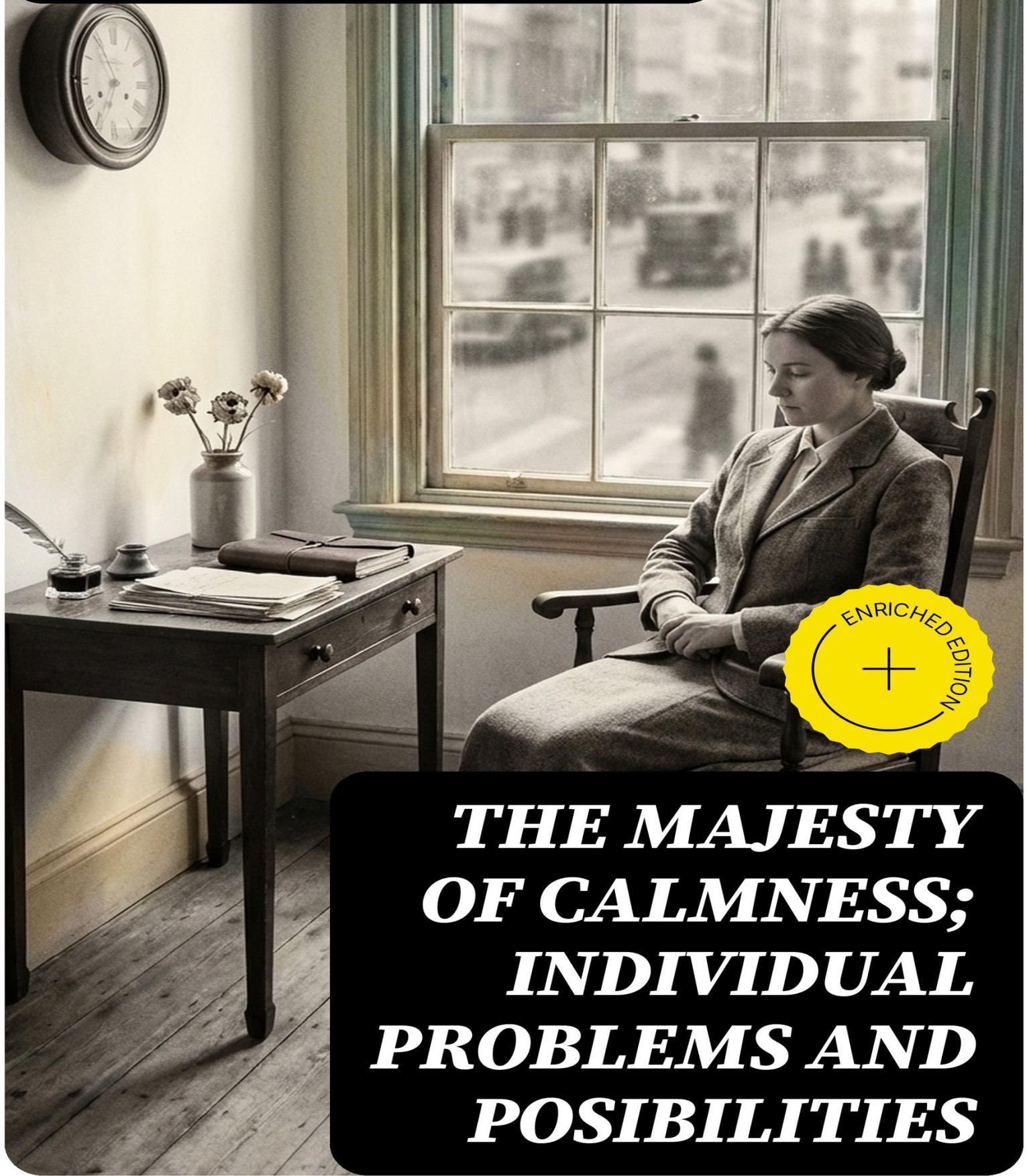


**WILLIAM  
GEORGE JORDAN**



**THE MAJESTY  
OF CALMNESS;  
INDIVIDUAL  
PROBLEMS AND  
POSIBILITIES**

**William George Jordan**

# **The Majesty of Calmness; individual problems and possibilities**

**Enriched edition.**

*Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Peter Boyd*

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# Introduction

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At the heart of *The Majesty of Calmness; Individual Problems and Possibilities* lies a disciplined defiance of the world's clamor, asserting that inner poise, rather than frenzied striving, enables clear judgment, steady purpose, and humane strength, and that the individual who governs attention, temper, and will can move through conflict, uncertainty, and pressure with a quiet authority that outlasts applause, unnerves hostility, steadies relationships, and converts ordinary days into deliberate practice, so that success is not a trophy awarded by accident or noise but an outcome shaped from within by character, courtesy, and a serenity that does not retreat from effort but directs it.

William George Jordan's book, first published in 1900 in the United States, belongs to the tradition of concise moral essays that blend practical psychology with ethical reflection. Neither a novel nor a technical treatise, it is a compact manual of self-culture written at the turn of the twentieth century, when industrial pace, urban growth, and technological change were accelerating everyday life. Jordan writes not as a detached academic but as a clear-eyed editor and essayist addressing the general reader, standing within a stream of character-building literature while remaining rooted in timeless questions of conduct and personal agency.

Readers encounter a sequence of short, concentrated chapters that advocate composure as a practical art,

unfolding through crisp definitions, pointed contrasts, and illustrative counsel. The voice is direct and exhortative without rancor, seeking to persuade by clarity and repetition rather than ornament. The style favors aphoristic turns and vivid pairings—haste against patience, irritation against mastery—to train attention on personal habits more than external obstacles. The tone remains steady, humane, and morally serious, inviting reflection rather than argument. The experience is less a narrative arc than a sustained meditation meant to be read slowly, revisited, and absorbed into daily conduct.

