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# COLLEGE AND THE FUTURE



# COLLEGE AND THE FUTURE

ESSAYS FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE ON PROBLEMS  
OF CHARACTER AND INTELLECT

EDITED BY

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TO

MY NEPHEW, RICHARD RICE, 3D

IN THE HOPE THAT, WHEN HE ENTERS COLLEGE A  
GENERATION HENCE, HE WILL FIND THERE A TRUER  
EXPRESSION OF THOSE IDEALS WHICH THE AUTHORS  
OF THE FOLLOWING ESSAYS HAVE SEEN FROM AFAR

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## THE PLAN OF THE BOOK

*“There is no enlargement, unless there be a comparison of ideas one with another, as they come before the mind, and a systematizing of them. We feel our minds to be growing and expanding then, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already.”*

—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

1925  
King  
Lift  
The object of this volume is to present a set of essays which form a close sequence of ideas, a little philosophy, about the present interests and the future problems of the undergraduate. It is hoped that he may find in them a series of facts and opinions that will be naturally productive of further opinions and investigation on his part. The chief intention of the book is to be gathered from the order of the essays, which enables the writer of themes to proceed from one discussion to another logically resulting discussion, accumulating thought instead of “writing himself out” in rather scattered and casual efforts. Owing to the variety of the materials, which illustrate many kinds of writing, he has an unusual chance to gain true impressions of manner and method, because he can here see what different styles do for the drift of the same general argument. The essays make chapters of a book that may be read from cover to cover as a unit.

A brief commentary will serve here better than elsewhere to describe some of its practical uses as a text for courses in writing.

I and II. The two preliminary articles, which constitute Part I, deal with the general question of learning to write, and may, it is hoped, clear up certain perplexities which sometimes long encumber the student. What is style? What is technique? What is originality? What are some of the practical methods for organizing detail, for raising expectation, for guiding the reader, and for maintaining an effective tone? The discussion of these points looks forward specifically to the subject-matter of the essays which follow.

III and IV. Articles III and IV, of Part II, contain descriptions of Oxford University, from which the student is expected to form his opinion of an institution widely different, in all probability, from his own. To write a parallel account of life at his own college, to compare the two places in detail as regards athletics or scholarship, to give his chief reason for preferring one place to the other, are, for example, exercises that will naturally suggest themselves to him. They are exercises that will test the logic of many of his prejudices and prove to him the difficulty and the profit of forming opinions fairly from an array of facts. He may supplement these facts by such reading as is suggested in the little bibliography at the end of the volume. Here at the start he is asked to think justly and vividly about a set of ideas and customs which are new to him, and which make a sharp criticism of the ideas and customs he has always accepted. This teaches him to see the essential character of the place he lives in and prepares him to understand and to criticise the point of view of many of the succeeding articles, especially of the next three, which deal with the general objects and advantages of liberal education. If, after reading them, or at some later period, he is asked to discuss again the relative merits of Oxford



and his own university, there will at once be apparent a new and more vivid picturing of what both Oxford and his own college really are.

V, VI, and VII. For meanwhile many questions have come up. What do we really go to college for—what combination of social and intellectual training? Which of these two objects best includes the other? What is the difference between character and intellect? After reading President Wilson's essays, should one regard the qualities of character discussed by Professor William James as "by-products" of education? What is for most men the valuable "by-product" of the college course? How closely is it related to the training of intellect? These are pretty heavy questions, and they should be approached through illustration and personal experience. In this way there may be avoided a certain monotony and ineffectiveness which comes, in undergraduate writing, from a tendency to generalization and mere assumption. Properly answered, these questions teach one how to bring experience and evidence of all kinds to bear in such a way as to give both solidity and relief to abstract argument.

VIII and IX. In the midst of this general discussion of the purposes and ideals of college life, it seems well to introduce a test case, about which nearly every student will have his own definite opinion. What is the importance and influence of sport in college life? Is the example of phenomenal athletic skill more inspiring to college students than the example of wide-spread athletic habits? Will not emphasis of the second produce the first, and emphasis of the first diminish the second? Articles VIII and IX put before us information and opinions which are sure to call out a good deal of prejudice and a good deal of pointed explanation. It is probable that, relative to the

three preceding essays, the writer has already committed himself in a general way on the issues here, and he must now attempt to be both outwardly consistent with what he has already said about the objects of college life, and true to his own convictions—for many students a stimulating process of thought.<sup>1</sup>

X. The essays on the function of athletics in college life, which are attempts to define and to make vivid the moral relation of a single important college interest to many others, lead to a general study of what may be called the balance of interests, or the sense of proportion, in college life. Professor Gayley finds that this sense is growing defective. Democratic ideals have rather upset the aristocracy of learning. We have been able neither to keep the old standards nor to make a proper readjustment to changed conditions, as we have been called on to educate a whole nation instead of a chosen few. In place of ideals we have thought it necessary to substitute idols. "Idols of Education," from which Article X is taken, is at once the most stimulating and amusing of books on the *trouble* with the modern college. It is a sane, witty corrective of those incongruities and confusions in the thought of college men—trustees, faculty, and students—who mistake the flashy and the specious for the solid and the thorough, or who actually prefer the advertisement to the real thing. Is Professor Gayley's satire justified by what the student has seen of college life? What are college "activities"? How does the modern curriculum compete with them for

<sup>1</sup>The purpose of all these essays and exercises in their specific order is to furnish a training, that shall be natural rather than arbitrary, in constructive, consequential thinking; and the critical emphasis should be laid on the logic, the importance, the pointedness of what is said. The effort to think logically and pointedly is a *positive* cure for incorrect and slouchy diction.

the student's attention? What appears to be the value of the ambition of the "typical college man"? What is college spirit? What is the difference between an idol and a by-product of a college education? What ideals are perhaps idols in disguise? What is there to say in defense of some of the idols? Can an idol be improved into an ideal? The manner of Professor Gayley's satire, humorous and trenchant, is a training in urbanity, in deftness of touch—qualities the most difficult to attain, but here thoroughly appreciable.

XI. As a concise and more arbitrary statement of the student's purpose among those conditions which Professor Gayley has made humorously clear comes President Hyde's advice to freshmen. President Hyde is speaking to the entering class in a hard-headed, compact New England college. Professor Gayley had in mind the infinitely more expansive and complex State university of the West. Yet are not the problems of both institutions at bottom much the same? Are they not the central problems described in President Wilson's two essays? What are the differences in college life and the resulting differences in the student's purpose described in the essays of these three men? Is there really a difference in the outlook on life of a student at a small college and a student at a large university? President Hyde's address describes the temptations and the discipline of college life, and what the student's clear purpose should be, not so much from the ultimate social point of view as from the immediate point of view of a member of a strictly regulated institution whose standards of excellence are a precious inheritance. It makes it clear that the ideals of a liberal education are only to be seen through the efforts which a strenuous discipline demands. Power depends on a practical training in obedience. Char-

acter and wisdom come only from devotion to some immediate and practical demand. This address sums up much that has preceded. It leads toward what is to come.

XII. The relation of the practical to the ideal, of the arbitrary to the experimental, which is one of the parts of life most important to understand vividly, is the central topic of the next essay, by Cardinal Newman, on "Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Learning." It is placed here because it is in all this discussion the one topic that must now be fundamentally treated. When the student comes to college and begins to pick his way among its complexities, he is constantly trying to decide what is practical, what is, as he says, worth while. The abstruseness of certain studies, their remoteness from any immediate utility, lead him often to conclude that he is wasting his time on them. He wants to see results. He wants before his eye what Professor Gayley calls the Idol of Quick Returns. He wants useful knowledge. Learning alone does not satisfy him. There is Latin, still too largely a grammar, not a literature. There is geometry, an interesting puzzle, but not an applied science. There are German and French which he may never "use," as he says. And history—why should they spend so much time over Frederick Barbarossa and never get to William II? And there is English composition, useful, but perfunctory. Of what are all these mere beginnings the beginning? If it is the beginning of knowledge, it is a pretty roundabout way of getting down to any facts of life which he expects to be called on to use. But in reality all this is not so much the beginning of knowledge as it is the beginning of wisdom. That is Cardinal Newman's point. Large stores of special knowledge are to be gained in some technical school where the freshman had better go if he must immediately learn something

that will bring in quick results in money. But if he can afford the time to train his mind in a way that may afterward make all his knowledge concordant and more largely effective—just as team-play is more effective than individual action—the liberal-arts course is the place for him. Here he may become in a fine sense obedient to, and hence in control of, all the details of his knowledge. And later he will be emancipated, rather than somewhat enslaved, by his particular profession. To understand this relationship of knowledge and wisdom, as Newman here allows one to understand it, is a fundamental experience for the college man.

XIII. With more personal illustration the next essay, on "The College Curriculum," brings these principles to matters immediately confronting every student. There are three kinds of thinking—practical, imaginative, and moral—necessary either to solve satisfactorily the commonest difficulty of life or to contemplate wisely the eternal and unsolvable questions. It is not advisable to train the mind from the beginning too much in one kind of thought. In the college curriculum these modes of thought are called science, poetry, and philosophy; and every course in college emphasizes one mode or a certain combination of them. How, in this connection, may the three modes be defined and illustrated? What is meant by narrow-mindedness, and how is the usual course in liberal arts a cure for it? How does liberal education help one to know and follow his bent, and to do what he really wishes to do?

XIV and XV. Let us now take the specific instance of a subject which we must learn to think of in the various modes of thought, from all sides, that is, if we would have any fair view of it at all. The student, plunged into an unwonted freedom and variety of opinion in college, is apt

to have as an early experience there a certain confusion, or loss, as he calls it, of his religion. This is almost invariably not because he is weak in faith, but because he does not understand that, in keen minds, religious thought, like all other kinds of thought about life which are worth while, changes, is evolutionary and progressive. In regard to religion, as in regard to other ways of thinking, a man's opinions must grow. To hold an opinion is to understand its tendency to change, and thus to allow its full development in one's life. To be held by an opinion is to be blind to its evolutionary qualities. Ideas change and grow through the ages in the minds of great men and are useful to successive generations. Ideas come to a standstill in the minds of small men, where they persist as obstacles and stumbling-blocks. In great minds changes of opinion and of belief do not upset the principles of faith. In small minds, because there is room for no enlarging principles of faith, any change of opinion appears to be confusing and is usually rejected. What is meant by faith? What is meant by religious opinion? What part does the church play in a personal religion? What adjustment must there be between the faith of our fathers and our own creeds? How is the principle of growth the principle of strength? These are questions partly answered by the essays of Professor Colestock and Doctor Peabody. A further question should be asked, in the light of the preceding articles—how does the study of science, poetry, and philosophy help to establish in the mind of a reasoning student a strong, reasonable, enlarging religious belief?

XVI. President Meiklejohn's Inaugural Address makes at this point an analysis of the general problems so far discussed. What is college like as a phase of life? What is training of intellect for? This discourse defines the broad-

ening point of view, for it describes college training as leading to an eminence from which to look out over our complex world. What is the wider function of college training and leisure? Is it to help men re-form ideals in thoughtful quiet before entering the strenuous life of business and the professions? Is it to help men cultivate their natural resources and their capabilities for the superior enjoyment of life? How does college teach one the art of learning to play? In this connection what is meant by thought for its own sake? How, then, does liberal education differ from professional education? Which general type may render a man more independently useful? Which most helps a man on in the world? How may technical education, if not preceded or accompanied by liberal studies, tend to make a man the slave of his vocation? These are questions which modern college students are constantly asking themselves, which they try to answer from the experience and counsel of their elders, and also by looking forward into life independently and afresh.

XVII, XVIII, XIX, and XX. It is thus natural to present next two views of practical idealism. These two theories of life, especially if taken in connection with the lives of the men who utter them, make an interesting and consistent contrast. But they are not altogether opposite in tendency. They both emphasize the importance of getting all the action and enjoyment out of life possible—or a little more than circumstances at first sight seem to warrant—and they are both prophecies of youth and of the spirit of our age in its two dominant phases—strenuous labor and ardent dreaming. They both represent the reaction from what Stevenson calls “cowardly and prudential proverbs.” They emphasize the importance of progress at all costs instead of safety at all costs. In this

connection the two essays of Stevenson furnish an excellent view of the typical relations between fathers and sons. From another point of view, however, the doctrines of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt and Robert Louis Stevenson make a distinct contrast. One represents strenuous, pragmatic, commercial America; the other the criticism which an artistic idealism makes of all temporary effort in a material age. It is a contrast especially illuminating in this era of the great European war, when the principles of our vaunted Christian civilization are undergoing the criticism of brute nature, and when we Americans, congratulating ourselves on our democracy, our representative government, and our present geographic independence, are beginning somewhat anxiously to forecast the future. For there already looms ahead the question of whether any nation, which, in this practical and commercial era, believes strongly in its practical and commercial ambitions, must not soon arm itself to the teeth for their maintenance. It is the question of whether, in the evolution of this planet, commercialism will not mean just that, so long as it is backed by the national will. There is national militant Christianity for a curious parallel. But is this sort of national will the real will of the people? Is it not merely a *governmental* will? That during the leisure and idealism of college days the good and evil of such matters should be seriously contemplated is of the utmost importance. And here, the article on "Thinking for Yourself" makes an interesting comment by defining the practical relation of thought and action, the two general attributes of the all-round man. It is a comment on the theories of life set forth in Colonel Roosevelt's address and in Stevenson's two essays. It might be valuably applied to the lives of the two writers:



XXI. "The Discovery of the Future," by Mr. Wells, is the statement of a scientist and a novelist who has described the incongruities, the muddle, of our modern commercial prosperity. Realizing the muddle, the modern world is all for organization. "Organize and we shall be saved" is the watchword of all commercial undertakings; and anything, if thoroughly organized, satisfies the modern moral sense. Do we not all, for example, wherever our neutral hearts may be in the present conflict, take a great satisfaction in the supreme organization of the German people—for it is the nation that is organized, not just the army? The virtue of organization we call *morale*. By the *morale* of a people, we say, their state of civilization may be judged. And more rarely do we ask the question, in the light of what ultimate moral principle is this *morale* perfected? Now we ask the question rarely only because we are in the habit of believing ourselves to be blind to the future. If we understood some way of discovering the future, would not that question certainly be the criterion of value in regard to any enterprise? Would not organization of business, that is, be for ultimate moral ends and less for immediate or, let us say, national ends? This philosophy cannot be too much emphasized. We have neglected it for a blind materialism, for a stupid fatalism, which are much the same thing. Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die, is the business man's motto. And this is because his to-morrow is never far enough in the future. He has left idealistic thinking to men whom he speaks of condescendingly as mere dreamers. He is not sufficiently aware that in *collective dreaming* lies the greatest safeguard of civilization. By what present indications, in what modes of thought, the discovery of the future is being attempted, is the subject of Mr. Wells's discourse.

XXII. The rare kind of thinking or social forecasting which Mr. Wells predicts must soon hold sway, if we are to progress beyond the limits of our present national form of civilization, is concretely described in the fantasy that now follows, entitled "The Great Analysis." The little book from which it is taken is perhaps the best definition in recent years of that constructive imagination which long ago produced the philosophy of Aristotle. It describes the kind of imaginative wisdom that from now on, even in the face of further war, must begin to guide the human will to think of a peaceful world-order. Among the various types of free creative imagination in our era, far-reaching non-partisan statesmanship is the rare type which must ultimately predominate and direct. It is presupposed by the enormous progress of certain other great types of imagination, like the commercial, the mechanical, or the medical, which surely cannot be ends simply to themselves. It is presupposed by the very complexity of the world-order which they create and then fail to safeguard. It is the all-inclusive type to which every other is contributory. When the non-partisan statesmen, historians, sociologists, of the future begin in earnest to make the Great Analysis, the relation of all types and their importance will be more clearly seen; but already we understand how commercial and mechanical and medical imagination each make progress in the other more rapid and more important, how they combine for mutual benefit and for the benefit of humanity.

It is the problem of a world-order which we have so far failed to see with any comprehensive view. Imagination is not yet in this respect freely constructive. The experiments of government are so slow, and it dares make so few of them. The present forms of government are but

two, the autocratic and the representative, and neither one appears to be successful in combining different races under its rule. The Great Analysis has for its political aim, as Professor Gilbert Murray says in the preface, "to find out by organized knowledge what is good for society as a whole, not to snatch by strategy what is good for a particular group."

Non-partisan statesmanship is the greatest need of our country; for, in the light of the present conflagration, it can be seen to be the greatest need of the world. But have we had, as a matter of fact, much statesmanship of any kind, except in emergency? Have we had, as a government, steady, constructive statesmanship? We are an intelligent people most advantageously situated, and we have been able to get on without a great deal of statesmanship. But have we not reached a stage when our problems obviously require the finest intelligence of the country to save us from constant distress? Why is it, then, that in spite of all that our last three Presidents have done and are doing to make political service popular with the finer men of America, it does not usually attract the most cultivated and brilliant of them? Is this a serious indictment of our politics or of our intellectual men? Do they perceive their obvious duty? Do they think about it deeply and in large terms? Are Americans deeply patriotic? Trained theoretically in college for just such impersonal problems as federal government faces, do they not seem to prefer almost any form of money-getting in business, when once successful there, to this most intellectual and humane of callings, this most active and exciting of enterprises?

XXIII. An appeal to college men on this subject concludes our discussion. It is called "The Unity of Human

Nature." Our discussion has led from the conditions and purposes immediately about us in college to the conditions of the vast world of which, if we are preparing for it, we should have some comprehension at the start. "The trouble with the world is its vastness." "If one could stand on the edge of the moon and look down through a couple of thousand years on human politics, it would be apparent that everything that happened on the earth was directly dependent on everything else that happened there." These sentences, one of which stands at the beginning of "The Great Analysis" and the other at the beginning of Mr. Chapman's address to the students of Hobart College on "The Unity of Human Nature," make practically the same assertion. If the problem is vast and complex and in need of vast and complex minds for its simplification, the hope that such minds are in the making lies in this interdependency of all things. In the very cause of what seems at times the hopeless confusion of the world lies the means of its constant betterment, through education. The fact of the unity of human nature implies for all thinking men a consciousness of their social obligations, and is the ultimate reason for self-improvement and for believing in the doctrine of individualism. "The Czar of Russia cannot get rid of your influence, nor you of his. Every ukase he signs makes allowance for you, and, on the other hand, the whole philosophy of your life is tinged by him. You believe that the abuses under the Russian Government are inscrutably different from and worse than our own; whereas both sets of atrocities are identical in principle, and are more alike in fact, in taste and smell and substance, than your prejudice is willing to admit. The existence of Russia narrows America's philosophy, and misconduct by a European power may be

seen reflected in the moral tone of your clergyman on the following day.”

It is the unity of human nature that makes the training of an individual American college student such a vastly important thing; for only by extreme clearness of individual thought do we attain the requisite for the great citizenship. What is the world for, with its vast and tantalizing problem? What is life for, with its seemingly inscrutable incongruities? What is college for? The answer to all these questions turns out to be very nearly the same, and its full meaning is a faith in the efficacy of the well-rounded mind.

To know so much about life through experience, and through science, art, and philosophy, which are experience typified, that one is convinced of the need for bearing a noble part in the world, is the purpose of going to college. And the true purpose of the college itself as part of the state is to increase that great society of men and women who are dedicated to the principle of *idem sentire de republicâ*—of thinking together about public affairs—not in the sense of all thinking alike, but in the sense of all wishing to act with that broad and generous intelligence which has been inculcated by the same training and which is fostered by memories and ideals held in common.

[NOTE: At the end of this series of essays a number of questions, on which the student has been writing, will present themselves in a new light, and they may perhaps be worth rediscussing. His mind is equipped for more urbane and farther-sighted arguments, for weightier explanations, for more pointed records of his own experience. In the light of President Hyde's brief characterization of Oxford (Chapter XI), and of Cardinal Newman's description of what sort of outlook on life a university ought to cultivate (Chapter XII, Section V), and of Stevenson's "Apology for Idlers" (Chapter XVIII), the reader will very likely perceive the real differences between Oxford and American methods, where at first he only caught at rather trivial and superficial aspects. Or he may find, after reading "The Great Analysis," that he has a new opinion about Colonel Roosevelt's arguments

against peace, and about the question whether empire is a valid ideal for the United States. When he has finished Mr. Chapman's essay he may well perceive a new significance in William James's saying, that the end of college education is ability to know a good man when you see him. Such reference of one set of ideas to another is the truest way of deepening thought and of producing that enlargement of which Cardinal Newman speaks in the quotation placed at the beginning of this book. In this connection it may also be well to note Edmund Burke's advice about reading: "Reading, and much reading, is good. But the power of diversifying the matter infinitely in your own mind, and of applying it to every occasion that arises, is far better; so don't suppress the *vivida vis*."] ]

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**COLLEGE AND THE FUTURE**



# COLLEGE AND THE FUTURE

## PART I

### I

### LEARNING TO WRITE

RICHARD RICE, JR.

#### *I. The Nature of Literary Art and Its Technique*

Why is learning to write so difficult? The simplest and also the deepest reason is because all writing is done in the shadow of infinite possibilities—those of the writer's unknown powers for thought and those of the fine art of literature. But if this is the reason why learning to write is difficult, it is also the reason why it is inspiring. Literary art is not inaccessible. It is not the achievement of professionals alone. It is part of the same energy which any man displays when he writes a good letter or converses well of an evening. It is a thing more and more understood as one observes life, profits by experience, and learns to know himself. It is the art with which we all inevitably grow more and more intimate all our lives. It may be called the technique of life.

Learning to write is difficult for the same reason that it is difficult for a boy to think like a man. It can be done. Little by little it is done. But to do it outright is rare. All this means that learning to write is but part of learning to grow up. For writing is thinking.

Undoubtedly there is something ironical in the fact that at the very time when the world shines in the most glowing colors to our eyes and calls most interestingly to our imaginations, we should find ourselves incapable of giving any correspondingly vivid and poignant account of it. It is curious to note that one can hardly find a prose record of the feelings and opinions of youth made on the hour, with whatever degree of technical skill, which does not lack, paradoxically, the vital energy that inspired it, which does not shortly appear both to youth and to time thin and unsatisfying.

But this aspect of the old truth that what youthful genius lacks is an art, the combining of a wisdom and a technique which requires time to effect, forms a hopeful consideration for the student who is still continually baffled by the difficulties of "mere self-expression." The fact that the art of writing is acquired only after much practise means also that it can be acquired to a great extent by every one who practises. The fact that without an ever-maturing power of thought technical facility has no lasting products means also that such experience and wisdom as may come to any man are at the basis of literary power. [The inspiring conditions which determine how we should go about learning to write are, then, the possibility of definite improvement through acquiring technical knowledge and the impossibility of power without maturing one's energy as a thinker.

A great many counsellors have told us that the only way to learn to write is to write. This advice emphasizes the fact that literary art has a fairly definite body of technique which must be mastered by practise before skill and facility can be hoped for. Another set of counsellors has said that the way to learn to write is to read, to see life, to enlarge

general knowledge and experience as much as possible. This advice often seems to a beginner less definite and satisfactory than the first, because it emphasizes the fact that the art of composition is the art of thinking and of growing up; and the beginner always hopes that by the time he is perfect in the A B C's he will somehow have a supply of thoughts. But the truth is that whichever advice he inclines to pay chief attention to will show the beginner, before very long, the necessity and value of also following the other; for the two conditions for literary prowess here laid down are so interdependent that they are really one comprehensive condition.

In the practise of any art, thinking and acquired technical skill must constantly support each other, ideas at once fashioning their technique, and technique helping in the formation of ideas. In their final effects these two elements may scarcely be separated. It is hence unwise to separate them to begin with in the process of learning to write.

