

character with age

"like a shock of corn fully ripe." job 5:26

a gentleman, writing about the breaking up of old ships, recently said that it is not the age alone which improves the quality of the fiber in the wood of an old vessel, but the straining and wrenching of the vessel by the sea, the chemical action of the bilge water, and of many kinds of cargoes.

some planks and veneers made from an oak beam which had been part of a ship eighty years old were exhibited a few years ago at a fashionable furniture store on broadway, new york, and attracted general notice for the exquisite coloring and beautiful grain.

equally striking were some beams of mahogany taken from a bark which sailed the seas sixty years ago. the years and the traffic had contracted the pores and deepened the color, until it looked as superb in its chromatic intensity as an antique Chinese vase. it was made into a cabinet, and has today a place of honor in the drawing-room of a wealthy new york family.

so there is a vast difference between the quality of old people who have lived flabby, self-indulgent, useless lives, and the fiber of those who have sailed all seas and carried all cargoes as the servants of God and the helpers of their fellow men.

"not only the wrenching and straining of life, but also something of the sweetness of the cargoes carried get into the very pores and fiber of character." – louis

albert banks

"when the sun goes below the horizon he is not set; the heavens glow for a full hour after his departure. and when a great and good man sets, the sky of this world is luminous long after he is out of sight. such a man cannot die out of this world. when he goes he leaves behind him much of himself. being dead, he speaks." – beecher

when victor hugo was past eighty years of age he gave expression to his religious faith in these sublime sentences: "i feel in myself the future life. i am like a forest which has been more than once cut down. the new shoots are livelier than ever. i am rising toward the sky. the sunshine is on my head. the earth gives me its generous sap, but heaven lights me with its unknown worlds."

"you say the soul is nothing but the resultant of the bodily powers. why, then, is my soul more luminous when my bodily powers begin to fail? winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart. i breathe at this hour the fragrance of the lilacs, the violets, and the roses as at twenty years. the nearer i approach the end the plainer i hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invite me. it is marvelous, yet simple."

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there's much to be said about character. it's hard to

develop but easy to lose. there is a young lady (young at least compared to me) that i had been ministering to during her prison term. she has been released for awhile now, making several bad decisions that hurt those who care for her. now her continued association with old friends and old ways have resulted in her being back in prison, perhaps for a longer stint this time.

i remember all the letters i wrote to her in prison; the money, time and care i invested (time now being my most precious commodity). i had such hope for her. now my hope is beginning to dwindle. she sounded like she wanted more and had good intentions of doing better but they say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. satan is cruel in all he does. his ultimate intention is to divert as much worship as he can from our precious Lord. he sees that as his only consolation - to draw others to hell with him. i would much appreciate your prayers that he will not be successful in this case.