At its core stands the discipline of self-mastery: controlling temper, curbing haste, and protecting the integrity of one's purpose. Jordan connects calmness to courage, courtesy, and concentration, arguing that character, not circumstance, furnishes the conditions of meaningful achievement. He elevates attention as the gateway to influence, reframing success as the steady conversion of intention into action. Alongside this runs a critique of nervous excitability and vain display, which he treats as forms of waste that erode judgment and goodwill. The book insists that poise amplifies usefulness, that gentleness is not weakness, and that personal responsibility is freedom's necessary companion.

In a culture saturated with alerts, interruptions, and performative busyness, the book's counsel feels acutely contemporary. Its emphasis on attention anticipates today's concerns about distraction; its defense of civility answers polarization; its call to steady effort counters the chase for instant results. Rather than promising tricks, it proposes

habits: quieting rash reactions, choosing words carefully, honoring commitments, and aligning work with purpose. Leaders, students, and professionals will recognize the costs of hurry and the value of composure in decision-making, collaboration, and creativity. Jordan's framework offers a humane antidote to burnout, suggesting that sustainability begins in the governance of self.

Though plainly written, the book assumes seriousness from its readers, inviting them to test each page against their own habits and pressures. Its brevity encourages rereading: a chapter can accompany a commute, a pause between meetings, or a quiet evening, turning reflection into routine. Those drawn to Stoic thought, mindfulness practices, or leadership studies will find resonances without jargon or technical theory. Jordan's audience is the individual who wants to work from principle rather than impulse, and who suspects that effectiveness and kindness are not enemies. The prose aims to steady rather than dazzle, preferring clarity to spectacle.

The *Majesty of Calmness* endures because it reframes ambition as the art of becoming dependable to oneself and useful to others. Without romanticizing struggle, it insists that composure is a choice exercised minute by minute, a craftsmanship of mind available to any background or station. The book's value lies in its coherence: every page directs attention toward building capacity rather than broadcasting self-importance. Readers need not agree with every emphasis to profit from its discipline. What remains is a bracing, humane invitation to live deliberately, to meet

urgency without panic, and to translate inward steadiness into outward contribution.