Obviously, it is convenient to have a body of special advice about writing all together in one book of grammar and rhetoric. But this should not give to grammar and rhetoric a particle of the false dignity of isolation; for, in any comprehensive view, the technique of correct English, which one may apparently study by itself in a hand-book, is really nothing but a practical method of thinking. Without thinking you say: "I see a black object under the smoke which grows larger as it approaches." Technique bids you think more clearly. You must think: "Under the smoke I see a black object which grows larger as it approaches." Without thinking you say: "Be sure that your sentences *end* with words that deserve the *distinction* you give them." Technique bids you apply the very principle you have wished to express, and think as

follows: "*End* with words that deserve *distinction*." If you say, "In the process of civilization I expect that man will find woman to be the last thing he can improve," it is a trifle ambiguous and certainly a rather weak statement. Sir Austin Feverel, whatever the truth of the sentiment, at least knew sharply what he thought: "I expect that Woman will be the last thing civilized by Man." What you say and what you think are really the same thing, since any slight change in speech represents a slight change in thought. Thus what you say (or write) is simply the shape of what you think, and the study of technique is the study of representative convenient and effective shapes for thought from which the principles of correctness and of structure are to be deduced.

Now the reason why learning to write is so difficult, even when the principles of correctness and structure are well in mind, is because the immature will does not easily effect a junction between powers of thinking and the knowledge, facility, and taste which have been acquired by technical study. "I know what I mean, but I can't say it," is one way of describing our common perplexity, which nearly always should be: "I could say it, if I could only think it." But however you look at the matter, what is here described is a lack of co-ordination between the various faculties of the mind. In youth, what the mind chiefly lacks is a multiplicity of contacts. Liberal education, or the art of growing up, may be said to be the process of bringing the various faculties of the mind closer and closer together, of supplying contacts; and maturity in any person is expressed in terms of the energy generated by the extent of these contacts. Maturity means that the various faculties are thoroughly contributive to each other, and that they are thus one comprehensive faculty, the art of thinking. My

friend, Professor Aydelotte, in a chapter called "Writing and Thinking," at the end of his book, *College English*, has expressed this matter as follows: "To write clearly one must think clearly, to write nobly one must think nobly, to have a great style one must think great thoughts. All of which means that one must be clear-sighted and noble and great, for as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. The problem of improving a man's writing is usually the problem of improving his character."

This thoroughly logical statement places the problem of learning to write on a high plane, and if it is once realized that it must be so placed to see it clearly, there need be no confusion simply from terminology as to what is meant by style, matter, technique, and thought. If writing were mainly a technique, it might be mastered rapidly and completely as one masters the management of a typewriter. Because it is an art, one grows in it only as fast as one grows up. What at first appeared to be a definite set of conventions and a definite body of knowledge in the rule book, to be utilized freely as soon as mastered, is soon perceived to possess no value of its own, and to depend for vitality entirely on the power to think. Literacy grows with the demands of experience; we become articulate as we develop wants. And at length something more than articulation and literacy is required of us. We must compete in clearness and force and copiousness with the rest of mankind, and for that we must train ourselves in something more vital than mere conventionalities. "Mechanical correctness," says Professor Aydelotte, "is not a merit in writing; it is only a necessity. It does not in the least imply that the writing is good. The absence of it means, on the other hand, that the student's work, no matter how brilliant in other respects, will receive no consideration in practical

life until the mechanical faults are mended. Correctness of this sort is like wearing a necktie, a condition of entrance into good society, but not an admission ticket." We are never done with conventionalities, with attention to the structure of paragraphs, proper guides to the drift of thought, summaries at crucial spots, brightened endings that cast a light back over the whole; but what we notice, if we are growing up, is that these things begin to grow out of the necessities of our thought, and that we cannot finally conceive of technique as something external to our purposes in writing.

In the study of any art it is important to keep this in mind. The painter, the sculptor, or the musician may seem to give himself up for a time more thoroughly than the writer to technical study, to the thorough understanding of the mode of thought before using it for original, personal expression. But what the painter is studying is thought—not just ways of mixing and laying on color. All technique is the technique of thought; it has no existence for its own sake. To forget this is to be either a pedant or a dilettante.

The relation of practise in technique to artistic execution is, however, very generally misunderstood. It is a common remark, which we have all accepted, that the musician who has once mastered his technique can then forget about it and just create or interpret. It is in this way that we like to think of great pianists, especially if we are ourselves still rather hampered in playing scales or such a carefully fingered exercise as childhood's old friend, "The Spinning-Wheel." After hearing Paderewski, we are very apt to say that he does not have to think about fingering at all. We like to say this, and to believe it inadvertently, though we know that a great musician is always playing his scales and that the last thing he wishes to do is to reach



a state of automatism where he might be unconscious of technical control. For his sincerest purpose is to make the technique of his art more and more a part of himself, and to think in its terms with such facility that every change of thought will find its exact expression. Doctor Fite, from whose book on *Individualism* the above illustration is partly borrowed, points out that being thus facile is the opposite of being highly automatic, and that automatism is the very negation of art. "Art," says Doctor Fite, "aims above all things to be free."<sup>1</sup> Freedom is secured through complete conscious control, or through practised obedience to law, which is exactly the same thing. Only by obeying the technical laws of your automobile do you control it. Only by practising obedience does the musician have his will with his instrument; and when his attention is, as we say, wholly on interpretation, it is because he can be aware, without confusion, of every aspect of his performance. He grows oblivious to nothing. He relies more than ever on all the qualities that make up his final effect. The creation of art demands this kind of expanded consciousness, and the appreciation of art is to a great extent a comprehension of this faculty.

In the foregoing considerations of the nature of art, it is not intended to place before one who is learning to write an ideal that can never be practically comprehended without the gift of genius, but rather to help him realize, as much as possible to begin with, and more and more as maturity sets in, the unity of mental processes in any effective and practical writing. For it is very necessary to understand this general principle, whether apropos of a business letter or of a sonata. Otherwise we shall hardly make out from day to day what the lifelong process of liberal education

<sup>1</sup> Warner Fite, *Individualism*, p. 94.

is for. Otherwise we may constantly fail to appreciate greatness in our fellow men, and by our own fogginess be dim, if ever so little, the creative ardor of our generation. At the end of this volume is an essay, an address to a graduating college class, on "The Unity of Human Nature." Corresponding to the influence of one man's mind on his neighbor's which makes for social unity, there is in every man's mind a natural force for uniting his own mental processes in what may be called their artistic unity. Toward this as an end, learning to write is the fundamental and the supreme training, not because we expect to become creative artists, but because writing is perhaps the only art in which we shall practise enough to cultivate a sense of the universal principles.

## *II. Originality and Thoroughness*

Every man who intends to be a thinker—and who escapes being a thinker in these latter days?—will understand much that is fundamental in the problem of literary art; for the textures of great writings, though they are as various as the range of personalities, have something in common in their warp and woof, and this every man understands somewhat, since he himself cultivates so far as he can a share of originality, and since every bit of thoughtful, practical writing he attempts contains principles that relate it to the efforts of genius. The practical man uses these words, genius, originality, art, with increasing respect and familiarity as his knowledge of his own processes of thought expands. Indeed, every one, however humble his own gifts, has an ideal duty, the duty of fitting himself to appreciate art, genius, originality, wherever he meets it.

We often deem it the part of modesty to disclaim this

duty; but it is really not modesty that prompts us here so much as laziness or self-satisfaction. The man who says, "I know nothing about art," seldom feels humbleness or even shame in the acknowledgment, as he usually shows by adding with infinite assurance, "but I know what I like." Now, it is knowing about art that makes a man humble. It is some familiarity with genius and some realization of how genius thinks that makes a man reverent and robs him of his complacency. It is by a keen appreciation of originality that every man shares in the progress of the world.

From this point of view the effort of learning to write has a great importance, whether we succeed very well or not. For even the kind of writing which, as college students, we already seem to do with a certain finality, and the kind of writing that any man, though he have no intention of being a deep thinker, must yet do with skill and force or fail in his profession, even such rather small achievements are bound to give us some knowledge of the greater art which we would not otherwise have. In college it is not the fact that composition is the substratum and the fundamental technique of all intellectual work that gives it its final importance there, but the fact that the effort of learning to write may lead us most directly and personally into the presence of great minds and make us compare ourselves with greatness. Education, whatever skill in method it may teach us, is not liberal education unless it does that. From this point of view—for the purpose, that is, of expanding intellect, of cultivating originality or what I shall presently define as *thoroughness*—it is important for one who is learning to write at college to see, more vividly than he usually does see, into what presences and toward what kind of enjoyments and appreciations the traditional col-

lege exercises and his own trusting efforts are leading. It is not good for him to be satisfied with the old, lazy saying that "it all trains the mind." Even the freshman in his green cap, as one supposed to know his place and take life as it comes, should wish to be more truly conscious of his work than that sort of talk implies. I mean that he should be more keenly alive to the fact that even the report he writes on an issue in history enables him to see, if he but look, the enlargement of mind in the great historian who has endeavored to encompass and compress a hundred details of the issue; or that the plan which his professor makes him draw of the Roman Forum, brings him into relation with the vastness of an empire; that his mechanical and imitative skill in handling the algebra of calculus can grow directly into the imagination of the engineer he may some day be when calculus is the bridge over a river or the range of a fortress beyond a hilltop; that the stanza he may have composed as a mere exercise gives him a new inkling of what kind of energy brought Spenser's poem to its completion; that the story he has invented about storm and shipwreck, if he has at all realized the elements he is dealing with, puts him more keenly in touch with humanity and nature; and that all of these matters lead straight out into the complex world which is shortly to require of him whatever expansion of mind and power of analysis he is capable of.

To the man interested in writing, such relationships are the chief source of inspiration. They both idealize his tasks and make them more obviously practical. For one cannot, with a sweep of the arm and a fine phrase about culture, proceed very far or very sincerely with the studies of a modern university. The freshman in his green cap understands more than that of the matter, more than the vague

principle that every little court in the hall of knowledge has its further door. He wishes already to see himself approaching, if not actually in the presence of, greatness. From the start he must compare his mind and his acts with those of greatness and have some basis for the comparison. Only thus, if he is to be a thinker and a writer, can he best cultivate his originality—through seeing the further possibilities, the wide importance, of what he is doing. And only thus is he apt to realize the necessity for thoroughness.

Originality in thought about any subject nearly always means a *comprehensive thoroughness*. Or, if you put it the other way round, a comprehensive thoroughness leads to originality.

Let me take, first, an illustration that applies directly to such practical writing as every undergraduate is asked to do. You have read, let us say, about the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and you are to write a report on the significance of that historical fact. Now the drift of the report, if it is only a mechanical effort, may be something as follows: "Mary was very beautiful and also rather indiscreet. When she was driven from Scotland she fled to England. She was a Catholic, which stirred up trouble. Philip, France, and the Pope had a good deal to do with this. Elizabeth may have had nothing against Mary personally, but she yielded to her counsellors and permitted Mary's execution. This brought on the vengeance of Philip, France, and the Pope. The result was the Armada." This report may be two pages long, or twenty, and anybody might have written it. What is the matter with it? How can one be original on such a hackneyed topic?

In the first place, I think you have probably read, in preparation, one of those books nearest to your elbow,

which is itself simply a report, concise or flimsy, as the case may be, but which, in any event, carefully avoids *doing anything for the subject* that would surely make you think about it. If, on the other hand, you should read a great account, such as Froude has written—a great account, because it is vivid, complex, simple, comprehensive, all at once—you will take the first step toward writing an “original” report on the subject. For Froude is thorough, in spite of a few inaccuracies, and is sure to give you, even in a rather hurried reading, some notion of the infinite ramifications of this one fact, the execution of Mary Stuart. It will then perhaps occur to you rather sharply how interesting is the old truth that everything that happens on earth is connected with everything else that happens there, and that this one fact is a wonderful illustration of it. In order to see the matter originally, this is a fundamental idea to keep in mind. After reading such an account as Froude’s, ask yourself what were the causes of Mary’s execution, and you will be led at once into most complex and seemingly endless chains of influence. These chains of events are, however, just because of their complexity, reasonable and comprehensible; they always lead you back to central connections. Now you probably observe that certain links in each chain of cause and effect are forged more definitely than the rest, or that they seem to join together several chains. What sort of force is it that forges most of these links? That is obviously the important matter. If you can determine that, you will have a point of view about the whole subject. So you begin to compare the links for similarities: Mary’s early relations with the French court; her marriage with Darnley; Rizzio; her treachery; Bothwell; her conflict with John Knox; her conflict with her brother; Elizabeth’s jealousy; Eliza-

beth's failure to marry the Duke of Alençon; the excommunication of Elizabeth; the Northern Rising; the massacre of St. Bartholomew; popular enthusiasm for Francis Drake; the Babington plot. You examine them all, and as you find more and more traces of the same forces at work, you begin to see how you will answer any phase of the question. A force that forges a great many of these links in the chain of circumstance that surrounds Mary appears to be her own wayward, rather "indiscreet" disposition. Another force forges links out of the conflict between Rome and John Knox, and joins them to those formed in the conflict between Rome and Elizabeth. Again appears the mischievous force of Elizabeth's own frowardness. Mary's fate wears many chains, and, as you perceive in reading Froude, there is something ominous in the way these chains are slowly welded together. Any aspect of her fate inevitably suggests the others.

When you have reached this comprehensive point of view, you may safely take up any phase of the subject without a constant tendency to produce a mere imitation of the facts. [It is in seeing a thing thoroughly, or from many angles, that you choose a point of view of your own and begin to see originally. You decide, let us say, to show how far John Knox and the growth of Calvinism may be said to have brought about Mary's tragic end. This will perhaps involve, first, a description of the contrast between Mary's character, which was formed in the French court before she came to Scotland, and the austerity of Scotch opinion. Then might follow a discussion of John Knox as the originator and representative of this opinion, his conception of his duty, and his attitude toward Romanism. Next, the shock felt by the nation at Mary's unscrupulous behavior, and the effects of this in driving her into England

and in dissuading Elizabeth from any attempt to restore her to the throne and from any other step that would offend the Scotch in the crisis which was threatening abroad.

From this special point of view, you thus look at nearly all the phases of the subject. You introduce nothing not well known; but your arrangement of details expresses your *own* opinion, and you are seeing the thing for yourself—not just through somebody else's eyes. Seeing a thing thus thoroughly implies an expansion of mind, without which one hardly writes well on any subject. For it is expansion that clear thinking demands as much as concentration. This is the same principle that we noted in regard to the musician and his technique. There, Doctor Fite pointed out that "art aims above all things to be free," and that freedom comes from a mastery of detail. In regard to writing he puts the case as follows: "Every one who attempts to put his thoughts into writing has his days when words are mere words and nothing more. We speak at such times of the difficulty of concentration. But it is equally a difficulty of expansion. You cannot get your thoughts together because you cannot cover your field of thought. Like the traveller in a fog, your vision is limited to the region just about you, and you find it difficult to make out whence your argument has come and whither you intend it to go. And when you afterwards review what you have written you find there a string of formal literary phrases expressing not so much what you meant as what was the correct thing to say. Contrast this with the rarer occasions when you are truly and certainly yourself. Then, in a mental atmosphere of serene clearness, the whole field of your argument lies extended before you in perfect distinctness of outline. And then, just because of your expanded field of vision, you know at each moment just where

large expansion



you are, just what you mean; and every phrase that you utter, instead of being merely the proper thing to say, is now remoulded, re-born, so to speak, out of the depths of your private self, and, like your hand or your face, so individuated that it could belong to no one else."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, you date your understanding of any problem from the moment when you stop leaning on somebody else's explanation of it. Even in so literal a matter as geometry, you can scarcely be said to understand it till you have acquired a certain independence of thought, and, having mastered the principal theorems, can proceed to solve "originals." Your originality here both depends on your comprehension of those previous explanations, and is set free by that comprehension. Thoroughness is the bottom of originality. Being original consists not so much in being different from other people as in going beyond them; it consists not so much in alighting on some unthought-of point as in working up to it. To originality the past is indispensable. A mastery of tradition is its source and spring. Walt Whitman depends distantly on Shakespeare and Wordsworth; Marconi immediately on Edison and Tesla. The thought of man progresses, slowly or by leaps and bounds; but it does not create itself.

Such definitions, while viewing originality from its hopeful side, do not, however, put it within the reach of every persistent and serious-minded person. Thoroughness is not just laboriousness, and comprehensive thoroughness presupposes a superior type of energy. I once heard a newspaper reporter explaining the difference between *reporting* and *writing*. "Suppose you are told," said he, "to furnish a column about the opening of the new Boston subway. If you are just a reporter, you will take a lot of pains

<sup>1</sup> Warner Fite, *Individualism*, p. 96.

to find out how long the subway is, how long it has taken to build it, how it is built, how much it has cost, how much traffic it is likely to divert, and all the other obvious how's regarding it. You will arrange all your information systematically, and as interestingly as you can without spoiling the system. Those who read your article will not have, at first, a question to ask. They will simply say: 'Well, the new subway is a mile long; it has cost the city a pretty penny; but it is finished.' If you are a writer, you will at once recognize that you have here an inspiring and difficult task, not a mechanical task. In the same space of a column, you have, somehow or other, to answer all the obvious questions in the case, and, in addition, to make the reader see more personally what the subway is like and what the problem of building it has meant, its significance to himself and to the city, how it is going to affect a dozen civic problems, how it is going to change the area, let us say, of some distant residence section, and the price of land ten miles out of town. You have, that is, to use your trained imagination and answer a great many hypothetical and ultimate questions, and think all the time with more comprehensive thoroughness than the reporter. When the reporter got through with his impersonal and mechanical account, the subway was still, so to speak, anybody's subway; it was described as anybody might have described it. When the writer gets through with his interpretative account, the subway has become an expression of the writer's opinion, and it is, in certain aspects, the writer's subway." Now this is not saying that to be a writer you must be a genius; it merely expresses, to a newspaper man, the basic difference between reporting and writing. It perhaps expresses also what is essential in serious originality.

It is perfectly clear to us, if we have studied the writings

of men of originality, that practically every subject of thought has two aspects: its obvious aspect, or as it might appear to anybody, and its aspect as it appears to some thinking individual. Our simplest phrases illustrate this. *The dark night*, says anybody. *The huge and thoughtful night*, says some individual. *The bright moon*, says anybody. *The immense and silent moon*, says some individual, who, in these cases, was a poet. You have, probably, like anybody else, made a voyage in a great steamship. The compact complexity of the vessel interested you, as it naturally would interest anybody. But after you have read Kipling's story of *The Ship that Found Herself*, is there not a far more vivid aspect of the matter and far more meaning? Do you now see the ship as anybody might see it, or quite differently? And the truth is that after the individual has spoken there is a third aspect of every subject—the unforgettable aspect that everybody knows who has looked through the individual's eyes. For gradually the world is made over by art and becomes a new original possession for those who have eyes to see with the artists.<sup>1</sup>

This is what the writers and the musicians and the painters are doing for us, and what we are all striving to do somewhat for ourselves. Though we may disclaim any attempt to be original, the attempt is spontaneous whenever we try to make any subject clear to another person. "How shall I know Jones in the crowd at the railway station?" you are asked; and your reply is an attempt on your part to be an artist. "The way to learn to write," said Flaubert to his pupil De Maupassant, "is to stand on a street corner watching the cab-horses file past; pick out one cab-horse, and describe him in a single phrase so that he will be dif-

<sup>1</sup> See Browning's *Fra Lippo Lippi*, lines 300-306.

the molecules of air  
 & the molecules of water  
 3

ferent from all the other cab-horses in Paris." Think of the unrelaxing scrutiny, the complete thoroughness, which this stupendous advice, if it could be carried out, would mean. Yet that, on a reasonable scale, is the way to learn to write, as can be illustrated from almost any page of good fiction. In De Maupassant's story of *The String* how carefully he watches the old peasant's every gesture; in *The Coward* how intently he follows the successive moods of fear.

In art nothing that is superficial is successful; being artistically true depends to a high degree on thoroughness. If you will try to write up one of your own vivid experiences with the sole idea of making the reader see and feel as you did, you will discover at once that a few truthful statements do not necessarily convey the impression you intend. A truthful statement is one thing; an impression like yours is another. It is a truthful statement to say: "It was a hot day, and a great many people were assembled at the county fair." But you hardly expect the reader, on the strength of that, to find himself with you at the fair-grounds. To be artistically true requires much sharp observation, much experience, much practise.

Let us take this instance of a county fair. Let us suppose that the centre of interest is a running race, and that we wish to give the reader some notion of how it appeared in the midst of the great crowd. Since the whole thing is just the sort of occasion that we never feel more keenly than in youth, why should we not be able to give a true and vivid account of it? Yet something like the following is what we are usually capable of:

It was a piping hot August afternoon, and a great many people had assembled at the fair-grounds. There were farmers from all over the county, with their wives and children, dressed out in every imag-

inable fashion, all wandering about at random, looking at the various shows or drinking red lemonade in a shed out of the sun. But the centre of interest was the running track where the great race "for the championship of the world" was shortly to be held.

And so we might go on for several pages, gathering mere general impressions, not untruthful, but perfectly flat, opening our eyes to stare, but not to see sharply. In contrast, here is the same scene *visualized*:

There was, in the first place, a piping hot August afternoon, the kind that they have out in the corn belt, when not a drop of rain has fallen for a couple of months and the leaves are drying up on the trees and the grass is yellow and crackly under foot, and the dust follows after the farmers' wagons like smoke. Then, inside a high board fence, was the fair-ground, with big wooden halls here and there, oak-trees with locusts singing away in the branches, and packed full of people and prize cattle and pumpkins and lunch-boxes and chewing candy and noise. There were farmers in their store-clothes just in from thrashing and farmers' girls in white dresses with pink and baby-blue ribbons, and in between, children with sticky popcorn and red balloons and squawkers. There was a "natural amphitheatre" with benches running along the side hill, where the hushed crowd gaped at the spellbinder waving his arms beside the ice-water pitcher. There were prize-pig pens and sheep pens, the art hall with its pictures of peaches tumbling out of baskets and watermelons just opened with the knife lying beside them, and the tents where Diavolo ate grass and blew fire out of his mouth and the beautiful young lady stood out on a platform by the ticket-box, in faded pink tights, with a big wet snake wound around her throat and her spangles blinking in the sunshine. There were sample windmills and cane-ringing games, and wherever there was room a man shaking popcorn or pulling candy over a hook, or a damp little shed smelling of vanilla, where people were eating ice cream and drinking red lemonade. You get all that and lots more going at once, with the barkers yelling and the sledge-hammers thumping on the strength-testing machines and the merry-go-round organs squealing away, with the sun blazing at ninety-four in the shade and everywhere the smell of hot people and clothes and stale perfume, of lemonade and popcorn and peanuts and dust and trampled grass—you take all that, draw a third-of-a-mile circle through the thick of it, push the crowd back a bit, and you have

the Vandalia track that day as the engine bell in the judges' stand tolled out the warning signal and the old marshal on his white circus horse rode down the track sidewise, bellowing out the "mile foot-race for the champeenship of the world!"<sup>1</sup>

Take a good look at this little picture. Is there an element in it that you could not have thought of by yourself? You do not believe that your own impressions were less vivid, for you felt the heat, the crowd, the dust, in just that way. From your point of view, that is what makes the whole so true. It corresponds perfectly to your experience. You did not phrase your impressions at the time, but is not the language simple enough—just the phrases, taken one by one, you might perfectly well have used? What is it, then, which is, perhaps, beyond your reach? It is to give a clear, multicolored impression of the whole appearance, taking into account all the facts you remember, the air, the crowd, the noise, the dust, the excitement, the look and sensation of it all, not vaguely, but specifically, by some sort of orderly selection of parts, by some sort of focussing process that suggests whatever it blots out, so that the whole, the reality, is always retained. This kind of record, as you say, requires more originality than you possess. But now please notice that it presents much the same problem as describing the significance of Queen Mary's death, after a reading of Froude's complexly detailed narrative. Doubtless it is only a man with a good deal of art who can accomplish either of these things well; but, on the whole, it is as difficult to do one as the other.

