital relation to the welfare of earth's people and to the endurance of the earth itself.

What a vain lot we are! Forever challenging the gods—forever contending that our views must prevail or the world shall have been created in vain. Unreasoning, daring, trembling only for others, we tread the world with a prophet's voice, tread it clothed in an ass's skin, denouncing all that is not in harmony with our ways, and holding aloft, as an unsullied banner, all the brief vic-

tories we claim to have been won by our prowess.

But let it not be said that this asinine characteristic—and the dominant characteristic—is not fittest for man. For who would—

"Fardels bear

"To grunt and sweat under a weary life,"

were he assured that whether he fardels bore or not, whether he grunted or swat not, that which he strove for would be if it were right that it should be; and would not be if it were wrong that it should be. Or, were man's foresight equal to his later sight—imperfect even as that is how much would he undertake to perform? Could man but sense how futile his individual efforts, there would be none to return at night from the toil, for none would go forth in the morn to toil.

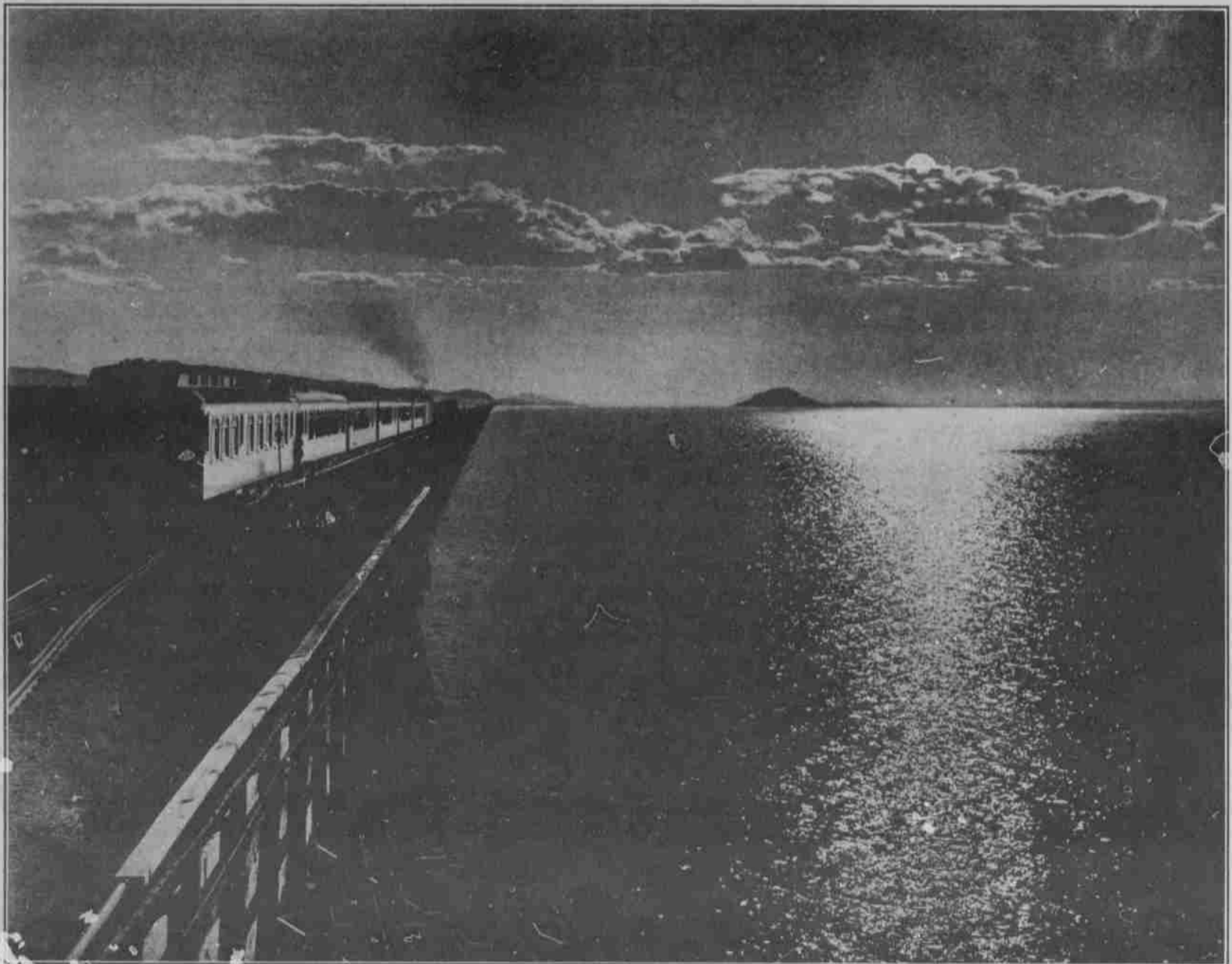
Consider the tribulations we cause each other because of the dull, ox wisdom that beats upon what we call our brains and makes us to tread under foot the tender and fragrant flowers of life alike with the noxious weed—and for what? Because we will have what we will have! Is there so much of joy in securing success that it is worth the price of blackened characters and ruined lives? Vain, vain, is a life that is lived affirmatively!

What is success? Who is the successful man? Life is too short and time all too brief and the hours of it too precious to be spent in telling

what is not success, and in endeavoring to explain who is not successful. But time were not wasted though 'twere all given to the task of telling who is the successful man. The successful man is he who has so lived as to deserve the confidence and esteem of his fellow men, the sure affection and reverence of his children, and the abiding trust and love of his wife. The man who, at the last, has not earned these, may write failure over the pages of his life.

Were the determination of man to bring certain purposes to pass a guarantee of the worth of his purposes, there would be few disappointments—because those in error would lose all sense of discomfort in the joyful consciousness that the right had prevailed.

But we wander like children in the dark. We stagger like drunkards to uncertain ends—and in the combat and confusion that result from man's contending for mastery, the weak and undetermined run hither and thither and are trodden underfoot. Yet, despite this blindness and dismay, chaos does not follow; and no man is surprised that his prophecies have failed of fulfillment. The sun smiles again, stars yet twinkle in the depths above, the air is good to breathe and life still holds something to make the heart sing songs of thanksgiving. Something far deeper than the plummet of man's vanity has yet been able to



Across the Silent, Desolate Inland Sea the Hamman Trains Run on the Great Salt Lake Cut-off, the Building of Which Was One of the Greatest Triumphs of the Century.