You may call this ability what you like—trained observation, craftsmanship, imagination; but for purposes of getting it into a real relationship with your own capabilities and with your character, it is well to call it thorough-

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Ruhl, "Left Behind," *Scribner's Magazine*, vol. 38, p. 300.

ness. If you lack thoroughness, you may still hope to gain some of it and some of those qualities that it either includes or creates.

### *III. The Practical Methods*

#### I

After considering even thus briefly what literary art is and what are some of its demands on us, we are in a better position to take advantage of any definite, practical advice as to methods of working at our literary tasks. But no practical advice such as, for example, Benjamin Franklin or Robert Louis Stevenson has given us about how to sit down to work, or such counsel in regard to technicalities of structure as the books of rhetoric are full of, is so important and so fundamental as a vivid conception of the kind of energy which the ideals of literary art represent.

By practical methods I mean here the combination of personal habits of work with external principles of literary structure. Good habits of work come from the effort to make them correspond to principles of structure. Unity is a principle of structure; concentration is a habit of work. Ease is a principle of structure; listening to the tone of what one says and imitating or continuing its finest strains is a habit of work. But concentration and listening to tone are effected by different people in different ways, and the habits resulting are individual. Therefore practical methods of composition are often highly idiosyncratic. Those which I shall ultimately emphasize have, however, a fairly wide utility.

Authors themselves, both the great and the less, have furnished us with an almost infinite variety of information as to how they "do it," ranging from the sort of pen

they use to the diet and even the brand of tobacco which most conduce to inspiration. I recall reading somewhere that the libretto of *Don Giovanni* was written at midnight in a haze of latakia, and that the novels of Marion Crawford were clearly indited on a certain definite size of paper with a Falcon pen. Doubtless there is something to be learned from a study of writers' proclivities: for when you discover that every hour of the day and night has been named by some successful author as the one and only season for labor; and that certain mysterious persons, like Lord Byron, wrote only at the remaining unknown seasons; also that every conceivable speed is earnestly to be striven for, from Walter Pater's two pages a day to Anthony Trollope's regular two hundred and fifty words every fifteen minutes by the clock, or Colonel Ingraham's forty thousand words in twenty-four hours, for some novel of the immortal Buffalo Bill Series; you wisely conclude that you should study your own case in these matters, and discover what seasons are for you the most fluent or the most intense, and how much work you can, as a rule, do effectively at a stretch. It is also interesting to know that such a veteran as Doctor Johnson, found it easier to write while he was stroking a cat; that Herbert Spencer, who suffered from a nervous affection and wrote in brief half-hour intervals, wore a white canton-flannel suit to maintain an equilibrium of heat throughout his body, and thick ear-tabs to keep out noise; that Zola worked in the daytime, with blinds closed and gas lighted; and that vast numbers of authors have written chiefly before breakfast—as their writings most obviously show. Somebody has defined literature as the record of the best moments of the best minds. A psychologist (with a sense of humor), investigating this matter of authors' habits, could determine



for us what are the best moments and under what circumstances they are most likely to occur. But until that is done we shall have to blunder on in our own ways.

There are, nevertheless, a number of small matters of sufficiently general application to be mentioned here. It is most important to learn to write a fastidiously clear script in lines far enough apart to allow an inserted line in revision, to get used to a standard size page, regular margins, and, in general, to perfect early such mechanical aspects of the task as every man finds serviceable. It is an excellent practise, in most cases, to revise each paragraph as it is finished, and the whole composition afterward, and to make a great moral effort to complete the first draft in these two natural processes of revision—after which there should be made a final draft, allowing a certain time, if possible, to intervene.<sup>1</sup>

A very reasonable proclivity of a well-known American novelist is to write the first draft of his stories in college blue books, using the opposite blank page for his revisions and insertions. I know of no purely mechanical suggestion so apt to increase order and unity, and to save time, as this. Another writer has told me that he finds it fatal to the ultimately desired sequence of his work to write on large sheets of paper. He writes passages on half-sheets, and from time to time rearranges them and pastes them together. In this way he can see more exactly the real sequences and connections, and he is not so apt to invent a transition or a casual relationship between two thoughts which have occurred to him in succession, but which have no other natural connection. He often finds, that is, that

<sup>1</sup> The student who finishes an essay or report at midnight and turns it in to his instructor the next morning is usually forcing the instructor to do fifty per cent of the revising which the student, a day later, could have done equally well for himself.

the *lucidus ordo* of his production is not the chronological order of his thoughts, however logical that order may have seemed at the time.

Now the lucid order, the right arrangement of parts, is obviously the chief end of structure, and these personal, practical devices or habits are developed by the demands of that end.

The fundamental methods are *organizing detail and guiding the reader*, and *keeping or modulating the tone*. They are all methods which serve the end of clearness, though that word, as we shall see, can be variously interpreted. But among all methods that might be suggested, if the student who is learning to write understands thoroughly one or two, he has, so to speak, introduced a yeast into his ideas and purposes which will leaven the whole. Let us consider first an illustrative method of organizing detail.

## II

Let us suppose that in thinking over the fate of Mary Queen of Scots, to take a subject already referred to and somewhat familiar, you have been struck with the idea that Mary's world of royalty and statecraft was so small and so closely organized that everything any one did in it seemed to affect sooner or later everybody else who belonged to it. In this closely organized world everything counted in a peculiar way. Mary herself was too important to take a single step which, if it happened to be a foolish one, did not rapidly bring her into trouble. In the larger, more loosely organized world of commonalty, our mistakes are oftener to be mended, because our influence does not radiate so rapidly or so widely. But in Mary's world, the King of Spain could have no opinion that did not ultimately

affect her ambitions, and Drake could not gain a victory in South America that did not make her position in her English prison a little less secure.

Supposing that such considerations had decided you to write a theme on the subject they suggest—The Unity of Men and their Acts. Let us also suppose that you have other illustrations of what we mean by this kind of unity, this interdependence, and that you have thought out somewhat the general truth involved—that, if all the acts and opinions of men ultimately influence each other, each of us has a tremendous burden of responsibility to think and act wisely, and to be effective citizens of our own part of the world. This may have struck you as a very significant idea. The question is how to introduce and arrange it so that it will affect the reader as poignantly, so that all it implies will dawn on him brightly and create a vista for his imagination.

Obviously then, the first step is to discover a really interesting point from which to begin, for you must gain an advantage over the possible (the highly probable) indifference of the reader at the very start. You must say something to throw a light ahead, to rouse his curiosity, his expectation, in regard to the general look of the subject. Indeed, to discover a really significant point of departure is to settle for the writer several difficult problems. Such a beginning usually suggests a fairly definite course and fixes the limits of your subject. If you have definitely raised the reader's expectation, you should more easily know when you have satisfied it. There is something definite for you to live up to, and something definite to keep you in bounds. A good beginning will do more psychologically for the unity and coherence, and hence for the end of a theme, than any other one factor.

You will very likely find a satisfactory beginning by jotting down on separate slips of paper all the points and illustrations you can readily think of which you wish to embody in the essay, and then sorting them as you would a hand of cards till they fall into their most reasonable and most pleasing arrangement. From this arrangement, you can, if you wish, write out a formal outline; but I think it is usually better to let these cards or slips constitute your outline—at least until you are well on your course. They are easily shifted, and this kind of outline can be more quickly altered and revised than if it is formally drawn up. Also you may get a better idea of what doesn't belong in it, and this is a matter of first-rate importance.

Suppose that the topics on these separate slips read as follows:

(1) Statement of the principle of the unity of men and their acts. (2) Illustration: the history of Mary Stuart. (3) The world is very small, especially in the upper classes of society, and therefore smallest in the ruling class. (4) Does not intermarriage among royalty complicate the relations of nations in a way to make them more precarious than they naturally are? (5) Nations live peaceably side by side; rulers do not. (6) The principle of unity is seen most easily in the small group of crowned heads, but it is a universal principle. (7) You influence your neighbor, your neighbor influences some one else. Is it not like throwing a stone into a pond and starting the ripples? (8) Ultimately it may be said that your opinion influences the Czar of Russia. (9) Illustration: You help to call the attention of Mr. Thomas Mott Osborne to the conditions of our prisons. He spends a week in Auburn Jail. He writes a book about it. He is appointed warden of Sing Sing, and inaugurates certain reforms. Russian travellers visit Sing Sing; Russians read his book or the reports of journals. Ultimately, there are better prisons in Siberia. (10) We can never do anything simply for ourselves; whatever we do for ourselves is also for others. (11) We have a grave responsibility. We are part of collective opinion. To be as intelligent a part of collective opinion as we can is our greatest duty, an international duty. (12) In becoming liberally educated we are performing a widely significant rôle. (13) Liberal collective

opinion must rule the world, not family opinion, not royalty, not governmental opinion. (14) Application of these ideas to the great war.

Suppose that this represents the arrangement of your notes for this essay on the unity of men and their acts. It is not by any means the only arrangement, or the best, but it represents a definite drift of thought. It will do to start with, and a brightened beginning will do much toward making its outline sharper. Suppose that the following ways of beginning occur to you: (1) To tell how you were reading about the life and death of Queen Mary, and how you had concluded, from the way in which so many rather remotely connected events all finally seemed to join toward one end, that there is a more generally applicable principle of the unity of human nature than we are normally conscious of. This might make an excellent introduction, intimate and personal, in which you take the reader by the hand and start him fairly on his course:

The other day, when I was reading about the political and religious complications leading to the execution of Mary Stuart, etc.

It would be that sort of easy beginning. (2) But on experimenting a few minutes with this beginning, it may occur to you that, after all, it will not prove very significant unless you analyze and illustrate the fate of Mary Stuart at length, and that a long discourse on Elizabethan history, all for the sake of showing that what most of us believe in theory is sometimes concretely true, is not a very far-reaching, not exactly a running start. You are out of breath before you have really begun, and you have to begin again. So you decide to put the general truth first and at once illustrate briefly by a reference to this historic example:

All human actions are interdependent. Everything influences, directly or indirectly, everything else. This can be seen from the study of history. Let us take a single instance, etc.

It would be that sort of succinct beginning. (3) If, however, you have a keen sense of what beginnings ought to do for subjects, if you recall your own pleasure in opening a magazine and starting to read, as it were from an eminence, you will realize as you proceed that this second beginning of yours is not very prophetic. It does not really raise expectation so well as the other because it proceeds to fix the attention too quickly on an exact instance before the mind has had time to guess at the many implications of the general thesis. You realize that if you are going on to speak of what this thesis means in regard to current affairs and our individual social duty; if, for instance, you intend to apply it for specific illustration to the great European war and to show that we all share in the causes of that war, which, from a universal point of view, is due to a lack of educated opinion, to a lack of power in any great number of men to think widely on international subjects, and hence that it may be said to be partly due to American indifference to the diplomatic systems of Europe; if you are going to end with something like that, you must realize also that you should begin by stating your thesis with comprehensive imagination:

If one could stand on the edge of the moon and look down through a couple of thousand years on human politics, it would be apparent that everything that happened on the earth was directly dependent on everything else that happened there. Whether the Italian peasant shall eat salt with his bread, depends on Bismarck. Whether the prison system of Russia shall be improved, depends on the ministry of Great Britain. If Lord Beaconsfield is in power, there is no leisure in Russia for domestic reform. In like manner, the good things that happen are each the product of all extant con-

ditions. Constitutional government in England qualifies the whole of western Europe; our slaves were not set free without the assistance of every liberal mind in Europe; and the thoughts which we think in our closet affect the fate of the Boer in South Africa.

Such a beginning is more nearly adequate to the subject. On second thought you will perceive that it is by no means too fanciful. Turn to the last essay in this volume, and, after reading three or four pages, ask yourself if this introduction is not still enlarging your imagination to the measure of the subject.

A glance at several essays with which you are already familiar will show you the effect that the beginning has on the treatment and extent of the subject. One may raise expectation, as Carlyle does in his essay on Scott, by asking a central question that secures light from each detail as he proceeds, Was Scott a great man?—a question requiring obviously some definition of greatness in ambition and in achievement, and leading naturally to an analysis of Scott's life, which shows in what ways Scott was or failed to be great. Brand Whitlock begins his little biography of Lincoln by saying that Lincoln's story, rightly told, is the epic of America. Hutton begins his famous criticism of Shelley and his poetry with nine or ten pages of seemingly random illustration and comment, which lead you to believe with him that the dominant quality in Shelley's acts and in his thinking is *caprice*; the meaning of all that follows in the essay is modified and illuminated by this primary admission. A good beginning is an impetus that lasts.

Obviously you will not always be able to think of far-reaching beginnings for your subjects. But if you understand the principle involved, you will do better with them than otherwise, and especially will you be apt to go back, after reaching a certain point in the theme, and give the

beginning a more significant turn—a turn that more truly prophesies the point you have reached and the line you are proceeding on. (And this point, by the way, where you feel the need of starting over again, is usually the psychological moment for working up more completely the outline of the whole theme.)

Often, it is true, there is the greatest difficulty in starting at all, even when there is no vagueness about the main issue. You can see the end clearly, like the gentleman who knew that he wished to propose marriage but could never think how to begin such a terrible conversation. He was advised to begin with the end. And in writing it is an excellent method to begin close to the end, for then you may encircle your subject and return to the same point, which will usually give the subject a recognizable shape, or at least a certain mechanical unity that, on second thought, can be turned into real unity. It is the least random of all methods which can be objectively described. Three points, if the first and last are close together, indicate at once the exact circumference of a circle. If the first point is not close to the last it is more difficult to visualize the area.

So much for the influence of the beginning on the trend and end of an essay. To raise expectation, to lift the eye toward the end, to equip the reader with a word, a phrase, or an image that shall be a light on the way, and to mark the extent of the theme—these are the chief functions of a good beginning.

### III

As you proceed to develop the trend of the discussion, which has been largely defined by beginning well and by making an improved outline, you still feel the need of



some kind of test to tell you if its substance has a real, inherent unity, and not just a mechanical or verbal unity. Do the central thoughts cohere, or just the peripheries of their expression?

It is probably well to trust at first to your natural logic, to the sequences which a certain rapidity and fluency of composition often create. Then, when a definite division of the work has been thus completed, if you will write opposite each paragraph a sentence, or underline in each paragraph a sentence which expresses the chief purpose of the paragraph, and read those sentences together, you will have the best criticism of your work that can be devised. Do these summary sentences, when thus read, form of themselves a logical, pointed paragraph? Are they in their best order, and do they fit together easily? If they can be changed about to advantage, the chances are that the paragraphs they represent should change places. Or, if they can be changed about without especially embarrassing their sense, the chances are that there is a corresponding lack of emphasis or lack of proper subordination in the parts they represent. Also, these summary sentences, if not already in the paragraphs and in some significant position there, should nearly always be so incorporated. They should be most carefully and pointedly worded. They are the bones, the ribs, of the whole matter, the things that count most in giving it shape. Again, if they do not fit together as they are, but need to be supplemented by other connecting sentences to make their sequence plain, see to it that these connecting sentences are also incorporated and, when necessary, new paragraphs written to correspond. If you cannot devise connecting sentences for them at all, then they are superfluous, and the parts they stand for should be cut out. A large part of poor writing and super-

ficial thinking is due to a lack of these features by which we recognize more sharply the character and influence of thoughts as we write. And, just so, their presence is a large part of the enduring impression of great writings.

Such a method, which, after some practise becomes a thoroughly conscious habit embodying itself in the processes of thought and not requiring an external application, includes, obviously, many minor points in organizing detail. One of these I wish especially to describe—the principle of emphasis.

#### IV

In a Gothic arch every stone has its place. Remove any stone, the arch falls. But while every stone is a necessity, we think of some of them as being more important than the others, especially the bases and the keystone. If a stone cross surmounts the keystone, we think of the keystone as supporting it, though it may be there to give weight to the keystone. We say, in turn, that the arch supports the keystone, that the flying buttresses support the arch, that the pinnacles on the buttresses add their weight to resist the thrust of the arch. Remove the pinnacles and the stone cross is less secure.

Everything in this structure is necessary and important because it is subordinate to some other part. It is indispensable only because of this relationship. The cross and the pinnacles look like ornaments or like expressions of the purpose of the substructure; in reality they play their own indispensable parts.

This principle of subordination is the principle of emphasis. In writing, if you would sharpen the outline of your idea (an exposition, an argument, a story), subordinate

many parts to the few you wish to emphasize, *make the few thoroughly dependent on the many*. Apply this Gothic test. See that you do not place as co-ordinate parts that depend directly or indirectly on each other, that have, in some measure, a cause-and-effect relationship. You may wish to emphasize the cause or the effect, as the case may be, but you will bring out the significance of neither if they are not represented in their proper relationship.

If, for example, in your discussion of the interdependence of human actions, you wish to emphasize point eleven, about our international duty to be liberally educated and to help in the good government of our little locality, make points thirteen and fourteen lead up to it by saying that, if liberal opinion ruled the world, the great war might not have come, and it is, therefore, our chief public duty to be liberally and democratically educated. Suppose you wish to emphasize your statement of the general principle of the unity of human nature, make the story of Mary Stuart simply an illustration of it. Suppose you wish to emphasize that story, then say that it is from such a story as that of Mary Stuart that we learn most about the nature of the principle.

True emphasis is a principle inherent in structure. Being arbitrarily emphatic, talking loud, reiterating, beating your breast, swearing by all the gods that what you are saying is important, are the resources not of eloquence but of flatulence. The ornaments of speech should play their part like the ornaments in the Gothic design, and their significance should result largely from their place, their arrangement, in the design. I once heard a distinguished speaker say that every lasting impression he had made was due more to his having simply managed to put the horse before the cart than to any particular attraction in the rig itself.

## V

In describing methods for organizing detail we have not spoken entirely from the writer's point of view, but from the reader's as well. All good methods of writing are, of course, methods of guiding the reader. We try to write so that the reader will see his way clearly and not grope about, so that he will be impressed and not confused, and so that we shall not have to explain at length over and over what we mean and whither we are going. At street corners are sign-posts—not in themselves obtrusive, but part of the scheme of the town. We think of them as belonging to the streets, like the lamps to which they are often attached. So in a well-organized piece of writing there are, as part of the plan, a good many incidental guides.

That these guides may not appear as superficial formalities for the benefit of some not-overintelligent reader, it is most desirable that they should be part of the general attitude and manner of the writer himself. The older novelists and essayists, with a charming courtesy toward their guest, the gentle reader, were in the habit of taking him aside informally and explaining how matters really stood. Modern methods are perhaps more subtle, but too often they are not employed at all. Impersonality is the growing characteristic of style. The reader is, in a certain sense, always the writer's guest, and most of the rules for receiving and entertaining a guest, and especially for not boring him, may be followed with benefit by the literary host. Having our house fit to be seen, we take a certain pride in showing a guest about till he has learned his way—our way, that is. We make allowance for his ignorance of what to us is the commonplace of habit; we keep him posted on our plans and arrangements; we occupy ourselves with

him to a considerable extent, and certainly never quite forget that he is with us. At the same time we are careful not to bore him. These things are in the intention of any socially inclined writer. He accomplishes them naturally. They are part of his style, his literary manners. He is always thus doubly thoughtful, of his subject and of his reader; and the more complex his subject, the more pains he must take; for the reader and the subject are always close together in his mind, two aspects of the same problem.

In this matter of guiding the reader, there is perhaps one rule of more frequent application than any other in writing: *Proceed from the general to the particular*. In other words, when you have made a statement hasten to illustrate it. Be specific. "The Germans are going to win; they have kept the war almost entirely on foreign soil." "Byron is a great poet; read the last stanza of the fifteenth canto of 'Don Juan.'" So far as you are concerned, the first statements may mean something. So far as the reader is concerned, it is only the second statements that count. Most writing is simply the process of illustrating our opinion; and I venture to suggest that the greatest faults in writing, which correspond exactly to the greatest weaknesses in thinking, could be described by saying that a generalization has no eyes. Dulness, vagueness, incoherence, bluster, repetition, gabble, pomposity, inanity, twaddle, these are qualities that belong to authors who are deaf to the reader's cry, "Give me an illustration!" It should also be said, however, that the reader who cannot follow closely connected abstract reasoning misses the deepest truths, which, as Shelley once said, are "imageless"; and no set of illustrations unaccompanied by the criticism of comprehensive, enlarging, or qualifying statements are apt to give a fair view of the subject.

The examination of a number of serious writings, such as follow in this book, even the examination of the first few paragraphs of each, will convince you that the normal method of thinking about any subject is that of alternating general and specific considerations. Nor do I know any exercise so beneficial to the writer as to plan rigidly a few themes which consist entirely of a set of illustrations following an expressed opinion, and in which each paragraph is a set of more specific statements after one rather general statement. To hold to this idea rigidly and see just what it does for coherence and point is often a revelation in regard to literary method.

Besides looking for a series of lamps along the way, the reader is also hoping to arrive on a series of eminences from which he can get a view. He wishes to look back, to look ahead, and to realize where he is. For merely coming out somewhere at the end does not satisfy him. The writer must therefore provide a number of vantage points where he tells what he is going to do, and others where he tells what he has done, and still others where he tells what he has not done and has no intention of doing. All these points he must reach at the psychological moments: when the reader is growing expectant, never before; and when he is trying to recall, never after he has totally forgotten. Moreover, the writer must not linger at these points beyond the psychological moment when the reader understands. A word or a phrase will often suffice to sum up a long matter; a new turn to a phrase is often all the reader needs to point him ahead. We remember single words and phrases far better than long sentences, and are guided by them more easily. Indeed, the importance of the single word is so great that, like the maker of maxims, Joseph Joubert, the man interested in guiding his reader is con-

tinually taken up with the effort to reduce his pages to a paragraph, his paragraph to a sentence, his sentence to a word.

The art of describing one's own purpose brightly enough to shed some real light on it, that is one of the rare things in literary art. It is the secret of Lincoln's power, of which his Gettysburg address is not the only example. It is a large part of Stevenson's charm—how certain phrases keep ringing in the ear as one flies after him from fancy to fancy, guided by the echo! It is the essential brilliance of Carlyle, whose guiding words flash like swords across his page. It is in the nature of every man who is a force in letters, from the poet with his refrain to the statesman with his shibboleth. And when one has caught the ring of these words one knows something more of a matter than is evident from the logic of its structure.

## VI

Clearness, the *lucidus ordo*, is the fundamental thing in art, but not its consummation—though so to regard it is a present popular superstition. "Whatever you do, be clear," the successful writers and practical teachers of this practical success-loving generation are always telling us. The advice usually stops there; for practical people like to think that the world is all made up of *real* objective facts and ideas, and that the writer should try to see them as impersonally as possible in order to see them clearly. Consequently, if the word style is mentioned at all, it is only to say that the best style is that of which we are least aware—"just as the best-dressed man is he whose clothes are not noticeable, and the best manners are those which occasion no remark one way or the other." But the analogy is not

true to nature; for the best style is no more that of which we are least aware than the best-dressed man is he who wears no clothes at all, or the best manners are those of complete silence and self-effacement. But if we have been misled by mere words, it is in theory rather than in practise. There is surely no lack of vivid and picturesque style nowadays. Nor do we really mean, in emphasizing our practical maxim, "Whatever you do, be clear," instead of the older maxim of fine manners and taste, "*Quoi que vous écriviez, évitez la bassesse,*" that the personal characteristics of a man's writing are unworthy of attention. For undoubtedly there is more excellently mannered writing at present than in the day of "manners," and more appreciation both of the essentials and of the fine shades of literary art. If we have been misled in theory, it is by a set of people who understand nothing which they cannot teach, and who have not yet discovered an exact pedagogical method for "teaching style." If we are not cultivating our own personalities enough in writing, it may be because we read too rarely in the thoroughly written books—the books in which the writer has lived as he wrote—and because we read too much in the newspapers, where a certain impersonality has to be consciously cultivated in order to secure, in reports from a hundred different pens, some unity of tone. For it is a curious paradox that seeing life through the deep eyes of a dominating personality is to discover our own point of view, while seeing life impersonally in the passing, helter-skelter show of successive journals is to see it always at second hand. The vivid reality of things is in the minds and imaginations of men, not in the things themselves.

So, when we say that lucidity is our ideal, we do not mean mere plainness. We mean also vividness and picturesqueness; and though one general quality does not



comprehend all the excellencies of writing, it is helpful to those learning to write to think of many qualities contributing to a final clear end rather than of many qualities being cultivated for their own sakes. As a matter of fact, tone, manner, sustained "rhetoric," finely flowing sequence, are qualities not often existing or even possible for their own sakes or for the sake of any intention quite different from the intention to be clear. They are qualities which add at once to the clarity of our impressions. If Mr. Dooley writes one of his humoresques on grand opera, the manner of the whole thing, the fantastic exaggerations of his mental dialect, are for the purpose of making us see some of the characteristics of grand opera more clearly. Nor can we see them at all from his point of view unless we laugh. If ——— addresses to us a stirring and lofty appeal, the eloquence is for the purpose of making us feel and reason more emphatically. But the man who does not catch the tone, the manner, of these things is neither stirred in the one case nor entertained in the other, and consequently misses the point of their meaning. Tone is, therefore, part of any meaning, intellectual or emotional, and those people who do not care for manner but want only the "practical gist of the thing" miss the very point they are after. They beg the question; they do not care for *the* meaning. I remember saying once to a Spaniard that few Americans seem to care for the humor of Don Quixote until, perhaps, the vast moral of the satire begins to dawn on them. "That," he replied, "is simply because you cannot perceive in English the delicious tone in which each little bit is written." Now, it is in that tone, of course, that the real satirical meaning lies. Until every intention of the writer is perceived, one cannot understand a work wholly. In a translation there is sure to be something

lacking from the author's intention in his choice of words to convey his meaning; and therefore, no matter how exact the translation may be, the meaning is not quite the same as in the original. It is rather hopeless to translate poetry, or any writings where the meaning is so largely conveyed by the tone, by the sequences of sound, by the connotations of words that are vividly local. What meaning there is in the translation may be perfectly clear, but it is not a fully toned clearness, and we say we do not get "the spirit of the original."

The element which we have in mind here is obviously not just lucidity. It is another part of a writer's meaning that appears to be best described by the word *tone*, because this term includes the idea of choices in words, the sounds of phrases and sentences, and the psychological impression on us. We call this impression smoothness, choppiness, bluntness, floridity, grace, richness, thinness, as the case may be. Obviously, in all writings there is some kind of tone, though in many it is so flat and so slightly accented as to be unindividual, or so crudely developed and unharmonious that we receive only irksome impressions. But when the tone is well modulated, whether it be prominent or restrained, so long as it suits the rest of the meaning we have a definite satisfaction in feeling it. Temperamentally we may prefer one kind of tone and meaning to another. We may prefer Macaulay's history to Carlyle's; the essays of H. G. Wells to those of Bernard Shaw; Newman, as a preacher, to Matthew Arnold; Tennyson, as a dramatist, to Browning. The appreciation of literary art, however, comes from a sense of what is suitable between tone and clearness in any meaning. Well-toned clearness is the object of any writer's best effort.

Ultimately you will perceive that this is what you are

always trying for—to make the thing ring true, to cast out or make whole the dead places and to harmonize all the variations. For a certain poet's intention, such a line as

“The weirdly wistful wailing of the melancholy flute”

suits perfectly. Supposing it had first been written, “the sad and wistful wailing,” is not the tone of “wistful wailing” marked enough to have immediately suggested “weirdly” as the word to complete the sensuous meaning? “*Veni, vidi, vici!*” “I came, I saw, I conquered!” How much less of the original meaning would be preserved if we said, “I arrived, I saw, I was victorious!” and how little or nothing in, “I got there, I looked around, and I came out ahead.” If you have written the last, which is all in the same (ragged) tone, there is no chance for improvement except by erasing the whole thing and beginning over. But if you have written the second, you will be guided by the tone of “I saw, I was victorious,” to give it more uniformity by saying, “I saw, I conquered”; and you will hardly fail to realize that “I came” chimes in better than, “I arrived,” in bluntness and brevity, for the whole effect.<sup>1</sup>

You improve upon yourself. You imitate your own better moments, and thus you enlarge your glimpses of your true meaning. You work up on either side of what strikes you as your true level of well-toned clearness, till all is in a graded relationship with that level. To know how to work skilfully and rapidly in this kind of revision is the final thing in learning to write. It requires taste; it requires ability to listen to your own style critically; and it

<sup>1</sup> A good exercise toward an understanding of tone is to paraphrase a page of one of *Stevenson's Essays* in this volume, retaining in the paraphrase every now and then a sentence from the original. The tone of the original may be then, perhaps, more sharply discovered.

requires power to make every now and then a phrase or a paragraph worthy of being looked up to. If it were not for this last and fundamental necessity of thorough and original thought, the whole might be described as the way in which we may all become great writers. It is the method, so far as there is one, that all great writers have used; and that it is the natural method must be obvious from your own experience.

It is already your method. But perhaps you have not made the most of it. Perhaps you revise here and there, in much the same way that one usually begins to work at a picture-puzzle after the pieces are dumped on the table, putting together scatteringly any two pieces that fit. There is, however, little similarity between the mechanical fitness in a picture-puzzle and the idea of general suitability that one keeps in mind while revising a composition. Don't use picture-puzzle methods; there are no better and worse pieces in a picture-puzzle. But perhaps you do not clearly distinguish, in writing, your better tones and phrases from the mediocre. It is a very poor critic who cannot show them to you. Yet, better than any critic or teacher, who can, after all, be little more than a wide-awake audience for you, greeting with alternate applause and hisses your efforts, is some long, enthusiastic reading in an author who has a strong smack of language about him, like Carlyle, or Kipling, or Joseph Conrad, or Browning. You must discover your own book, just as you have ultimately to discover yourself; and "your own book," if it happens to be a true and great one, will be a sort of mirror to you and will hasten your understanding of many things. You will begin to hear your own words more distinctly and to recognize what is typical of your best moments of thought. For reading accustoms you to minds definitely engaged in these processes,

and in the intimacy of "your own book" you will at last understand them critically and thoroughly.

This is not the old doctrine of imitating the other man, nor yet the fallacy of trying to be original all by yourself. It is the doctrine of understanding the other man, and then of imitating, not him, but yourself. It is the doctrine of inheriting the past, not of dying with it. It is a description, I believe, of the way in which every great artist has individually learned his art. Sooner or later he has thought and expressed something thoroughly, finely, compactly; and listening to the tone of it, how well it suits its meaning, he has caught the trick of style from himself. So, it is not a trick, after all; it is simply himself at last coming out.

This is a fundamental idea; it is in every part of life. You learn to swim three strokes, and you are at once guessing about your possibilities for a mile. The picture in your father's house which you have looked at for years makes you suddenly aware of its real beauty—it is also something in yourself that you are conscious of. For the first time you play an old piece in the exercise book with an expression that is your own, and you are at the entrance of the whole realm of music. What is it you have heard in that piece—somebody else's notes? Return to your favorite book, a book like *Middlemarch*, after three years. It is all new, you say. What is new? Your own experiences and your latest thoughts, reflected in that mirror. Art is ever fresh, so long as you do not grow stale. It takes the measure of your increasing maturity and of your hopes. It cleanses your nature by showing you what you must outgrow, by developing the beautiful and enjoyable part of you, and by flashing before you vividly those things that you do not yet understand but may not remain indifferent to.

Once having recognized the truth of this, a general truth which applies to much in one's character besides the power to write, the man of character finds that it sets before him the sternest of ideals—the necessity of striving to enlarge and, at the same time, encompass his true possibilities, of not settling back into his adequate mediocrities. For the discovery of power, while it is an inspiration, does not insure success. Mediocrity is strong in all of us. It usually conquers. And because it often buries us so comfortably, we come to regard it as success instead of the other thing which is rarely comfortable at all—which is only romantic and moral, an unending effort.

It is in this light that the far-reaching comment with which we began, in the saying that the problem of improving a man's writing is usually the problem of improving his character, places the whole matter on a high plane. Most men have, at one time or another, glimpses of their possible powers; they see the truth they long to believe in, they hear the words they fain would utter. But only one man in a thousand has the patience, persistence, the energy for thoroughness, and the romantic egoism that enable him to enlarge that finest area in his nature, and to protect it inch by inch against the encroachments of his mediocrity and his self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction is the story of most of us; self-realization only of the few. Nowhere is this more commonly to be seen than in writing. Yet we have all been given our little bit of magic, the open sesame both to our own minds and to the secrets of art.

## II

### THE QUESTION OF STYLE <sup>1</sup>

ARNOLD BENNETT

In discussing the value of particular books, I have heard people say—people who were timid about expressing their views of literature in the presence of literary men: “It may be bad from a literary point of view, but there are very good things in it.” Or: “I dare say the style is very bad, but really the book is very interesting and suggestive.” Or: “I’m not an expert, and so I never bother my head about good style. All I ask for is good matter. And when I have got it, critics may say what they like about the book.” And many other similar remarks, all showing that in the minds of the speakers there existed a notion that style is something supplementary to, and distinguishable from, matter; a sort of notion that a writer who wanted to be classical had first to find and arrange his matter, and then dress it up elegantly in a costume of style, in order to please beings called literary critics.

This is a misapprehension. Style cannot be distinguished from matter. When a writer conceives an idea he conceives it in a form of words. That form of words constitutes his style, and it is absolutely governed by the idea. The idea can only exist in words, and it can only exist in one form of words. You cannot say exactly the same thing in two dif-

<sup>1</sup> Chapter VI of *Literary Taste, How to Form It*. Reprinted through the courtesy of Arnold Bennett and of George H. Doran Company.

ferent ways. Slightly alter the expression, and you slightly alter the idea. Surely it is obvious that the expression cannot be altered without altering the thing expressed! A writer, having conceived and expressed an idea, may, and probably will, "polish it up." But what does he polish up? To say that he polishes up his style is merely to say that he is polishing up his idea, that he has discovered faults or imperfections in his idea, and is perfecting it. An idea exists in proportion as it is expressed; it exists when it is expressed, and not before: It expresses itself. A clear idea is expressed clearly, and a vague idea vaguely. You need but take your own case and your own speech. For just as science is the development of common sense, so is literature the development of common daily speech. The difference between science and common sense is simply one of degree; similarly with speech and literature. Well, when you "know what you think," you succeed in saying what you think, in making yourself understood. When you "don't know what to think," your expressive tongue halts. And note how in daily life the characteristics of your style follow your mood; how tender it is when you are tender, how violent when you are violent. You have said to yourself in moments of emotion: "If only I could write—," etc. You were wrong. You ought to have said: "If only I could *think*—on this high plane." When you have thought clearly you have never had any difficulty in saying what you thought, though you may occasionally have had some difficulty in keeping it to yourself. And when you cannot express yourself, depend upon it that you have nothing precise to express, and that what incommodes you is not the vain desire to express, but the vain desire to *think* more clearly. All this just to illustrate how style and matter are coexistent, and inseparable, and alike.



You cannot have good matter with bad style. Examine the point more closely. A man wishes to convey a fine idea to you. He employs a form of words. That form of words is his style. Having read, you say: "Yes, this idea is fine." The writer has therefore achieved his end. But in what imaginable circumstances can you say: "Yes, this idea is fine, but the style is not fine"? The sole medium of communication between you and the author has been the form of words. The fine idea has reached you. How? In the words, by the words. Hence the fineness must be in the words. You may say, superiorly: "He has expressed himself clumsily, but I can *see* what he means." By what light? By something in the words, in the style. That something is fine. Moreover, if the style is clumsy, are you sure that you can see what he means? You cannot be quite sure. And, at any rate, you cannot see distinctly. The "matter" is what actually reaches you, and it must necessarily be affected by the style.

Still further to comprehend what style is, let me ask you to think of a writer's style exactly as you would think of the gestures and manners of an acquaintance. You know the man whose demeanor is "always calm," but whose passions are strong. How do you know that his passions are strong? Because he "gives them away" by some small, but important, part of his demeanor, such as the twitching of a lip or the whitening of the knuckles caused by clenching the hand. In other words, his demeanor, fundamentally, is not calm. You know the man who is always "smoothly polite and agreeable," but who affects you unpleasantly. Why does he affect you unpleasantly? Because he is tedious and therefore disagreeable, and because his politeness is not real politeness. You know the man who is awkward, shy, clumsy, but who, nevertheless, impresses you with a

sense of dignity and force. Why? Because mingled with that awkwardness and so forth *is* dignity. You know the blunt, rough fellow whom you instinctively guess to be affectionate—because there is “something in his tone” or “something in his eyes.” In every instance the demeanor, while perhaps seeming to be contrary to the character, is really in accord with it. The demeanor never contradicts the character. It is one part of the character that contradicts another part of the character. For, after all, the blunt man *is* blunt, and the awkward man *is* awkward, and these characteristics are defects. The demeanor merely expresses them. The two men would be better if, while conserving their good qualities, they had the superficial attributes of smoothness and agreeableness possessed by the gentleman who is unpleasant to you. And as regards this latter, it is not his superficial attributes which are unpleasant to you, but his other qualities. In the end the character is shown in the demeanor; and the demeanor is a consequence of the character and resembles the character. So with style and matter. You may argue that the blunt, rough man’s demeanor is unfair to his tenderness. I do not think so. For his churlishness is really very trying and painful, even to the man’s wife, though a moment’s tenderness will make her and you forget it. The man really is churlish, and much more often than he is tender. His demeanor is merely just to his character. So, when a writer annoys you for ten pages and then enchants you for ten lines, you must not explode against his style. You must not say that his style won’t let his matter “come out.” You must remember the churlish, tender man. The more you reflect, the more clearly you will see that faults and excellences of style are faults and excellences of matter itself.

One of the most striking illustrations of this neglected

truth is Thomas Carlyle. How often has it been said that Carlyle's matter is marred by the harshness and the eccentricities of his style? But Carlyle's matter is harsh and eccentric to precisely the same degree as his style is harsh and eccentric. Carlyle was harsh and eccentric. His behavior was frequently ridiculous, if it were not abominable. His judgments were often extremely bizarre. When you read one of Carlyle's fierce diatribes, you say to yourself: "This is splendid. The man's enthusiasm for justice and truth is glorious." But you also say: "He is a little unjust and a little untruthful. He goes too far. He lashes too hard." These things are not the style; they are the matter. And when, as in his greatest moments, he is emotional and restrained at once, you say: "This is the real Carlyle." Kindly notice how perfect the style has become! No harshnesses or eccentricities now! And if that particular matter is the "real" Carlyle, then that particular style is Carlyle's "real" style. But when you say "real" you would more properly say "best." "This is the best Carlyle." If Carlyle had always been at his best he would have counted among the supreme geniuses of the world. But he was a mixture. His style is the expression of the mixture. The faults are only in the style because they are in the matter.

You will find that, in classical literature, the style always follows the mood of the matter. Thus, Charles Lamb's essay on *Dream Children* begins quite simply, in a calm, narrative manner, enlivened by a certain quippishness concerning the children. The style is grave when great-grandmother Field is the subject, and when the author passes to a rather elaborate impression of the picturesque old mansion it becomes, as it were, consciously beautiful. This beauty is intensified in the description of the still more beautiful garden. But the real dividing point of the

essay occurs when Lamb approaches his elder brother. He unmistakably marks the point with the phrase: "*Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how,*" etc. Henceforward the style increases in fervor and in solemnity until the culmination of the essay is reached: "And while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech. . . ." Throughout, the style is governed by the matter. "Well," you say, "of course it is. It couldn't be otherwise. If it were otherwise it would be ridiculous. A man who made love as though he were preaching a sermon, or a man who preached a sermon as though he were teasing schoolboys, or a man who described a death as though he were describing a practical joke, must necessarily be either an ass or a lunatic." Just so. You have put it in a nutshell. You have disposed of the problem of style so far as it can be disposed of.

But what do those people mean who say: "I read such and such an author for the beauty of his style alone"? Personally, I do not clearly know what they mean (and I have never been able to get them to explain), unless they mean that they read for the beauty of sound alone. When you read a book there are only three things of which you may be conscious: (1) The significance of the words, which is inseparably bound up with the thought. (2) The look of the printed words on the page—I do not suppose that anybody reads any author for the visual beauty of the words on the page. (3) The sound of the words, either actually uttered or imagined by the brain to be uttered. Now it is indubitable that words differ in beauty of sound. To my mind one of the most beautiful words in the English

language is "pavement." Enunciate it, study its sound, and see what you think. It is also indubitable that certain combinations of words have a more beautiful sound than certain other combinations. Thus Tennyson held that the most beautiful line he ever wrote was:

"The mellow ousel fluting in the elm."

Perhaps, as sound, it was. Assuredly it makes a beautiful succession of sounds and recalls the bird sounds which it is intended to describe. But does it live in the memory as one of the rare, great Tennysonian lines? It does not. It has charm, but the charm is merely curious or pretty. A whole poem composed of lines with no better recommendation than that line has would remain merely curious or pretty. It would not permanently interest. It would be as insipid as a pretty woman who had nothing behind her prettiness. It would not live. One may remark in this connection how the merely verbal felicities of Tennyson have lost our esteem. Who will now proclaim the *Idylls of the King* as a masterpiece? Of the thousands of lines written by him which please the ear, only those survive of which the matter is charged with emotion. No! As regards the man who professes to read an author "for his style alone," I am inclined to think either that he will soon get sick of that author or that he is deceiving himself and means the author's general temperament—not the author's verbal style, but a peculiar quality which runs through all the matter written by the author. Just as one may like a man for something which is always coming out of him, which one cannot define, and which is of the very essence of the man.

In judging the style of an author, you must employ the same canons as you use in judging men. If you do this

you will not be tempted to attach importance to trifles that are negligible. There can be no lasting friendship without respect. If an author's style is such that you cannot *respect* it, then you may be sure that, despite any present pleasure which you may obtain from that author, there is something wrong with his matter, and that the pleasure will soon cloy. You must examine your sentiments towards an author. If, when you have read an author, you are pleased without being conscious of aught but his mellifluousness, just conceive what your feelings would be after spending a month's holiday with a merely mellifluous man. If an author's style has pleased you but done nothing except make you giggle, then reflect upon the ultimate tediousness of the man who can do nothing but jest. On the other hand, if you are impressed by what an author has said to you, but are aware of verbal clumsinesses in his work, you need worry about his "bad style" exactly as much and exactly as little as you would worry about the manners of a kind-hearted, keen-brained friend who was dangerous to carpets with a tea-cup in his hand. The friend's antics in a drawing-room are somewhat regrettable, but you would not say of him that his manners were bad. Again, if an author's style dazzles you instantly and blinds you to everything except its brilliant self, ask your soul before you begin to admire his matter what would be your final opinion of a man who at the first meeting fired his personality into you like a broadside. Reflect that, as a rule, the people whom you have come to esteem communicated themselves to you gradually, that they did not begin the entertainment with fireworks. In short, look at literature as you would look at life, and you cannot fail to perceive that, essentially, the style is the man. Decidedly you will never assert that you care nothing for style, that your enjoyment of an

author's matter is unaffected by his style. And you will never assert, either, that style alone suffices for you.

If you are undecided upon a question of style, whether leaning to the favorable or to the unfavorable, the most prudent course is to forget that literary style exists; for, indeed, as style is understood by most people who have not analyzed their impressions under the influence of literature, there *is* no such thing as literary style. You cannot divide literature into two elements and say: This is matter and that style. Further, the significance and the worth of literature are to be comprehended and assessed in the same way as the significance and the worth of any other phenomenon: by the exercise of common sense. Common sense will tell you that nobody, not even a genius, can be simultaneously vulgar and distinguished, or beautiful and ugly, or precise and vague, or tender and harsh. And common sense will therefore tell you that to try to set up vital contradictions between matter and style is absurd. When there is a superficial contradiction, one of the two mutually contradicting qualities is of far less importance than the other. If you refer literature to the standards of life, common sense will at once decide which quality should count heaviest in your esteem. You will be in no danger of weighing a mere maladroitness of manner against a fine trait of character, or of letting a graceful deportment blind you to a fundamental vacuity. When in doubt, ignore style, and think of the matter as you would think of an individual.

## PART II

### III

#### LIFE AT OXFORD<sup>1</sup>

JOHN CORBIN

##### I

One of the familiar sights at Oxford is the American traveller who stops over on his way from Liverpool to London, and, wandering up among the walls of the twenty colleges from the Great Western Station, asks the first undergraduate he meets which building is the university. When an Oxford man is first asked this, he is pretty sure to answer that there isn't any university; but as the answer is taken as a rudeness, he soon finds it more agreeable to direct inquirers to one of the three or four single buildings, scattered hither and yon among the ubiquitous colleges, in which the few functions of the university are performed.

To the undergraduate the university is an abstract institution that at most examines him two or three times, "ploughs" him, or graduates him. He becomes a member of it by being admitted into one of the colleges. To be sure, he matriculates also as a student of the university; but the ceremony is important mainly as a survival from the historic past, and is memorable to him perhaps because it takes

<sup>1</sup> This article, taken partly from *An American at Oxford* and partly from an essay in *Harper's Weekly*, is here reprinted in this special form through the courtesy of John Corbin, The Houghton Mifflin Company, and Messrs. Harper and Brothers.



place beneath the beautiful mediæval roof of the Divinity School; perhaps because he receives from the vice-chancellor a copy of the university statutes, written in mediæval Latin, which it is to be his chief delight to break. Except when he is in for "schools," as the examinations are called, the university fades beyond his horizon. If he says he is "reading" at Oxford, he has the city in mind. He is more likely to describe himself as "up at" Magdalen, Balliol, or elsewhere. This English idea that a university is a mere multiplication of colleges is so firmly fixed that the very word is defined as "a collection of institutions of learning at a common centre." In the daily life of the undergraduate, in his religious observances, and in regulating his studies, the college is supreme.

To an American the English college is not at first sight a wholly pleasing object. It has walls that one would take to be insurmountable if they were not crowned with shards of bottles mortared into the coping; and it has gates that seem capable of resisting a siege until one notices that they are reinforced by a *cheval de frise*, or a row of bent spikes like those that keep the bears in their dens at the Zoo. Like so many English institutions, its outward and visible signs belong to the manners of forgotten ages, even while it is charged with a vigorous and very modern life. A closer view of it, I hope, will show that in spite of the barnacles of the past that cling to it—and in some measure, too, because of them—it is the expression of a very high ideal of undergraduate convenience and freedom.

The virtue of the college lies in the fact that it gives every man a suitable home, and provides that he come under the best influences of the university with the least possible effort and delay. When a freshman arrives at the college the mediæval gate is unbarred by a very modern porter,

who lifts boxes and bags from the hansom in the most obliging manner; and he is presently shown to his cloisteral chambers by a friendly and urbane butler or steward. To accommodate the newcomers in the more populous colleges a measure is resorted to that shocks all American ideas of academic propriety. Enough seniors—fourth and third year men are turned out of college to make room for the freshmen. The assumption is that these upper classmen have had every opportunity to profit by the life of the college and are prepared to flock by themselves in the town. Little communities of four or five fellows who have proved congenial live together in “diggings”—that is, in some townsman’s house hard by the college gate. This arrangement makes possible closer and more intimate relationship among them than would otherwise be likely; and, by insuring them against the distractions of life in the college, it gives them a solid year for study before the final examination. It cannot be said that they leave college without regret, but I never heard a word of complaint, and it is tacitly admitted that, on the whole, they profit by the arrangement.

When the freshman has been shown to his room he falls to the care of the “scout”—a dignitary in the employ of the college who stands in somewhat less than the place of a parent and more than that of a servant to some half a dozen fellows whose rooms are adjacent. The more substantial furnishings in the rooms are usually permanent, belonging to the college; each successive occupant is charged for interest on the investment and for depreciation by wear. Thus the furniture is far more comfortable than in an American college and costs the occupant less. Bed and table linen, cutlery, and a few of the more personal furnishings the student brings himself. If one neglects to

bring them, however, as, I confess, I did, through ignorance, mine host, the scout, clandestinely levies on the man above for sheets, on the man below for knives and forks, and on the man across the way for table-linen. And there is no call for either shame on the one part or resentment on the other, for is not the scout the representative of the hospitality of the college? "When you have time, sir," the scout says kindly, "you will order your own linen and cutlery." How high a state of civilization such an arrangement implies can be appreciated only by those who have turned up friendless in an American university.

As soon as the freshman is settled in his rooms, and sometimes even before, his tutor meets him and arranges for a formal presentation to the dean and master. All three are apt to show their interest in a freshman by advising him as to trying for the athletic teams, joining the college clubs and societies, and, in a word, as to all the concerns of undergraduate life except his studies—these come later. If a man has any particular gift, athletic or otherwise, the tutor introduces him to the upper classman he should know or, when this is not feasible, gives a word to the upper classmen, who take the matter into their own hands. If a fellow has no especial gift, the tutor is quite as sure to say the proper word to the fellows who have most talent for drawing out newcomers.

In the first weeks of a freshman's residence he finds sundry pasteboards tucked beneath his door—the upper classman's call is seldom more than the formal dropping of a card. The freshman is expected to return these calls at once and is debarred by a happy custom from leaving his card in return. He goes again and again until he finds his upper classman. By direct introduction from the tutor or by this formality of calling, the freshman soon meets half

a dozen upper classmen, generally second-year men, and in due time he receives little notes like this:

DEAR SMITH,—Come to my rooms to breakfast, if you can, with Mr. Brown and me on Wednesday at 8.30.

Yours sincerely,

A. ROBINSON.

At table, the freshman finds other freshmen, whose interests are presumably similar to his own.

No one supposes for a moment that all this is done out of simple human kindness. The freshman breakfast is a conventional institution for gathering together the unlicked cubs, so that the influences of the college can take hold of them. The reputation of the college in general demands that it keep up a name for hospitality, and in particular the clubs and athletic teams find it of advantage to get the run of all available new material. As a result of this machinery for initiating newcomers, a man usually ceases to be a freshman after a single term—two months—of residence, and it is always assumed that he does.

If one's idiosyncrasies do not yield to the kindlier treatment he is liable to be "ragged," or, as we should say, hazed. The more I learned of Oxford motives, the less anxious I was to censure the system of ragging. In an article I wrote, after only a few months' stay, I spoke of it as boyish and undignified, and most Americans, I feel sure, would hold up the hand of public horror. Yet I am not now inclined to be thankful that we are not as they. Ragging is doubtless a survival of the excellently efficient system of discipline in the public schools where the older boys have charge of the manners and morals of the younger, if indeed it is not, like public-school discipline, an inheritance from the Mid-

dle Ages. In the schools, to be sure, the sixth form take their duties with great sobriety of conscience, which is scarcely the case in the college; but the difference of spirit in the colleges is perhaps justifiable.

I have not come to this trust in the college system without experience. I have also sounded the undergraduates as to whether they would find use for a greater liberty. I found that the fellows were not only content with their lot, but would resent any loosening of the restrictions. To give them the liberty of London at night, or even of Oxford, they argued, would tend to break up the college as a social organization and to weaken it athletically, for at Oxford they understand what we sometimes do not—that a successful cultivation of sports goes hand in hand with universal good comradeship and mutual loyalty.

The only question remaining was of the actual moral results of the semicloisteral life. As for drinking, in spite of the fact that wine is sold to the students at any and all times by the college, and in any and all quantities, there seemed to be less excessive indulgence than, for instance, at Harvard or at Yale. And the fact that what there was took place for the most part within the college walls was certainly most fortunate. When fellows are turned loose for their jubulations amid the florid vices of a great city, as is often the case with us, the consequences to their general morality are sometimes the most hideous. The lives of the men in English colleges are clean, incredibly clean. The few men to whom immorality seems inevitable—and such are to be found in all communities—have recourse to London. But as their expeditions take place in daylight and cold blood, and are, except at a great risk, cut short when the last evening train leaves Paddington shortly after dinner, it is not possible to carry them off

with that dazzling air of the man of the world that in America lures so many silly freshmen into dissipations for which they have no natural inclination.

It will be seen that the English college affords those peculiar advantages of community life—eating, sleeping, work, and play—that with us are confined to fraternities and clubs, and where these are in their very nature exclusive the college is consciously and effectively inclusive. The very fact of being at Oxford insures one a well-ordered life and ample opportunity for making friends. Society life, as we know it, is obviously superfluous. The social organizations in a college are, for the most part, for the promotion of recognized undergraduate activities—athletics, debating, etc.—and are open to all who are qualified for membership. Each college, to be sure, is likely to have its wine club, membership in which is a purely social distinction; and in the university, as a whole, there are, as in American universities, many exclusive organizations most pleasant and useful to belong to. But their evil effects are annulled by the fact that the life in the colleges is so admirably adapted to supplying all normal social wants. The college is a man's home, while the university is, like the city he lives in, full of interests and activities which it is pleasant but not necessary to form a part of. And here is the point of chief moment. By the very conditions of residence in colleges the members of the exclusive societies come into daily contact, each with the life of the college he belongs to, and the esprit de corps of the college is so strong that they seldom or never cease to be loyal to its interests. No matter how distinguished a 'varsity oarsman may be, he has the keenest interest in the boating reputation of his college, as the annual bumping races testify. And socially it is the same. The news of the university at large is first

reported and discussed over afternoon tea at the great university society, Vincent's; by dinner time it has been brought into the dining-halls of all the great colleges. In an incredibly short time all undergraduate news and the judgments upon it of the men best qualified to judge ramify the college, and men who seldom stir beyond the college walls are brought closely in touch with the innermost spirit of the university life. Here again the compact communities within those college walls—so terrible to Americans—make possible a freedom of interplay of all social forces unknown at Harvard or Yale. The real Union of Oxford, social, athletic, and intellectual, exists quite apart from the so-called Oxford Union; it results from the nice adjustment between the residential life of the colleges and the social life of the university. Thus Oxford and Cambridge combine the intellectual advantages of a large university with the social advantages possible in a small college.

## II

When a freshman is once established in college, his life falls into a pleasantly varied routine. The day is ushered in by the scout, who bustles into the bedroom, throws aside the curtain, pours out the bath, and shouts, "Half past seven, sir," in a tone that makes it impossible to forget that chapel—or if one chooses, roll-call—comes at eight. Unless one keeps his six chapels or "rollers" a week, he is promptly "hauled" before the dean, who perhaps "gates" him. To be gated is to be forbidden to pass the college gate after dark, and fined a shilling for each night of confinement. To an American all this brings recollections of the paternal roof, where tardiness at breakfast meant, perhaps, the loss of dessert and bedtime an hour earlier. I remember

once, when out of training, deliberately cutting chapel to see with what mien the good dean performed his nursery duties. His calm was unruffled, his dignity unsullied. I soon came to find that the rules about rising were bowed to and indeed respected by all concerned, even while they were broken. They are distinctly more lax than those the fellows have been accustomed to in the public schools, and they are conceded to be for the best welfare of the college.

Breakfast comes soon after chapel, or roll-call. If a man has "kept a dirty roller," that is, has reported in pajamas, ulster, and boots, and has turned in again, the scout puts the breakfast before the fire on a trestle built of shovel, poker, and tongs, where it remains edible until noon. If a man has a breakfast party on, the scout makes sure that he is stirring in season, and, hurrying through the other rooms on the staircase, is presently on hand for as long as he may be wanted. The usual Oxford breakfast is a single course, which not infrequently consists of some one of the excellent English pork products with an egg or kidneys. There may be two courses, in which case the first is of the no less excellent fresh fish. There are no vegetables. The breakfast is ended with toast and jam or marmalade. When one has fellows in to breakfast—and the Oxford custom of rooming alone instead of chumming makes such hospitality frequent—his usual meal is increased by a course, say, of chicken. In any case it leads to a morning cigarette, for tobacco aids digestion and helps fill the hour or so after meals which an Englishman gives to relaxation.

At ten o'clock the breakfast may be interrupted for a moment by the exit of some one bent on attending a lecture, though one apologizes for such an act as if it were scarcely good form. An appointment with one's tutor is a more legitimate excuse for leaving; but even this is always an



occasion for an apology, in behalf of the tutor, of course, for one is certainly not himself responsible. If a quorum is left, they manage to sit comfortably by the fire, smoking and chatting in spite of lectures and tutors, until by mutual consent they scatter to glance at the *Times* and the *Sportsman* in the common-room, or even to get in a bit of reading.

Luncheon often consists of bread and cheese and jam from the buttery, with perhaps a half-pint of bitter beer; but it may, like the breakfast, come from the college kitchen. In any case it is very light, for almost immediately after it everybody scatters to field and track and river for the exercise that the English climate makes necessary and the sport that the English temperament demands.

By four o'clock every one is back in college tubbed and dressed for tea, which a man serves himself in his rooms to as many fellows as he has been able to gather in on field or river. If he is eager to hear of the games he has not been able to witness, he goes to the junior common-room or to his club, where he is sure to find a dozen or so of kindred spirits representing every sport of importance. In this way he hears the minutest details of the games of the day from the players themselves; and before nightfall—such is the influence of tea—those bits of gossip which in America are known chiefly among members of a team have ramified the college. Thus the function of the “bleachers” on an American field is performed with a vengeance by the easy chairs before a common-room fire; and a man had better be kicked off the team by an American captain than have his shortcomings served up with common-room tea.

The two hours between tea and dinner may be, and usually are, spent in reading.

At seven o'clock the college bell rings, and in two min-

utes the fellows have thrown on their gowns and are seated at table, where the scouts are in readiness to serve them. As a rule a man may sit wherever he chooses; this is one of the admirable arrangements for breaking up such cliques as inevitably form in a college. But in point of fact a man usually ends by sitting in some certain quarter of the hall, where from day to day he finds much the same set of fellows. Thus all the advantages of friendly intercourse are attained without any real exclusiveness. This may seem a small point; but an hour a day becomes an item in four years, especially if it is the hour when men are most disposed to be companionable.

The English college hall is a miniature of Memorial Hall at Harvard, of which it is the prototype. It has the same sombrely beautiful roof, the same richness of stained glass. It has also the same memorable and impressive canvases, though the worthies they portray are likely to be the princes and prelates of Holbein instead of the soldiers, merchants, and divines of Copley and Gilbert Stuart. The tables are of antique oak, with the shadow of centuries in its grain, and the college plate bears the names and date of the Restoration. To an American the mugs he drinks his beer from seem old enough, but the Englishman finds them aggressively new. They are not, however, without endearing associations, for the mugs that preceded them were last used to drink a health to King Charles, and were then stamped into coin to buy food and drink for his soldiers. The one or two colleges that, for Puritan principles or thrift, or both, refused to give up their old plate are not overproud of showing it.

Across the end of the hall is a platform for high table, at which the dons assemble as soon as the undergraduates are well seated. On Sunday night they come out in full

force, and from the time the first one enters until the last is seated, the undergraduates rattle and bang the tables, until it seems as if the glass must splinter. When, as often happens, a distinguished graduate comes up—the speaker of the Commons to Balliol, or the prime minister to Christ Church—the enthusiasm has usually to be stopped by a gesture from the master or the dean.

The dons at high table, like the British peers, mingle judicial with legislative functions. All disputes about sconces are referred to them, and their decrees are absolute. A sponce is a penalty for a breach of good manners at table, and is an institution that can be traced far back into the Middle Ages. The offenses that are sponcible may be summarized as punning, swearing, talking shop, and coming to hall after high table is in session. Take, for instance, the case of a certain oarsman who found the dinner forms rather too rigid after his first day on sliding seats. By way of comforting himself, he remarked that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Who is to decide whether he is guilty of profanity? The master, of course, and his assembled court of dons. The remark and the attendant circumstances are written on the back of an order-slip by the senior scholar present, and a scout is despatched with it. Imagine, then, the master presenting this question to the dons: Is it profanity to refer by means of a quotation from Scripture to the cuticle one loses in a college boat? Suppose the dons decree that it is. The culprit has the alternative of paying a shilling to the college library or ordering a tun of bitter beer. If he decides for beer, a second alternative confronts him: he may drink it down in one uninterrupted draft, or he may kiss the cup and send it circling the table. If he tries to floor the sponce and fails, he has to order more beer for the table; but if he succeeds, the

man who sconced him has to pay the shot and order a second tun for the table.

In the evening, when the season permits, the fellows sit out-of-doors after dinner, smoking and playing bowls. There is no place in which the spring comes more sweetly than in an Oxford garden. The high walls are at once a trap for the first warm rays of the sun and a barrier against the winds of March. The daffodils and crocuses spring up with joy as the gardener bids; and the apple and cherry trees coddle against the warm north walls, spreading out their early buds gratefully to the mild English sun. For long, quiet hours after dinner they flaunt their beauty to the fellows smoking and breathe their sweetness to the fellows playing bowls. "No man," exclaims the American visitor, "could live four years in these gardens of delight and not be made gentler and nobler!" Perhaps! though not altogether in the way the visitor imagines. When the flush of summer is on, the loiterers loll on the lawn full length; and as they watch the insects crawl among the grass they make bets on them, just as the gravest and most reverend seniors have been known to do in America.

In the windows overlooking the quadrangle are boxes of brilliant flowers, above which the smoke of a pipe comes curling out. At Harvard some fellows have geraniums in their windows, but only the very rich; and when they began the custom an ancient graduate wrote one of those communications to the *Crimson*, saying that if men put unmanly boxes of flowers in the window, how can they expect to beat Yale? Flower-boxes, no sand. At Oxford they manage things so that anybody may have flower-boxes; and their associations are by no means unmanly. This is the way they do it. In the early summer a gardener's wagon from the country draws up by the college gate, and the driver

cries: "Flowers! Flowers for a pair of old bags, sir." *Bags* is of course the fitting term for English trousers—which don't fit; and I should like to inform that ancient graduate that the window-boxes of Oxford suggest the very badge of manhood.

As long as the English twilight lingers, the men will sit and talk and sing to the mandolin; and I have heard of fellows sitting and talking all night, not turning in until the porter appeared to take their names at roll-call. On the eve of May-day it is quite the custom to sit out, for at dawn one may go to see the pretty ceremony of heralding the May on Magdalen Tower. The Magdalen choir-boys—the sweetest songsters in all Oxford—mount to the top of that most beautiful of Gothic towers, and, standing among the pinnacles—pinnacles afire with the spirituality of the Middle Ages, that warms all the senses with purity and beauty—those boys, I say, on that tower and among those pinnacles, open their mouths and sing a Latin song to greet the May. Meantime, the fellows who have come out to listen in the street below make catcalls and blow fish-horns. The song above is the survival of a Romish, perhaps a Druidical, custom; the racket below is the survival of a Puritan protest. That is Oxford in symbol! Its dignity and mellowness are not so much a matter of flowering gardens and crumbling walls as of the traditions of the centuries in which the whole life of the place has deep sources; and the noblest of its institutions are fringed with survivals that run riot in the grotesque.

If a man intends to spend the evening out of college, he has to make a dash before nine o'clock; for love or for money the porter may not let an inmate out after nine. One man I knew was able to escape by guile. He had a brother in Trinity whom he very much resembled, and

whenever he wanted to go out, he would tilt his mortarboard forward, wrap his gown high about his neck, as it is usually worn of an evening, and bidding the porter a polite good night, say: "Charge me to my brother, Hancock, if you please." The charge is the inconsiderable sum of one penny, and is the penalty of having a late guest. Having profited by my experience with the similar charge for keeping my name on the college books, I never asked its why and wherefore. Both are no doubt survivals of some mediæval custom, the authority of which no college employee—or don, for the matter of that—would question. Such matters interest the Oxford man quite as little as the question how he comes by a tonsil or a vermiform appendix. They are there, and he makes the best of them.

If a fellow leaves college for an evening, it is for a fore-gathering at some other college, or to go to the theatre. As a rule he wears a cloth cap. A "billycock" or "bowler," as the pot hat is called, is as thoroughly frowned on now in English colleges as it was with us a dozen years ago. As for the mortarboard and gown, undergraduate opinion rather requires that they be left behind. This is largely, no doubt, because they are required by law to be worn. So far as the undergraduates are concerned, every operative statute of the university, with the exception of those relating to matriculation and graduation, refers to conduct in the streets after nightfall, and almost without exception they are honored in the breach. This is out of disregard for the vice-chancellor of the university, who is familiarly called the vice, because he serves as a warning to others for the practise of virtue. The vice makes his power felt in characteristically dark and tortuous ways. His factors are two proctors, college dons in daytime, but skulkers after nightfall, each of whom has his bulldogs, that is,

scouts employed literally to spy upon the students. If these catch you without cap or gown, they cause you to be proctorized or "progged," as it is called, which involves a matter of five shillings or so. As a rule there is little danger of propping, but my first term fell in evil days. For some reason or other the chest of the university showed a deficit of sundry pounds, shillings, and pence; and as it had long ceased to need or receive regular bequests—the finance of the institution being in the hands of the colleges—a crisis was at hand. A more serious problem had doubtless never arisen since the great question was solved of keeping undergraduates' names on the books. The expedient of the vice-chancellor was to summon the proctors, and bid them charge their bulldogs to prog all freshmen caught at night without cap and gown. The deficit in the university chest was made up at five shillings a head.

One of the vice-chancellor's rules is that no undergraduate shall enter an Oxford "pub." Now the only restaurant in town, Queen's, is run in conjunction with a pub, and was once the favorite resort of all who were bent on breaking the monotony of an English Sunday. The vice-chancellor resolved to destroy this den of Sabbath-breaking, and the undergraduates resolved no less firmly to defend their stronghold. The result was a hand-to-hand fight with the bulldogs, which ended so triumphantly for the undergraduates that a dozen or more of them were sent down. In the articles of the peace that followed, it was stipulated, I was told, that so long as the restaurant was closed Sunday afternoons and nights, it should never suffer from the visit of proctor or bulldog. As a result, Queen's is a great scene of undergraduate foregatherings. The dinners are good enough and reasonably cheap; and as most excellent champagne is to be had at twelve shillings the bottle, the diners

are not unlikely to get back to college a trifle buffy, in the Oxford phrase.

By an interesting survival of mediæval custom, the vice-chancellor has supreme power over the morals of the town, and any citizen who transgresses his laws is visited with summary punishment. For a tradesman or publican to assist in breaking university rules means outlawry and ruin, and for certain offenses a citizen may be punished by imprisonment. Over the Oxford theatre the vice-chancellor's power is absolute. In my time he was much more solicitous that the undergraduate be kept from knowledge of the omnipresent woman with a past than that dramatic art should flourish, and forbade the town more than one excellent play of the modern school of comedy that had been seen and discussed in London by the younger sisters of the undergraduates. The woman with a present is virtually absent.

Time was when no Oxford play was quite successful unless the undergraduates assisted at its first night, though in a way very different from that which the term denotes in France. The assistance was of the kind so generously rendered in New York and Boston on the evening of an athletic contest. Even to-day, just for tradition's sake, the undergraduates sometimes make a row. A lot of B. N. C. men, as the clanny sons of Brazenose College call themselves, may insist that an opera stop while the troupe listen to one of their own excellent vocal performances; and I once saw a great sprinter, not unknown to Yale men, rise from his seat, face the audience, and, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder at the soubrette, announce impressively: "Do you know, I rather *like* that girl!" The show is usually over just before eleven, and then occurs an amusing, if unseemly, scramble to get back to college



before the hour strikes. A man who stays out after ten is fined threepence; after eleven the fine is sixpence. When all is said, why shouldn't one sprint for threepence?

If you stay out of college after midnight, the dean makes a star-chamber offense of it, fines you a "quid" or two, and like as not sends you down. This sounds a trifle worse than it is; for if you must be away, your absence can usually be arranged for. If you find yourself in the streets after twelve, you may rap on some friend's bedroom window and tell him of your plight through the iron grating. He will then spend the first half of the night in your bed and wash his hands in your bowl. With such evidence as this to support him, the scout is not apt, if sufficiently retained, to report a suspected absence. I have even known fellows to make their arrangements in advance and spend the night in town; but the ruse has its dangers, and the penalty is to be sent down for good and all.

It is owing to such regulations as these that life in the English college has the name of being cloisteral. Just how cloisteral it is in spirit no one can know who has not taken part in a rag in the quad; and this is impossible to an outsider, for at midnight all visitors are required to leave, under a heavy penalty to their host.

## IV

### TOM BROWN'S LETTER FROM ST. AMBROSE'S COLLEGE<sup>1</sup>

THOMAS HUGHES

“ST. AMBROSE, OXFORD,  
“FEBRUARY, 184—.

“MY DEAR GEORDIE:

“According to promise, I write to tell you how I get on up here, and what sort of a place Oxford is. Of course, I don't know much about it yet, having been only up some two weeks; but you shall have my first impressions.

“Well, first and foremost, it's an awfully idle place; at any rate, for us freshmen. Fancy now. I am in twelve lectures a week of an hour each—Greek Testament, first book of Herodotus, second *Æneid*, and first book of Euclid! There's a treat! Two hours a day; all over by twelve, or one at latest; and no extra work at all, in the shape of copies of verses, themes, or other exercises.

“I think sometimes I'm back in the lower fifth; for we don't get through more than we used to do there; and if you were to hear the men construé, it would make your hair stand on end. Where on earth can they have come from? unless they blunder on purpose, as I often think. Of course, I never look at a lecture before I go in, I know it all nearly by heart, so it would be sheer waste of time. I hope I shall take to reading something or other by myself; but you

<sup>1</sup> From *Tom Brown at Oxford*—a letter written soon after matriculation at Oxford to a friend in the sixth form at Rugby School.

know I never was much of a hand at sapping, and, for the present, the light work suits me well enough, for there's plenty to see and learn about in this place.

"We keep very gentlemanly hours. Chapel every morning at eight, and evening at seven. You must attend once a day, and twice on Sundays—at least, that's the rule of our college—and be in gates by twelve o'clock at night. Besides which, if you're a decently steady fellow, you ought to dine in hall perhaps four days a week. Hall is at five o'clock. And now you have the sum total. All the rest of your time you may just do what you like with.

"So much for our work and hours. Now for the place. Well, it's a grand old place, certainly; and I dare say, if a fellow goes straight in it, and gets creditably through his three years, he may end by loving it as much as we do the old schoolhouse and quadrangle at Rugby. Our college is a fair specimen: a venerable old front of crumbling stone fronting the street, into which two or three other colleges look also. Over the gateway is a large room, where the college examinations go on, when there are any; and, as you enter, you pass the porter's lodge, where resides our janitor, a bustling little man, with a pot-belly, whose business it is to put down the time at which the men come in at night, and to keep all discommodated tradesmen, stray dogs, and bad characters generally, out of the college.

"The large quadrangle into which you come first, is bigger than ours at Rugby, and a much more solemn and sleepy sort of a place, with its gables and old mullioned windows. One side is occupied by the hall and chapel; the principal's house takes up half another side; and the rest is divided into staircases, on each of which are six or eight sets of rooms, inhabited by us undergraduates, with here and there a tutor or fellow dropped down amongst

us (in the first-floor rooms, of course), not exactly to keep order, but to act as a sort of ballast. This quadrangle is the show part of the college, and is generally respectable and quiet, which is a good deal more than can be said for the inner quadrangle, which you get at through a passage leading out of the other. The rooms ain't half so large or good in the inner quad; and here's where all we freshmen live, besides a lot of the older undergraduates who don't care to change their rooms. Only one tutor has rooms here; and I should think, if he's a reading man, it won't be long before he clears out; for all sorts of high jinks go on on the grass plot, and the row on the staircases is often as bad, and not half so respectable, as it used to be in the middle passage in the last week of the half-year.

"My rooms are what they call garrets, right up in the roof, with a commanding view of college tiles and chimneys-pots, and of houses at the back. No end of cats, both college Toms and strangers, haunt the neighborhood, and I am rapidly learning cat-talking from them; but I'm not going to stand it—I don't want to know cat-talk. The college Toms are protected by the statutes, I believe; but I'm going to buy an air-gun for the benefit of the strangers. My rooms are pleasant enough, at the top of the kitchen staircase, and separated from all mankind by a great, iron-clamped, outer door, my oak, which I sport when I go out or want to be quiet; sitting-room eighteen by twelve, bedroom twelve by eight, and a little cupboard for the scout.

"Ah, Geordie, the scout is an institution! Fancy me waited upon and valeted by a stout party in black, of quiet, gentlemanly manners, like the benevolent father in a comedy. He takes the deepest interest in all my possessions and proceedings, and is evidently used to good society, to judge by the amount of crockery and glass, wines,

liquors, and grocery, which he thinks indispensable for my due establishment. He has also been good enough to recommend to me many tradesmen who are ready to supply these articles in any quantities; each of whom has been here already a dozen times, cap in hand, and vowing that it is quite immaterial when I pay—which is very kind of them; but, with the highest respect for friend Perkins (my scout) and his obliging friends, I shall make some inquiries before 'letting in' with any of them. He waits on me in hall, where we go in full fig of cap and gown at five, and get very good dinners, and cheap enough. It is rather a fine old room, with a good, arched, black-oak ceiling and high panelling, hung round with pictures of old swells, bishops and lords chiefly, who have endowed the college in some way, or at least have fed here in times gone by, and for whom, 'cæterisque benefactoribus nostris,' we daily give thanks in a long Latin grace, which one of the undergraduates (I think it must be) goes and rattles out at the end of the high table, and then comes down again from the dais to his own place. No one feeds at the high table except the dons and the gentlemen commoners, who are undergraduates in velvet caps and silk gowns. Why they wear these instead of cloth and serge I haven't yet made out—I believe it is because they pay double fees; but they seem uncommonly wretched up at the high table, and I should think would sooner pay double to come to the other end of the hall.

“The chapel is a quaint little place, about the size of the chancel of Lutterworth Church. It just holds us all comfortably. The attendance is regular enough, but I don't think the men care about it a bit in general. Several I can see bring in Euclids, and other lecture books, and the service is gone through at a great pace. I couldn't think

at first why some of the men seemed so uncomfortable and stiff about the legs at the morning service, but I find that they are the hunting set, and come in with pea-coats over their pinks, and trousers over their leather breeches and top-boots; which accounts for it. There are a few others who seem very devout, and bow a good deal, and turn toward the altar at different parts of the service. These are of the Oxford High-church school, I believe; but I shall soon find out more about them. On the whole, I feel less at home at present, I am sorry to say, in the chapel, than anywhere else.

“I was very nearly forgetting a great institution of the college, which is the buttery-hatch, just opposite the hall door. Here abides the fat old butler (all the servants at St. Ambrose’s are portly), and serves out limited bread, butter, and cheese, and unlimited beer brewed by himself, for an hour in the morning, at noon, and again at supper time. Your scout always fetches you a pint or so on each occasion, in case you should want it, and if you don’t, it falls to him; but I can’t say that my fellow gets much, for I am naturally a thirsty soul, and cannot often resist the malt myself, coming up, as it does, fresh and cool, in one of the silver tankards, of which we seem to have an endless supply.

“I spent a day or two in the first week, before I got shaken down into my place here, in going round and seeing the other colleges, and finding out what great men had been at each (one got a taste for that sort of work from the doctor, and I’d nothing else to do). Well, I never was more interested: fancy ferreting out Wycliffe, the Black Prince, our friend Sir Walter Raleigh, Pym, Hampden, Laud, Ireton, Butler, and Addison, in one afternoon. I walked about two inches taller in my trencher cap after it. Perhaps I may be going

to make dear friends with some fellow who will change the history of England. Why shouldn't I? There must have been freshmen once who were chums of Wycliffe of Queens, or Raleigh of Oriel. I mooned up and down the High-street, staring at all the young faces in caps, and wondering which of them would turn out great generals, or statesmen, or poets. Some of them will, of course, for there must be a dozen at least, I should think, in every generation of undergraduates, who will have a good deal to say to the ruling and guiding of the British nation before they die.

"But, after all, the river is the feature of Oxford, to my mind; a glorious stream, not five minutes' walk from the colleges, broad enough in most places for three boats to row abreast. I expect I shall take to boating furiously: I have been down the river three or four times already with some other freshmen, and it is glorious exercise; that I can see, though we bungle and cut crabs desperately at present.

"Here's a long yarn I'm spinning for you; and I dare say after all you'll say it tells you nothing, and you'd rather have twenty lines about the men, and what they're thinking about, and the meaning and inner life of the place, and all that. Patience, patience! I don't know anything about it myself yet, and have only had time to look at the shell, which is a very handsome and stately affair; you shall have the kernel, if I ever get at it, in due time.

"And now write me a long letter directly, and tell me about the doctor, and who are in the sixth, and how the house goes on, and what sort of an eleven there'll be, and what you are all doing and thinking about. Come up here and try for a scholarship; I'll take you in and show you the lions. Remember me to all old friends.—Ever yours affectionately,

T. B."

## V

### THE SOCIAL VALUE OF THE COLLEGE-BRED<sup>1</sup>

WILLIAM JAMES

Of what use is a college training? We who have had it seldom hear the question raised—we might be a little non-plussed to answer it offhand. A certain amount of meditation has brought me to this as the pithiest reply which I myself can give: The best claim that a college education can possibly make on your respect, the best thing it can aspire to accomplish for you, is this: that it should *help you to know a good man when you see him*. This is as true of women's as of men's colleges; but that it is neither a joke nor a one-sided abstraction I shall now endeavor to show.

What talk do we commonly hear about the contrast between college education and the education which business or technical or professional schools confer? The college education is called higher because it is supposed to be so general and so disinterested. At the "schools" you get a relatively narrow practical skill, you are told, whereas the "colleges" give you the more liberal culture, the broader outlook, the historical perspective, the philosophic atmosphere, or something which phrases of that sort try to express. You are made into an efficient instrument for doing a definite thing, you hear, at the schools; but, apart from

<sup>1</sup> An address before The Association of American Alumnae, at Radcliffe College, November 7, 1907. Reprinted through the courtesy of *McClure's Magazine*.



that, you may remain a crude and smoky kind of petroleum, incapable of spreading light. The universities and colleges, on the other hand, although they may leave you less efficient for this or that practical task, suffuse your whole mentality with something more important than skill. They redeem you, make you well-bred; they make "good company" of you mentally. If they find you with a naturally boorish or caddish mind, they cannot leave you so, as a technical school may leave you. This, at least, is pretended; this is what we hear among college-trained people when they compare their education with every other sort. Now, exactly how much does this signify?

It is certain, to begin with, that the narrowest trade or professional training does something more for a man than to make a skilful, practical tool of him—it makes him also a judge of other men's skill. Whether his trade be pleading at the bar or surgery or plastering or plumbing, it develops a critical sense in him for that sort of occupation. He understands the difference between second-rate and first-rate work in his whole branch of industry; he gets to know a good job in his own line as soon as he sees it; and getting to know this in his own line, he gets a faint sense of what good work may mean anyhow, that may, if circumstances favor, spread into his judgments elsewhere. Sound work, clean work, finished work: feeble work, slack work, sham work—these words express an identical contrast in many different departments of activity. In so far forth, then, even the humblest manual trade may beget in one a certain small degree of power to judge of good work generally.

Now, what is supposed to be the line of us who have the higher college training? Is there any broader line—since our education claims primarily not to be "narrow"—in which we also are made good judges between what is first-

rate and what is second-rate only? What is especially taught in the colleges has long been known by the name of the "humanities," and these are often identified with Greek and Latin. But it is only as literatures, not as languages, that Greek and Latin have any general humanity value; so that in a broad sense the humanities mean literature primarily, and in a still broader sense the study of masterpieces in almost any field of human endeavor. Literature keeps the primacy; for it not only *consists* of masterpieces, but is largely *about* masterpieces, being little more than an appreciative chronicle of human master-strokes, so far as it takes the form of criticism and history. You can give humanistic value to almost anything by teaching it historically. Geology, economics, mechanics are humanities when taught with reference to the successive achievements of the geniuses to which these sciences owe their being. Not taught thus, literature remains grammar, art a catalogue, history a list of dates, and natural science a sheet of formulas and weights and measures.

The sifting of human creations!—nothing less than this is what we ought to mean by the humanities. Essentially this means biography; what our colleges should teach is, therefore, biographical history, that not of politics merely, but of anything and everything so far as human efforts and conquests are factors that have played their part. Studying in this way, we learn what types of activity have stood the test of time; we acquire standards of the excellent and durable. All our arts and sciences and institutions are but so many quests of perfection on the part of men; and when we see how diverse the types of excellence may be, how various the tests, how flexible the adaptations, we gain a richer sense of what the terms "better" and "worse" may signify in general. Our critical sensibilities grow both

more acute and less fanatical. We sympathize with men's mistakes even in the act of penetrating them; we feel the pathos of lost causes and misguided epochs even while we applaud what overcame them.

Such words are vague and such ideas are inadequate, but their meaning is unmistakable. What the colleges—teaching humanities by examples which may be special, but which must be typical and pregnant—should at least try to give us, is a general sense of what, under various disguises, *superiority* has always signified and may still signify. The feeling for a good human job anywhere, the admiration of the really admirable, the disesteem of what is cheap and trashy and impermanent—this is what we call the critical sense, the sense for ideal values. It is the better part of what men know as wisdom. Some of us are wise in this way naturally and by genius; some of us never become so. But to have spent one's youth at college, in contact with the choice and rare and precious, and yet still to be a blind prig or vulgarian, unable to scent out human excellence or to divine it amid its accidents, to know it only when ticketed and labelled and forced on us by others, this indeed should be accounted the very calamity and shipwreck of a higher education.

The sense for human superiority ought, then, to be considered our line, as boring subways is the engineer's line and the surgeon's is appendicitis. Our colleges ought to have lit up in us a lasting relish for the better kind of man, a loss of appetite for mediocrities, and a disgust for cheap jacks. We ought to smell, as it were, the difference of quality in men and their proposals when we enter the world of affairs about us. Expertness in this might well atone for some of our awkwardness at accounts, for some of our ignorance of dynamos. The best claim we can make for the

higher education, the best single phrase in which we can tell what it ought to do for us, is, then, exactly what I said: it should enable us to *know a good man when we see him*.

That the phrase is anything but an empty epigram follows from the fact that if you ask in what line it is most important that a democracy like ours should have its sons and daughters skilful, you see that it is this line more than any other. "The people in their wisdom"—this is the kind of wisdom most needed by the people. Democracy is on its trial, and no one knows how it will stand the ordeal. Abounding about us are pessimistic prophets. Fickleness and violence used to be, but are no longer, the vices which they charge to democracy. What its critics now affirm is that its preferences are inveterately for the inferior. So it was in the beginning, they say, and so it will be world without end. Vulgarity enthroned and institutionalized, elbowing everything superior from the highway, this, they tell us, is our irremediable destiny; and the picture papers of the European Continent are already drawing Uncle Sam with the hog instead of the eagle for his heraldic emblem. The privileged aristocracies of the foretime, with all their iniquities, did at least preserve some taste for higher human quality and honor certain forms of refinement by their enduring traditions. But when democracy is sovereign, its doubters say, nobility will form a sort of invisible church, and sincerity and refinement, stripped of honor, precedence, and favor, will have to vegetate on sufferance in private corners. They will have no general influence. They will be harmless eccentricities.

Now, who can be absolutely certain that this may not be the career of democracy? Nothing future is quite secure; states enough have inwardly rotted; and democracy as a whole may undergo self-poisoning. But, on the other hand,

democracy is a kind of religion; and we are bound not to admit its failure. Faiths and utopias are the noblest exercise of human reason, and no one with a spark of reason in him will sit down fatalistically before the croaker's picture. The best of us are filled with the contrary vision of a democracy stumbling through every error till its institutions glow with justice and its customs shine with beauty. Our better men shall show the way and we shall follow them; so we are brought round again to the mission of the higher education in helping us to know the better kind of man whenever we see him.

The notion that a people can run itself and its affairs anonymously is now well known to be the silliest of absurdities. Mankind does nothing save through initiatives on the part of inventors, great or small, and imitation by the rest of us—these are the sole factors active in human progress. Individuals of genius show the way, and set the patterns, which common people then adopt and follow. The rivalry of the patterns is the history of the world. Our democratic problem thus is statable in ultrasimple terms: Who are the kind of men from whom our majorities shall take their cue? Whom shall they treat as rightful leaders? We and our leaders are the  $x$  and the  $y$  of the equation here; all other historic circumstances, be they economical, political, or intellectual, are only the background of occasion on which the living drama works itself out between us.

In this very simple way does the value of our educated class define itself: we more than others should be able to divine the worthier and better leaders. The terms here are monstrously simplified, of course, but such a bird's-eye view lets us immediately take our bearings. In our democracy, where everything else is so shifting, we alumni and alumnae of the colleges are the only permanent presence

that corresponds to the aristocracy in older countries. We have continuous traditions, as they have; our motto, too, is *noblesse oblige*; and, unlike them, we stand for ideal interests solely, for we have no corporate selfishness and wield no powers of corruption. We ought to have our own class consciousness. "Les intellectuels!" What prouder club name could there be than this one, used ironically by the party of "red blood," the party of every stupid prejudice and passion, during the anti-Dreyfus craze, to satirize the men in France who still retained some critical sense and judgment? Critical sense, it has to be confessed, is not an exciting term, hardly a banner to carry in processions. Affections for old habit, currents of self-interest, and gales of passion are the forces that keep the human ship moving; and the pressure of the judicious pilot's hand upon the tiller is a relatively insignificant energy. But the affections, passions, and interests are shifting, successive, and distraught; they blow in alternation while the pilot's hand is steadfast. He knows the compass, and, with all the lee-ways he is obliged to tack toward, he always makes some headway. A small force, if it never lets up, will accumulate effects more considerable than those of much greater forces if these work inconsistently. The ceaseless whisper of the more permanent ideals, the steady tug of truth and justice, give them but time, *must* warp the world in their direction.

This bird's-eye view of the general steering function of the college-bred amid the driftings of democracy ought to help us to a wider vision of what our colleges themselves should aim at. If we are to be the yeast-cake for democracy's dough, if we are to make it rise with culture's preferences, we must see to it that culture spreads broad sails. We must shake the old double reefs out of the canvas into the wind and sunshine, and let in every modern subject,

sure that any subject will prove humanistic, if its setting be kept only wide enough.

Stevenson says somewhere to his reader: "You think you are just making this bargain, but you are really laying down a link in the policy of mankind." Well, your technical school should enable you to make your bargain splendidly; but your college should show you just the place of that kind of bargain—a pretty poor place, possibly—in the whole policy of mankind. That is the kind of liberal outlook, of perspective, of atmosphere, which should surround every subject as a college deals with it.

We of the colleges must eradicate a curious notion which numbers of good people have about such ancient seats of learning as Harvard. To many ignorant outsiders, that name suggests little more than a kind of sterilized conceit and incapacity for being pleased. In Edith Wyatt's exquisite book of Chicago sketches called *Every One His Own Way* there is a couple who stand for culture in the sense of exclusiveness, Richard Elliot and his feminine counterpart—feeble caricatures of mankind, unable to know any good thing when they see it, incapable of enjoyment unless a printed label gives them leave. Possibly this type of culture may exist near Cambridge and Boston, there may be specimens there, for priggishness is just like painters' colic or any other trade disease. But every good college makes its students immune against this malady, of which the microbe haunts the neighborhood-printed pages. It does so by its general tone being too hearty for the microbe's life. Real culture lives by sympathies and admirations, not by dislikes and disdains—under all misleading wrappings it pounces unerringly upon the human core. If a college, through the inferior human influences that have grown regnant there, fails to catch the robus-  
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 ter tone, its

failure is colossal, for its social function stops: democracy gives it a wide berth, turns toward it a deaf ear.

"Tone," to be sure, is a terribly vague word to use, but there is no other, and this whole meditation is over questions of tone. By their tone are all things human either lost or saved. If democracy is to be saved it must catch the higher, healthier tone. If we are to impress it with our preferences, we ourselves must use the proper tone, which we, in turn, must have caught from our own teachers. It all reverts in the end to the action of innumerable imitative individuals upon each other and to the question of whose tone has the highest spreading power. As a class, we college graduates should look to it that *ours* has spreading power. It ought to have the highest spreading power.

In our essential function of indicating the better men, we now have formidable competitors outside. *McClure's Magazine*, the *American Magazine*, *Collier's Weekly*, and, in its fashion, the *World's Work*, constitute together a real popular university along this very line. It would be a pity if any future historian were to have to write words like these: "By the middle of the twentieth century the higher institutions of learning had lost all influence over public opinion in the United States. But the mission of raising the tone of democracy, which they had proved themselves so lamentably unfitted to exert, was assumed with rare enthusiasm and prosecuted with extraordinary skill and success by a new educational power; and for the clarification of their human sympathies and elevation of their human preferences, the people at large acquired the habit of resorting exclusively to the guidance of certain private literary adventures, commonly designated in the market by the affectionate name of ten-cent magazines."

Must not we of the colleges see to it that no historian



shall ever say anything like this? Vague as the phrase of knowing a good man when you see him may be, diffuse and indefinite as one must leave its application, is there any other formula that describes so well the result at which our institutions *ought* to aim? If they do that, they do the best thing conceivable. If they fail to do it, they fail in very deed. It surely is a fine synthetic formula. If our faculties and graduates could once collectively come to realize it as the great underlying purpose toward which they have always been more or less obscurely groping, a great clearness would be shed over many of their problems; and, as for their influence in the midst of our social system, it would embark upon a new career of strength.

## VI

### WHAT IS A COLLEGE FOR? <sup>1</sup>

WOODROW WILSON

It may seem singular that at this time of day and in this confident century it should be necessary to ask: What is a college for? But it has become necessary. I take it for granted that there are few real doubts concerning the question in the minds of those who look at the college from the inside and have made themselves responsible for the realization of its serious purposes; but there are many divergent opinions held concerning it by those who, standing on the outside, have pondered the uses of the college in the life of the country; and their many varieties of opinion may very well have created a confusion of counsel in the public mind.

They are, of course, entirely entitled to their independent opinions and have a right to expect that full consideration will be given what they say by those who are in fact responsible. The college is for the use of the nation, not for the satisfaction of those who administer it or for the carrying out of their private views. They may speak as experts and with a very intimate knowledge, but they also speak as servants of the country and must be challenged to give reasons for the convictions they entertain. Controversy, it may be, is not profitable in such matters, because it is so easy, in the face of opposition, to become a partisan of

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted through the courtesy of President Woodrow Wilson from *Scribner's Magazine*.

one's own views and exaggerate them in seeking to vindicate and establish them; but an explicit profession of faith cannot fail to clear the air, and to assist the thinking both of those who are responsible and of those who only look on and seek to make serviceable comment.

Why, then, should a man send his son to college when school is finished; or why should he advise any youngster in whom he is interested to go to college? What does he expect and desire him to get there? The question might be carried back and asked with regard to the higher schools also to which lads resort for preparation for college. What are they meant to get there? But it will suffice to centre the question on the college. What should a lad go to college for—for work, for the realization of a definite aim, for discipline and a severe training of his faculties, or for relaxation, for the release and exercise of his social powers, for the broadening effects of life in a sort of miniature world in which study is only one among many interests? That is not the only alternative suggested by recent discussions. They also suggest a sharp alternative with regard to the character of the study the college student should undertake. Should he seek at college a general discipline of his faculties, a general awakening to the issues and interests of the modern world, or should he, rather, seek specially and definitely to prepare himself for the work he expects to do after he leaves college, for his support and advancement in the world? The two alternatives are very different. The one asks whether the lad does not get as good a preparation for modern life by being manager of a football team with a complicated programme of intercollegiate games and trips away from home as by becoming proficient in mathematics or in history and mastering the abstract tasks of the mind; the other asks whether he is not better prepared

by being given the special skill and training of a particular calling or profession, an immediate drill in the work he is to do after he graduates, than by being made a master of his own mind in the more general fields of knowledge to which his subsequent calling will be related, in all probability, only as every undertaking is related to the general thought and experience of the world.

"Learning" is not involved. No one has ever dreamed of imparting learning to undergraduates. It cannot be done in four years. To become a man of learning is the enterprise of a lifetime. The issue does not rise to that high ground. The question is merely this: (Do we wish college to be, first of all and chiefly, a place of mental discipline or only a school of general experience) and, if we wish it to be a place of mental discipline, of what sort do we wish the discipline to be—a general awakening and release of the faculties or a preliminary initiation into the drill of a particular vocation?)

These are questions which go to the root of the matter. They admit of no simple and confident answer. Their roots spring out of life and all its varied sources. To reply to them, therefore, involves an examination of modern life and an assessment of the part an educated man ought to play in it—an analysis which no man may attempt with perfect self-confidence. The life of our day is a very complex thing which no man can pretend to comprehend in its entirety.

But some things are obvious enough concerning it. There is an uncommon challenge to effort in the modern world, and all the achievements to which it challenges are uncommonly difficult. Individuals are yoked together in modern enterprise by a harness which is both new and inelastic. The man who understands only some single

process, some single piece of work which he has been set to do, will never do anything else, and is apt to be deprived at almost any moment of the opportunity to do even that, because processes change, industry undergoes instant revolutions. New inventions, fresh discoveries, alterations in the markets of the world throw accustomed methods and the men who are accustomed to them out of date and use without pause or pity. The man of special skill may be changed into an unskilled laborer overnight. Moreover, it is a day in which no enterprise stands alone or independent, but is related to every other and feels changes in all parts of the globe. The men with mere skill, with mere technical knowledge, will be mere servants perpetually, and may at any time become useless servants, their skill gone out of use and fashion. The particular thing they do may become unnecessary or may be so changed that they cannot comprehend or adjust themselves to the change.

These, then, are the things the modern world must have in its trained men, and I do not know where else it is to get them if not from its educated men and the occasional self-developed genius of an exceptional man here and there. It needs, at the top, not a few, but many men with the power to organize and guide. The college is meant to stimulate in a considerable number of men what would be stimulated in only a few if we were to depend entirely upon nature and circumstance. Below the ranks of generalship and guidance, the modern world needs for the execution of its varied and difficult business a very much larger number of men with great capacity and readiness for the rapid and concentrated exertion of a whole series of faculties: planning faculties as well as technical skill, the ability to handle men as well as to handle tools and correct processes, faculties of adjustment and adaptation as well

as of precise execution—men of resource as well as knowledge. These are the athletes, the athletes of faculty, of which our generation most stands in need. All through its ranks, besides, it needs masterful men who can acquire a working knowledge of many things readily, quickly, intelligently, and with exactness—things they had not foreseen or prepared themselves for beforehand, and for which they could not have prepared themselves beforehand. Quick apprehension, quick comprehension, quick action are what modern life puts a premium upon—a readiness to turn this way or that and not lose force or momentum.

To me, then, the question seems to be: Shall the lad who goes to college go there for the purpose of getting ready to be a servant merely, a servant who will be nobody and who may become useless, or shall he go there for the purpose of getting ready to be a master adventurer in the field of modern opportunity?

We must expect hewers of wood and drawers of water to come out of the colleges in their due proportion, of course, but I take it for granted that even the least gifted of them did not go to college with the ambition to be nothing more. And yet one has hardly made the statement before he begins to doubt whether he can safely take anything for granted. Part of the very question we are discussing is the ambition with which young men now go to college. It is a day when a college course has become fashionable—but not for the purpose of learning, not for the purpose of obtaining a definite preparation for anything—no such purpose could become *fashionable*. The clientage of our colleges has greatly changed since the time when most of the young men who resorted to them did so with a view to entering one or other of the learned professions. Young men who expect to go into business of one kind or another

now outnumber among our undergraduates those who expect to make some sort of learning the basis of their work throughout life; and I dare say that they generally go to college without having made any very definite analysis of their aim and purpose in going. Their parents seem to have made as little.

The enormous increase of wealth in the country in recent years, too, has had its effect upon the colleges—not in the way that might have been expected—not, as yet, by changing the standard of life to any very noticeable extent or introducing luxury and extravagance and vicious indulgence. College undergraduates have usually the freshness of youth about them, out of which there springs a wholesome simplicity, and it is not easy to spoil them or to destroy their natural democracy. They make a life of their own and insist upon the maintenance of its standards. But the increase of wealth has brought into the colleges, in rapidly augmenting numbers, the sons of very rich men, and lads who expect to inherit wealth are not as easily stimulated to effort, are not as apt to form definite and serious purposes, as those who know that they must whet their wits for the struggle of life.

There was a time when the mere possession of wealth conferred distinction; and when wealth confers distinction it is apt to breed a sort of consciousness of opportunity and responsibility in those who possess it and incline them to seek serious achievement. But that time is long past in America. Wealth is common. And, by the same token, the position of the lad who is to inherit it is a peculiarly disadvantageous one, if the standard of success is to rise above mediocrity. Wealth removes the necessity for effort, and yet effort is necessary for the attainment of distinction, and very great effort at that, in the modern world, as I

have already pointed out. It would look as if the ordinary lad with expectations were foredoomed to obscurity; for the ordinary lad will not exert himself unless he must.

We live in an age in which no achievement is to be cheaply had. All the cheap achievements, open to amateurs, are exhausted and have become commonplace. Adventure, for example, is no longer extraordinary: which is another way of saying that it is commonplace. Any amateur may seek and find adventure; but it has been sought and had in all its kinds. Restless men, idle men, chivalrous men, men drawn on by mere curiosity and men drawn on by love of the knowledge that lies outside books and laboratories, have crossed the whole face of the habitable globe in search of it, ferreting it out in corners even, following its by-paths and beating its coverts, and it is nowhere any longer a novelty or distinction to have discovered and enjoyed it. The whole round of pleasure, moreover, has been exhausted time out of mind, and most of it discredited as not pleasure after all, but just an expensive counterfeit; so that many rich people have been driven to devote themselves to expense regardless of pleasure. No new pleasure, I am credibly informed, has been invented within the memory of man. For every genuine thrill and satisfaction, therefore, we are apparently, in this sophisticated world, shut in to (work), to modifying and quickening the life of the age. If college be one of the highways to life and achievement, it must be one of the highways to work.

The man who comes out of college into the modern world must, therefore, have got out of it, if he has not wasted four vitally significant years of his life, a quickening and a training which will make him in some degree a master among men. If he has got less, college was not worth his while. To have made it worth his while he must have got



such a preparation and development of his faculties as will give him movement as well as mere mechanical efficiency in affairs complex, difficult, and subject to change. The word efficiency has in our day the power to think at the centre of it, the power of independent movement and initiative. It is not merely the suitability to be a good tool, it is the power to wield tools, and among the tools are men and circumstances and changing processes of industry, changing phases of life itself. There should be technical schools a great many and the technical schools of America should be among the best in the world. The men they train are indispensable. The modern world needs more tools than managers, more workmen than master workmen. But even the technical schools must have some thought of mastery and adaptability in their processes; and the colleges, which are not technical schools, should think of that chiefly. We must distinguish what the college is for, without disparaging any other school, of any other kind. It is for the training of the men who are to rise above the ranks.

That is what a college is for. What it does, what it requires of its undergraduates and of its teachers, should be adjusted to that conception. The very statement of the object, which must be plain to all who make any distinction at all between a college and a technical school, makes it evident that the college must subject its men to a general intellectual training which will be narrowed to no one point of view, to no one vocation or calling. It must release and quicken as many faculties of the mind as possible—and not only release and quicken them but discipline and strengthen them also by putting them to the test of systematic labor. Work, definite, exacting, long continued, but not narrow or petty or merely rule of thumb,

must be its law of life for those who would pass its gates and go out with its authentication.

By a general training I do not mean vague spaces of study, miscellaneous fields of reading, a varied smattering of a score of subjects and the thorough digestion of none. The field of modern knowledge is extremely wide and varied. After a certain number of really fundamental subjects have been studied in the schools, the college undergraduate must be offered a choice of the route he will travel in carrying his studies further. He cannot be shown the whole body of knowledge within a single curriculum. There is no longer any single highway of learning. The roads that traverse its vast and crowded spaces are not even parallel, and four years is too short a time in which to search them all out. But there is a general programme still possible by which the college student can be made acquainted with the field of modern learning by sample, by which he can be subjected to the several kinds of mental discipline—in philosophy, in some one of the great sciences, in some one of the great languages which carry the thought of the world, in history and in politics, which is its framework—which will give him valid naturalization as a citizen of the world of thought, the world of educated men—and no smatterer merely, able barely to spell its constitution out, but a man who has really comprehended and made use of its chief intellectual processes and is ready to lay his mind alongside its tasks with some confidence that he can master them and can understand why and how they are to be performed. This is the general training which should be characteristic of the college, and the men who undergo it ought to be made to undergo it with deep seriousness and diligent labor; not as soft amateurs with whom learning and its thorough tasks are side interests merely, but

as those who approach life with the intention of becoming professionals in its fields of achievement.

Just now, where this is attempted, it seems to fail of success. College men, it is said, and often said with truth, come out undisciplined, untrained, unfitted for what they are about to undertake. It is argued therefore, that what they should have been given was special vocational instruction; that if they had had that they would have been interested in their work while they were undergraduates, would have taken it more seriously, and would have come out of college ready to be used, as they now cannot be. No doubt that is to be preferred to a scattered and aimless choice of studies, and no doubt what the colleges offer is miscellaneous and aimless enough in many cases; but, at best, these are very hopeful assumptions on the part of those who would convert our colleges into vocational schools. They are generally put forward by persons who do not know how college life and work are now organized and conducted. I do not wonder that they know little of what has happened. The whole thing is of very recent development, at any rate in its elaborate complexity. It is a growth, as we now see it, of the last ten or twelve years; and even recent graduates of our colleges would rub their eyes incredulously to see it if they were to stand again on the inside and look at it intimately.

What has happened is, in general terms, this: that the work of the college, the work of its classrooms and laboratories, has become the merely formal and compulsory side of its life, and that a score of other things, lumped under the term "undergraduate activities," have become the vital, spontaneous, absorbing realities for nine out of every ten men who go to college. These activities embrace social, athletic, dramatic, musical, literary, religious, and profes-

sional organizations of every kind, besides many organized for mere amusement and some, of great use and dignity, which seek to exercise a general oversight and sensible direction of college ways and customs. Those which consume the most time, are, of course, the athletic, dramatic, and musical clubs, whose practises, rehearsals, games, and performances fill the term time and the brief vacations alike. But it is the social organizations into which the thought, the energy, the initiative, the enthusiasm of the largest number of men go, and go in lavish measure.

The chief of these social organizations are residential families—fraternities, clubs, groups of housemates of one kind or another—in which, naturally enough, all the undergraduate interests, all the undergraduate activities of the college have their vital centre. The natural history of their origin and development is very interesting. They grew up very normally. They were necessary because of what the college did not do.

Every college in America, at any rate every college outside a city, has tried to provide living-rooms for its undergraduates, dormitories in which they can live and sleep and do their work outside the classroom and the laboratory. Very few colleges whose numbers have grown rapidly have been able to supply dormitories enough for all their students, and some have deliberately abandoned the attempt, but in many of them a very considerable proportion of the undergraduates live on the campus, in college buildings. It is a very wholesome thing that they should live thus under the direct influence of the daily life of such a place and, at least in legal theory, under the authority of the university of which the college forms a principal part. But the connection between the dormitory life and the real life of the university, its intellectual tasks and disci-

plines, its outlook upon the greater world of thought and action which lies beyond, far beyond, the boundaries of campus and classroom, is very meagre and shadowy indeed. It is hardly more than atmospheric, and the atmosphere is very attenuated, perceptible only by the most sensitive.

Formerly, in more primitive, and I must say less desirable, days than these in which we have learned the full vigor of freedom, college tutors and proctors lived in the dormitories and exercised a precarious authority. The men were looked after in their rooms and made to keep hours and observe rules. But those days are happily gone by. The system failed of its object. The lads were mischievous and recalcitrant; those placed in authority over them generally young and unwise; and the rules were odious to those whom they were meant to restrain. There was the atmosphere of the boarding-school about the buildings, and of a boarding-school whose pupils had outgrown it. Life in college dormitories is much pleasanter now and much more orderly, because it is free and governed only by college opinion, which is a real, not a nominal, master. The men come and go as they please and have little consciousness of any connection with authority or with the governing influences of the university in their rooms, except that the university is their landlord and makes rules such as a landlord may make.

Formerly, in more primitive and less pleasant days, the college provided a refectory or "commons" where all undergraduates had their meals, a noisy family. It was part of the boarding-school life; and the average undergraduate had outgrown it as consciously as he had outgrown the futile discipline of the dormitory. Now nothing of the kind is attempted. Here and there, in connection with some large college which has found that the boarding-

houses and restaurants of the town have been furnishing poor food at outrageous prices to those of its undergraduates who could not otherwise provide for themselves, will be found a great "commons," at which hundreds of men take their meals, amid the hurly-burly of numbers, without elegance or much comfort, but nevertheless at a well-spread table where the food is good and the prices moderate. The undergraduate may use it or not as he pleases. It is merely a great co-operative boarding-place, bearing not even a family resemblance to the antique "commons." It is one of the conveniences of the place. It has been provided by the university authorities, but it might have been provided in some other way and have been quite independent of them; and it is usually under undergraduate management.

Those who do not like the associations or the fare of such a place provide for themselves elsewhere, in clubs or otherwise—generally in fraternity houses. At most colleges there is no such common boarding-place, and all must shift for themselves. It is this necessity in the one case and desire in the other that has created the chief complexity now observable in college life and which has been chiefly instrumental in bringing about that dissociation of undergraduate life from the deeper and more permanent influences of the university which has of recent years become so marked and so significant.

Fraternity chapters were once—and that not so very long ago—merely groups of undergraduates who had bound themselves together by the vows of various secret societies which had spread their branches among the colleges. They had their fraternity rooms, their places of meeting; they were distinguished by well-known badges and formed little coteries distinguishable enough from the general body

of undergraduates, as they wished to be; but in all ordinary matters they shared the common life of the place. The daily experiences of the college life they shared with their fellows of all kinds and all connections in an easy democracy; their contacts were the common contacts of the classroom and the laboratory not only, but also of the boarding-house table and of all the usual undergraduate resorts. Members of the same fraternity were naturally enough inclined to associate chiefly with one another, and were often, much too often, inclined, in matters of college "politics," to act as a unit and in their own interest; but they did not live separately. They did not hold aloof or constitute themselves separate families, living apart in their own houses, in privacy. Now all that is changed. Every fraternity has its own house, equipped as a complete home. The fraternity houses will often be the most interesting and the most beautiful buildings a visitor will be shown when he visits the college. In them members take all their meals, in them they spend their leisure hours and often do their reading—for each house has its library—and in them many of the members, as many as can be accommodated, have their sleeping-rooms and live, because the college has not dormitories enough to lodge them or because they prefer lodging outside the dormitories. In colleges where there are no fraternities, clubs of one sort or another take their places, build homes of their own, enjoy a similar privacy and separateness, and constitute the centre of all that is most comfortable and interesting and attractive in undergraduate life.

I am pointing out this interesting and very important development, not for the purpose of criticising it, but merely to explain its natural history and the far-reaching results it has brought about. The college having deter-

mined, wisely enough, some generation or two ago, not to be any longer a boarding-school, has resolved itself into a mere teaching machine, with the necessary lecture-rooms and laboratories attached and sometimes a few dormitories, which it regards as desirable but not indispensable, and has resigned into the hands of the undergraduates themselves the whole management of their life outside the classroom; and not only its management but also the setting up of all its machinery of every kind—as much as they please—and the constitution of its whole environment, so that teachers and pupils are not members of one university body but constitute two bodies sharply distinguished—and the undergraduate body the more highly organized and independent of the two. They parley with one another, but they do not live with one another, and it is much easier for the influence of the highly organized and very self-conscious undergraduate body to penetrate the faculty than it is for the influence of the faculty to permeate the undergraduates.

It was inevitable it should turn out so in the circumstances. I do not wonder that the consequences were not foreseen and that the whole development has crept upon us almost unawares. But the consequences have been very important and very far-reaching. It is easy now to see that if you leave undergraduates entirely to themselves, to organize their own lives while in college as they please—and organize it in some way they must if thus cast adrift—that life, and not the deeper interests of the university, will presently dominate their thoughts, their imaginations, their favorite purposes. And not only that. The work of administering this complex life, with all its organizations and independent interests, successfully absorbs the energies, the initiative, the planning and originating powers of the



best men among the undergraduates. It is no small task. It would tax and absorb older men; and only the finer, more spirited, more attractive, more original and effective men are fitted for it or equal to it, where leadership goes by gifts of personality as well as by ability. The very men the teacher most desires to get hold of and to enlist in some enterprise of the mind, the very men it would most reward him to instruct and whose training would count for most in leadership outside of college, in the country at large, and for the promotion of every interest the nation has, the natural leaders and doers, are drawn off and monopolized by these necessary and engaging undergraduate undertakings. The born leaders and managers and originators are drafted off to "run the college" (it is in fact nothing less), and the classroom, the laboratory, the studious conference with instructors get only the residuum of their attention, only what can be spared of their energy—are secondary matters where they ought to come first. It is the organization that is at fault, not the persons who enter into it and are moulded by it. It cannot turn out otherwise in the circumstances. The side-shows are so numerous, so diverting—so important, if you will—that they have swallowed up the circus, and those who perform in the main tent must often whistle for their audiences, discouraged and humiliated.

Such is college life nowadays, and such its relation to college work and the all-important intellectual interests which the colleges are endowed and maintained to foster. I need not stop to argue that the main purposes of education cannot be successfully realized under such conditions. I need not stop to urge that the college was not, and can never be, intended for the uses it is now being put to. A young man can learn to become the manager of a football

team or of a residential club, the leader of an orchestra or a glee-club, the star of amateur theatricals, an oarsman or a chess-player without putting himself to the trouble, or his parents to the expense, of four years at a college. These are innocent enough things for him to do and to learn, though hardly very important in the long run; they may, for all I know, make for efficiency in some of the simpler kinds of business; and no wise man who knows college lads would propose to shut them off from them or wish to discourage their interest in them. All work and no play makes Jack not only a dull boy but may make him a vicious boy as well. Amusement, athletic games, the zest of contest and competition, the challenge there is in most college activities to the instinct of initiative and the gifts of leadership and achievement—all these are wholesome means of stimulation, which keep young men from going stale and turning to things that demoralize. But they should not assume the front of the stage, where more serious and lasting interests are to be served. Men cannot be prepared by them for modern life.

The college is meant for a severer, more definite discipline than this: a discipline which will fit men for the contests and achievements of an age whose every task is conditioned upon some intelligent and effective use of the mind, upon some substantial knowledge, some special insight, some trained capacity, some penetration which comes from study, not from natural readiness or mere practical experience.

The side-shows need not be abolished. They need not be cast out or even discredited. But they must be subordinated. They must be put in their natural place as diversions, and ousted from their present dignity and pre-eminence as occupations.

And this can be done without making of the college again a boarding-school. The characteristic of the boarding-school is that its pupils are in all things in tutelage, are under masters at every turn of their life, must do as they are bidden, not in the performance of their set tasks only, but also in all their comings and goings. It is this characteristic that made it impossible and undesirable to continue the life of the boarding-school into the college, where it is necessary that the pupil should begin to show his manhood and make his own career. No one who knows what wholesome and regulated freedom can do for young men ought ever to wish to hale them back to the days of childish discipline and restraint of which the college of our grandfathers was typical. But a new discipline is desirable, is absolutely necessary, if the college is to be recalled to its proper purpose, its bounden duty. It cannot perform its duty as it is now organized.

The fundamental thing to be accomplished in the new organization is, that, instead of being the heterogeneous congeries of petty organizations it now is, instead of being allowed to go to pieces in a score of fractions free to cast off from the whole as they please, it should be drawn together again into a single university family of which the teachers shall be as natural and as intimate members as the undergraduates. The "life" of the college should not be separated from its chief purposes and most essential objects, should not be contrasted with its duties and in rivalry with them. The two should be but two sides of one and the same thing; the association of men, young and old, for serious mental endeavor and also, in the intervals of work, for every wholesome sport and diversion. Undergraduate life should not be in rivalry and contrast with undergraduate duties: undergraduates should not be merely

in attendance upon the college, but parts of it on every side of its life, very conscious and active parts. They should consciously live its whole life—not under masters, as in school, and yet associated in some intimate daily fashion with their masters in learning: so that learning may not seem one thing and life another. The organizations whose objects lie outside study should be but parts of the whole, not set against it, but included within it.

All this can be accomplished by a comparatively simple change of organization which will make master and pupil members of the same free, self-governed family, upon natural terms of intimacy. But how it can be done is not our present interest. That is another story. It is our present purpose merely to be clear what a college is for. That, perhaps, I have now pointed out with sufficient explicitness. I have shown the incompatibility of the present social organization of our colleges with the realization of that purpose only to add emphasis to the statement of what that purpose is. Once get that clearly established in the mind of the country, and the means of realizing it will readily and quickly enough be found. The object of the college is intellectual discipline and moral enlightenment, and it is the immediate task of those who administer the colleges of the country to find the means and the organization by which that object can be attained. Education is a process and, like all other processes, has its proper means and machinery. It does not consist in courses of study. It consists of the vital assimilation of knowledge, and the mode of life, for the college as for the individual, is nine parts of the digestion.

## VII

### THE TRAINING OF INTELLECT<sup>1</sup>

WOODROW WILSON

MR. TOASTMASTER, MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN: I must confess to you that I came here with very serious thoughts this evening, because I have been laboring under the conviction for a long time that the object of a university is to educate, and I have not seen the universities of this country achieving any remarkable or disturbing success in that direction. I have found everywhere the note which I must say I have heard sounded once or twice to-night—that apology for the intellectual side of the university. You hear it at all universities. Learning is on the defensive, is actually on the defensive, among college men, and they are being asked by way of indulgence to bring that also into the circle of their interests. Is it not time we stopped asking indulgence for learning and proclaimed its sovereignty? Is it not time we reminded the college men of this country that they have no right to any distinctive place in any community, unless they can show it by intellectual achievement? That if a university is a place for distinction at all it must be distinguished by the conquests of the mind? I for my part tell you plainly that that is my motto, that I have entered the field to fight for that thesis, and that for that thesis only do I care to fight.

<sup>1</sup> An address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Yale University in 1908. Reprinted through the courtesy of President Woodrow Wilson from a stenographic report.

The toastmaster of the evening said, and said truly, that this is the season when, for me, it was most difficult to break away from regular engagements in which I am involved at this time of the year. But when I was invited to the Phi Beta Kappa banquet it had an unusual sound, and I felt that that was the particular kind of invitation which it was my duty and privilege to accept. One of the problems of the American university now is how, among a great many other competing interests, to give places of distinction to men who want places of distinction in the classroom. Why don't we give you men the Y here and the P at Princeton, because, after all, you have done the particular thing which distinguishes Yale? Not that these other things are not worth doing, but they may be done anywhere. They may be done in athletic clubs where there is no study, but this thing can be done only here. This is the distinctive mark of the place.

A good many years ago, just two weeks before the mid-year examinations, the faculty of Princeton was foolish enough to permit a very unwise evangelist to come to the place and to upset the town. And while an assisting undergraduate was going from room to room one undergraduate secured his door and put this notice out: "I am a Christian and am studying for examinations." Now I want to say that that is exactly what a Christian undergraduate would be doing at that time of the year. He would not be attending religious meetings no matter how beneficial it would be to him. He would be studying for examinations not merely for the purpose of passing them, but from his sense of duty.

We get a good many men at Princeton from certain secondary schools who say a great deal about their earnest desire to cultivate character among our students, and I

hear a great deal about character being the object of education. I take leave to believe that a man who cultivates his character consciously will cultivate nothing except what will make him intolerable to his fellow men. If your object in life is to make a fine fellow of yourself, you will not succeed, and you will not be acceptable to really fine fellows. Character, gentlemen, is a by-product. It comes, whether you will or not, as a consequence of a life devoted to the nearest duty, and the place in which character would be cultivated, if it be a place of study, is a place where study is the object and character the result.

Not long ago a gentleman approached me in great excitement just after the entrance examinations. He said we had made a great mistake in not taking so and so from a certain school which he named. "But," I said, "he did not pass the entrance examinations." And he went over the boy's moral excellencies again. "Pardon me," I said, "you do not understand. He did not pass the entrance examinations. Now," I said, "I want you to understand that if the angel Gabriel applied for admission to Princeton University and could not pass the entrance examinations, he would not be admitted. He would be wasting his time." It seemed a new idea to him. This boy had come from a school which cultivated character, and he was a nice, lovable fellow with a presentable character. Therefore, he ought to be admitted to any university. I fail to see it from this point of view, for a university is an institution of purpose. We have in some previous years had pity for young gentlemen who were not sufficiently acquainted with the elements of a preparatory course. They have been dropped at the examinations, and I have always felt that we have been guilty of an offense, and have made their parents spend money to no avail and the youngsters spend

their time to no avail. And so I think that all university men ought to rouse themselves now and understand what is the object of a university. The object of a university is intellect; as a university its only object is intellect. As a body of young men there ought to be other things, there ought to be diversions to release them from the constant strain of effort, there ought to be things that gladden the heart and moments of leisure, but as a university the only object is intellect.

The reason why I chose the subject that I am permitted to speak upon to-night—the function of scholarship—was that I wanted to point out the function of scholarship not merely in the university, but in the nation. In a country constituted as ours is, the relation in which education stands is a very important one. Our whole theory has been based upon an enlightened citizenship and therefore the function of scholarship must be for the nation as well as for the university itself. I mean the function of such scholarship as undergraduates get. That is not a violent amount in any case. You cannot make a scholar of a man except by some largeness of Providence in his make-up, by the time he is twenty-one or twenty-two years of age. There have been gentlemen who have made a reputation by twenty-one or twenty-two, but it is generally in some little province of knowledge, so small that a small effort can conquer it. You do not make scholars by that time, you do not often make scholars by seventy that are worth boasting of. The process of scholarship, so far as the real scholar is concerned, is an unending process, and knowledge is pushed forward only a very little by his best efforts. And it is evident, of course, that the most you can contribute to a man in his undergraduate years is not equipment in the exact knowledge which is characteristic of the scholar, but an inspira-



tion of the spirit of scholarship. The most that you can give a youngster is the spirit of the scholar.

Now, the spirit of the scholar in a country like ours must be a spirit related to the national life. It cannot, therefore, be a spirit of pedantry. I suppose that this is a sufficient working conception of pedantry to say that it is knowledge divorced from life. It is knowledge so closeted, so desecrated, so stripped of the significances of life itself, that it is a thing apart and not connected with the vital processes in the world about us.

There is a great place in every nation for the spirit of scholarship, and it seems to me that there never was a time when the spirit of scholarship was more needed in affairs than it is in this country at this time.

We are thinking just now with our emotions and not with our minds, we are moved by impulse and not by judgment. We are drawing away from things with blind antipathy. The spirit of knowledge is that you must base your conclusions on adequate grounds. Make sure that you are going to the real sources of knowledge, discovering what the real facts are before you move forward to the next process, which is the process of clear thinking. By clear thinking I do not mean logical thinking. I do not mean that life is based upon any logical system whatever. Life is essentially illogical. The world is governed now by a tumultuous sea of commonalities made up of passions, and we should pray God that the good passions should outvote the bad passions. But the movement of impulse, of motive, is the stuff of passion, and therefore clear thinking about life is not logical, symmetrical thinking, but it is interpretative thinking, thinking that sees the secret motive of things, thinking that penetrates deepest places where are the pulses of life.

Now scholarship ought to lay these impulses bare just as the physician can lay bare the seat of life in our bodies. That is not scholarship which goes to work upon the mere formal pedantry of logical reasoning, but that *is* scholarship which searches for the heart of a man. The spirit of scholarship gives us catholicity of thinking, the readiness to understand that there will constantly swing into our ken new items not dreamed of in our systems of philosophy, not simply to draw our conclusions from the data that we have had, but that all this is under constant mutation, and that therefore new phases of life will come upon us and a new adjustment of our conclusions will be necessary. Our thinking must be detached and disinterested thinking.

The particular objection that I have to the undergraduate forming his course of study on his future profession is this—that from start to finish, from the time he enters the university until he finishes his career, his thought will be centred upon particular interests. He will be immersed in the things that touch his profit and loss, and a man is not free to think inside that territory. If his bread and butter is going to be affected, if he is always thinking in the terms of his own profession he is not thinking for the nation. He is thinking for himself, and whether he be conscious of it or not, he can never throw these trammels off. He will only think as a doctor, or a lawyer, or a banker. He will not be free in the world of knowledge and in the circle of interests which make up the great citizenship of the country. It is necessary that the spirit of scholarship should be a detached, disinterested spirit, not immersed in a particular interest. That is the function of scholarship in a country like ours, to supply not heat, but light, to suffuse things with the calm radiance of reason, to see to it that men do not act hastily, but that they act considerately, that they

obey the truth whether they know it or not. The fault of our age is the fault of hasty action, of premature judgments, of a preference for ill-considered action over no action at all. Men who insist upon standing still and doing a little thinking before they do any acting are called reactionaries. They want actually to react to a state in which they can be allowed to think. They want for a little while to withdraw from the turmoil of party controversy and see where they stand before they commit themselves and their country to action from which it may not be possible to withdraw.

The whole fault of the modern age is that it applies to everything a false standard of efficiency. Efficiency with us is accomplishment, whether the accomplishment be by just and well-considered means or not; and this standard of achievement it is that is debasing the morals of our age, the intellectual morals of our age. We do not stop to do things thoroughly; we do not stop to know why we do things. We see an error and we hastily correct it by a greater error; and then go on to cry that the age is corrupt.

And so it is, gentlemen, that I try to join the function of the university with the great function of the national life. The life of this country is going to be revolutionized and purified only when the universities of this country wake up to the fact that their only reason for existing is intellect, that the objects that I have set forth, so far as undergraduate life is concerned, are the only legitimate objects. And every man should crave for his university primacy in these things, primacy in other things also if they may be brought in without enmity to it, but the sacrifice of everything that stands in the way of that.

For my part, I do not believe that it is athleticism which stands in the way. Athletics have been associated with the achievements of the mind in many a successful civiliza-

tion. There is no difficulty in uniting vigor of body with achievement of mind, but there is a good deal of difficulty in uniting the achievement of the mind with a thousand distracting social influences, which take up all our ambitions, which absorb all our thoughts, which lead to all our arrangements of life, and then leave the university authorities the residuum of our attention, after we are through with the things that we are interested in. We absolutely changed the whole course of study at Princeton and revolutionized the methods of instruction without rousing a ripple on the surface of the alumni. They said those things are intellectual, they were our business. But just as soon as we thought to touch the social part of the university, there was not only a ripple, but the whole body was torn to its depths. We had touched the real things. These lay in triumphal competition with the province of the mind, and men's attention was so absolutely absorbed in these things that it was impossible for us to get their interest enlisted on the real undertakings of the university itself.

Now that is true of every university that I know anything about in this country, and if the faculties in this country want to recapture the ground that they have lost, they must begin pretty soon, and they must go into the battle with their bridges burned behind them so that it will be of no avail to retreat. If I had a voice to which the university men of this country might listen, that is the endeavor to which my ambition would lead me to call.

## VIII

### UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS<sup>1</sup>

SIMON NEWCOMB

“The greatest nation is the one that can send most men to the top of the Matterhorn.” This reply to the question which we should deem the greatest nation was probably regarded by the guests who heard it as a euphonious paradox rather than a serious opinion. And yet, if not taken too literally, it suggests a direction in which progress is now tending. With the decay of asceticism, naturally commences the growth of the opposite idea, embodied in the familiar phrases, “muscular Christianity” and “the physical basis of life.” This idea is supported by modern physiological investigation, which brings out in clear relief that physical health and vigor are qualities to be cultivated, not merely from a selfish desire for amusement and to secure freedom from pain, but as a means toward the attainment of our highest ethical ends. Experience shows the general rule to be that the physically lazy man is not apt to be mentally active, though the mentally active man may be so absorbed in his work as to have little time or energy to spend in outdoor exercise. The names of the few hundred persons who since Whymper’s memorable and disastrous adventure have ascended the Matterhorn would be more than a miscellaneous list of people endowed with bodily vigor and a propensity to climb. They would

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted through the courtesy of *The North American Review*.

include a President of the United States, a goodly list of leaders in science and literature, and more than a due proportion of men who have made their mark in various fields of effort. The general trend of evidence recently collected by students of hygiene is toward the view that there is something toxic in the air of even the best houses, and that he who would command the best measure of physical health must, so far as he can, live and sleep in the open air. He cannot do this well unless he is in motion during most of his waking hours; and in this we have a completely rational incentive to bodily exercise.

Having said this by way of preface, let us proceed to our task. We wish to bring about peace and amity between lusty Ajax, who attends all the football games, admires the manly qualities there displayed, and sees in the actors the men who are to do the real work of the world—and wise Minerva, who has learned that brain and not muscle does the world's work, and that the best physical health and mental vigor are quite compatible with inability to climb a hill or fight a burglar. We fancy that the goddess is already beginning to ply us with questions, whether we are not confounding causes and effect, whether men do not play football because they are already strong and active, rather than the reverse, whether the qualities they display in the game are really those most required by modern society, and whether Whympers would not have done as good work, and Leslie Stephen become as effective a writer, if neither of them had ever seen a mountain. But, with all the deference due her sex, we shall ask her to postpone her questions and remain a spectator while Ajax has his innings.

The world, he tells us, has no need of the weakling, who shrinks from personal combat and is disturbed by the

fear of a little physical pain and discomfort. The man who in the future is to win the admiration and command the respect of his fellow men by his works must possess the robust qualities of the body, as well as the finer qualities of the intellect. In no way are such qualities more readily acquired and displayed than in the roughest of the games played by university students in intercollegiate contests. The large majority of men who are to be leaders in this and the next generation will be trained at colleges and in universities. It is essential to their efficiency that they shall not be mere scholars and book-worms, but physically strong and courageous, ready to sacrifice ease and comfort to the exigencies of their work. Therefore, let them engage in manly contests, the rougher the better.

Now, dear Ajax, I am delighted that you take this ground. I take much the same view as you do, though I might state our case a little differently. We wish the men of our nation to be capable of carrying on great works. The best and most effective work cannot be done unless the doer enjoys good physical health. Human experience, as a whole, shows that life and motion in the open air are among the agents most conducive to vigor. Let us, therefore, cultivate this life in the nation at large, especially in that fraction of it which is to take the lead. Open-air games are an excellent means toward this end, therefore we wish to encourage them. I look for your cordial assent to my statement of the problem before us, which is to devise that course of action best adapted to imbue our intellectual young men with a warm love for the green fields, the blue sky, and the varied beauties of nature and such a fondness of physical movement that they shall look forward with pleasure many months in advance to the moment when they can escape from their daily routine to engage in

country walking or in mountain climbing. Let us now put our heads together and map out the course of action best adapted to our purpose. To do this we must begin with a survey of the situation, and study the problem which it offers from our point of view.

A body of several hundred young men enter college. The first step in deciding how to secure them the full measure of the manly qualities we admire will be to classify them as to their present possession of such qualities. We divide them into three groups. At the head will be the vigorous and courageous young men, already possessing in the highest degree the manly qualities we desire to cultivate. Born of strong and healthy parents, they have loved the outdoor air from childhood, and have played on the teams of their respective schools till they have reached the college age. If any of us can claim them as children or grandchildren, we are glad to do so.

The second and much larger group will comprise a middle class, possessing fair or excellent health and a due amount of every manly quality, but taking no special pleasure in bestowing their car-fares upon the shoemaker, more interested in study than in sport and fonder of seeing others lead the strenuous life than of leading it themselves.

The third will take in the weaklings; the men who shrink from strenuous physical effort, are not strong enough to engage in a rough-and-tumble game, fear they would get hurt if they tried, will not incur even a slight risk of a few bruises without some more serious reason than love of excitement, deem it the part of wisdom to go through life with a minimum of physical pain, and prefer a sphere of activity in which the sacrifice of comfort will be as small as possible. Perhaps many of them watch the games with as much eagerness as any of their fellows and hurrah for



their teams as loudly as their weak lungs will permit. But this adds little to their physical vigor.

Having these three groups before us, the problem is so to deal with and train them that, taken as a whole, the best results at which we aim shall be reached. Keeping in our mind's eye the respective needs of the groups, our policy is obvious. The first group already possesses, in as high a degree as society demands, all the manly qualities we wish. It goes without saying that we need not greatly concern ourselves with it. The second admits of improvement and may therefore command a share of our attention. But it is the third group which stands most urgently in need of our help and encouragement. One of the strongest reasons for devoting especial attention to it is that the conditions of modern society are extremely favorable to its increase. What would we do to-day if, like our forefathers, we had no street-cars? An evolutionary philosopher has predicted that at some future epoch the human being will be an animal unable to use his legs except to mount into an automobile or incapable of chewing with his own teeth. We desire to postpone this epoch, if possible, to some future geological age. To do this, we must evidently deal with the group of university students that is in most danger of being the progenitors of such an enfeebled race. In a word, athletic exercises are to be promoted with most care and attention in the third group, and with less in the second, while the first may be safely left to take care of itself. The ideal stage of intercollegiate athletics is, then, one in which the teams are made up of the weakest men in college, or at least those who were weakest to begin with but have gained strength from the training which the college has afforded them.

The contrast of the policy thus suggested with that at

present pursued is so strong that the proposition may seem as paradoxical as that of measuring national greatness by ability in mountain climbing. No one goes to see a game between men who have not reached the highest grade of vigor, no one even invites them upon a team. Even the second group is left to take care of itself, its members being promoted into the first group if they choose to make the necessary effort. It is to the first that public attention is entirely directed. It alone wins honors and brings out applause. That is to say, we have in actual operation a system which trains those who do not need training, and leaves those who do need it to take care of themselves, without even offering them an incentive to improvement. The worst outcome of the policy is not merely waste of effort through exerting it where it is not needed, but the actual discouragement of effort among those who most need to make it. If the discouragement is not a positive one, it is at least a negative factor in that it fails to offer encouragement to the weak to become strong.

That a course of action seemingly adapted to the attainment of an end should really take us further from it is no new experience in human affairs. The question whether this is true of our present system of intercollegiate athletics is so important as to merit an inquiry how far the contention can be established by independent evidence, especially by the opinions of impartial observers. We have two sources of such opinions, the utterances of officers of our universities who have observed the effect of athletics upon their students and the broader experience of nations. So far as the writer's observation has extended, no college or university authority has claimed, as the result of his own experience, that intercollegiate athletic contests stimulate a personal desire for exercise among that group of students

who most need it. For the most part, the opinions not only of administrative officers, but even of teachers of athletics, are toward the opposite view. It is conceded, indeed, that almost the entire body of students, even those least disposed to go through a course of physical training themselves, are much interested in the success of their college team. They enjoy a healthful diversion in witnessing the games. A minority say that they enjoy a certain benefit from this stimulus, although the nature of the benefit is not clearly stated. But no one claims to have seen evidence that students in the group most in need of exercise have been led to take it in consequence of the athletic contests of their fellows. So far as experience has gone, the opinions based on the best information tend toward the view that the real wants of the weaker group have been lost from sight in the excitement of preparing for and witnessing contests among the stronger ones.

We now invite the reader to take a broader view of the general question how far athletic contests between small groups of men stimulate the love of outdoor exercise in a community. The nation which in recent times has been most actively interested in such contests is, no doubt, the English. When physical training was introduced into our own institutions of learning, our schools borrowed their ideas from Rugby and other English sources, and our universities borrowed from Oxford and Cambridge. That athletic contests were the product of a healthy love of outdoor life among the English people, and not the cause of that love, must be carefully borne in mind. The result is that to-day the two English-speaking countries are the foremost in athletic contests. On the other hand, the semi-professional university athletic teams, so common in our country and, in a less degree, in England, are, so far as the

writer is aware, unknown in Germany. It will hardly be maintained that the silly practise of duelling, which has not wholly ceased in some of the German universities, is in any way a substitute for intercollegiate athletic games. In the common schools of the nation, physical training is carefully looked after, but the system is not ours. Those who need the training receive more careful attention and encouragement than those who do not. The whole system is devised and conducted on a rational basis, the end being the physical development of the individual and not the promotion of contests or other games.

It is of interest to inquire what the results of the systems have been in the case of the nations in question. One result to which we invite attention may be only a straw, but it seems very significant. The fondness of the English for feats of physical endurance in mounting difficult Alpine peaks has led us to regard Switzerland as the especial playground of their nation. If this was ever true, it is not true to-day. The fact is that a walker over a snow-covered Alpine pass may now safely use the German language in exchanging greetings with and asking the way of a fellow pedestrian, with confidence that he will not be going astray one time in five. But, when he reaches the luxurious hotels of the valley, he may with equal confidence use the English language in addressing every fellow guest he meets. That the two systems have produced these two distinctly opposite effects is an actual fact of personal observation. That the professional climber of lofty snow-peaks may be found speaking English as often as German, I cannot either affirm or deny. But, if such is the case, it will only strengthen our contention that the semiprofessional physical training to which the English and Americans are addicted benefits the few at the expense of the many who most need it.

If the conclusion to which a careful examination of the case seems to point is really correct, the ideal athletic contest would be one between teams whose members were chosen from men originally of the weakest class. It may well be asked whether an argument in favor of such a system is not futile. We know that no one but the players themselves would take any interest in such games. Then why argue the point? We do not argue it further than to show that intercollegiate contests are worse than useless. If we admit that the policy which supports the system fails of its object because it stimulates effort where no stimulus is necessary, and discourages effort where it is needful, and if, on the other hand, the only reform that will lead to our end is so impracticable as to seem ridiculous, the conclusion is obvious. Physical development on the part of our students will be best promoted by entirely abandoning intercollegiate contests and making games of strength a purely local and personal affair. In other words, we must train the body on the same system as we do the mind.

Having thus arranged, as we hope, a *modus vivendi* with Ajax by showing how his end can best be attained, let Minerva state her case. The development of intercollegiate athletics during the past twenty years has been so striking that the thoughtful man will inquire into the incentive that lies behind it. It may well be that, in the beginning, this came from a growing conviction of the benefits of physical training to intellectual workers. But it cannot be claimed that a rational conviction of this truth has been a factor in the present expansion of the system. To begin with the first agent: why does the vigorous and healthy student of Harvard or Yale join the athletic team of his institution and add to the labor of his studies the large outlay of brain and nerve power required by a course of

physical training? Certainly not because he feels that he needs the exercise, for he can supply this in a much easier way and at much less expense to his daily comfort. With him, the motive is the laudable one of commanding the esteem of his fellows and exciting the admiration of the public. For the most part, the game is not a pleasure to him, but a severe strain, which he willingly undergoes in order to gain his end. He is probably among the ablest students of his class; but, if he devoted himself to purely intellectual improvement, he would have to wait long years before getting into the limelight, while in the athletic team he finds himself there at once. If he is not received at home as was a winner in the Olympian games, he has at least the satisfaction of feeling that his friends and relatives take pride in the qualities he has displayed.

If interest in the contests were confined to students and their relatives, the actual situation would not have presented itself. Its important feature is the extraordinary public interest which the games now excite, and which may be fairly measured by the sums collected from gate receipts and other sources, the total of which would suffice to pay an important part of the expenses of a university. The income from gate receipts alone has been so great that the problem how to dispose of it could be solved only by incurring enormous outlays for expenses of all sorts. If we had here a measure of public interest in the physical improvement of students, the situation would at least show one bright side. But it may well be questioned whether this is the case, and whether the real incentive at play is not as old as history—the love of witnessing a combat. Is it not the same impulse which gave rise to gladiatorial contests in ancient Rome, to the bull-fights of Spain, to the cock-fights of the English, and to the prize-fights of

English and American pugilists; and which to-day collects a crowd around two dogs fighting in the street? Is it not that trait of our nature which leads to a personal squabble between two legislators in the parliament of any civilized country being cabled over the world with more promptness than a debate on the most important subjects? Let us not say that it is useless to contend against a trait so widely diffused. In spite of its universality, we all admit, in our sober moments, that the impulse is an ignoble one. We prohibit prize-fighting by law. A modern gentleman would be ashamed to join a crowd looking at a dog-fight. Whatever the interest he might feel in the contest, his conscience tells him that he can have no rational basis for a desire to witness the scene. The older and wiser he grows the more evident becomes the ignoble character of the impulse. We, descendants of the Puritans, should esteem as a compliment to our forebears rather, than a slur upon them, Macaulay's borrowed apothegm—"they opposed bear-baiting not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators." Their better nature clearly showed them that, apart from the question of cruelty, it was an unworthy trait of our nature which could find enjoyment in the spectacle. The intercollegiate football game gives an air of respectability to a spectacle which we should otherwise regard as undignified. A contest between two teams of professional football players would be as interesting to witness as one between students. But the veneering of respectability would then be wanting.

Probably the class of thinkers who, while admitting the force of this argument, feel that it is useless to oppose the spirit of the age may not be a small one. And yet, were we to carry this idea to its extreme, we should do away with one of the great functions of educational institutions—

which is to improve the spirit of the age. There is a wide field between the policy of bringing the world at once up to our standards, and leaving it entirely to go its own way. Universities and other academic institutions, being organized to correct what is evil in human impulses and promote what is good, should not assume the position of even passive spectators of a movement which sets their own ideals at naught.

It must be clearly understood that, in all we have said, we keep in mind a comparison between two systems—one devoting itself, in the German fashion, to the comparatively uninteresting task of encouraging the healthy physical development of all students, and the other to the promotion of spectacular games. The difference between these two motives is one that we are bound to recognize in the general interest of morality. It is the difference between loving excellence for its own sake and loving to excel others. It is like the difference between self-respect as an object in life and the desire to win the respect and applause of others. But can we eliminate from the motives to physical training the desire to excel our fellows? In considering this question, let us demur at the outset that a negative answer would not mean that the present system must be supported. We have already shown that the latter does not yield the fruits we have a right to expect. We should therefore abandon it, even if another way could not be found. But we have only to study the facts of the case to show that the better motive is not only worthy to prevail, but may practically be made to prevail. We have only to substitute the man himself as the standard of comparison, instead of the fellow man.

There still stands in a corner of the Harvard University grounds a small, low, old-fashioned brick building, offering



in its proportions a striking contrast to the buildings of to-day. It was the first gymnasium erected for the use of Harvard students. In it those who aimed at increasing the physical strength took as much pleasure in noting their improvement every week as does the football player of to-day in his contests. This continual gain, coupled with the real pleasure of physical activity, which perhaps many experienced there for the first time, was the sufficient motive to gain the full measure of physical energy attainable by the constitution of each individual student. We never know how interesting the simplest exercise may be unless we have had the experience. I never saw an outing more enjoyed than that of a poor widow of a Tyrolese school-master, who once arranged a picnic for a small party on a slope of one of her native mountains. I could see nothing in it but cooking and eating a meal out-of-doors instead of in the house; but it gave her a pleasure and a distraction which lightened her labors for days to come. In the light of a modern athletic contest, the interest taken by the students of forty years ago in their exercises may seem quite childish. Who but a child could be amused, as students then were, by seeing his fellows lean backward and walk under a barrier slowly lowered day by day until it was little more than knee-high? The youth who was looking forward to increasing the weight of his dumb-bells from sixty to eighty pounds, who could walk to the end of a vibrating spar without falling, and who was hoping soon to be able to mount up the peg-studded pole while hanging by his hands, were all interested by the sight of what the others could do in these various lines. It cannot be denied that all gained the greatest of the benefits that come from physical exercise; and, if we would secure the same advantage to our children, we can do it by inciting

them to action on similar lines. Instead of each trying to excel his fellows, which he knows is vain unless he is one of the strongest of the class, each person must try to be stronger to-day than he was yesterday. Even if we cannot move every one by this motive, we shall certainly move more than we do under our present system.

Let us temper a little our admiration for the manly qualities displayed in an athletic contest, by recognizing the confusion between cause and effect which we find involved. Probably nearly all of our readers would share with the writer the pleasure which he would feel in seeing a son win a boat-race. But why? Because the winning made him stronger? No, but because winning proved him to be a strong man to begin with. Success was the effect, not the cause, of strength. The same remark will apply to the manly qualities displayed in an athletic game. Psychologists will tell us that it is very doubtful whether innate qualities can be improved in any great degree in this way. But, apart from this, as we are now in a critical mood, let us inquire whether the manly qualities at play in a contest are really those which the world most needs to-day and will need in the future.

It is a characteristic of human nature that the sentiments and ideas which we inherit from our ancestors may continue through many generations after they have ceased to be needed. It is of especial interest that such sentiments are strongest in the boy, and tend to diminish with age. In former times, cities, villages, nations, and empires were so exposed to aggressions from their neighbors that not only their prosperity, but even the lives of their people, depended upon the prowess and courage of their fighting population. Hence arose an admiration for these qualities, which we may expect to continue, not only as long as war

is permitted, but even after conditions are so improved that no one will ever be obliged to place himself voluntarily in danger for the benefit of his fellow men. Every well-endowed boy of to-day admires the brave fighter as the highest type of humanity and shows his budding patriotism by delighting in the battles which our soldiers have won. But, as he grows up, he is from time to time surprised to find social regulations at seeming variance with his ideas. He learns that the man who jumps off the Brooklyn Bridge, or risks life and limb otherwise than in the performance of the greatest public or private duty, instead of receiving the reward of a hero is haled before the courts, to be dealt with as an offender against the law. His traditional ideas of the qualities essential in a soldier include readiness to take offense and to engage in mortal combat with his personal enemy. He is therefore surprised when he finds that duelling is prohibited by the regulations governing modern armies, and that the officer of to-day need not be quick of temper to prove his courage. The writer was once told by a distinguished officer of the past generation that it was a disappointment to the average citizen when he first found that the naval officer of our time was an educated gentleman, who did not interlard his conversation with sea slang. As the boy grows to manhood, he finds that fear is strongest in his boyhood and that physical courage is the rule and not the exception among grown men.

In the same category with physical courage we may place readiness to engage in personal combat. The boy who possesses this quality has a decided advantage among his fellows. But, as he grows older, he finds that the requirements of social life render it an undesirable quality among grown men. The boy who is not ready to defend himself is liable to be imposed upon by his fellows. But the grown

man trusts for his protection to public opinion and to the agents of the law; and, although the latter may not always be at hand when needed, it is not likely that an occasion will ever arise during his life in which he will have to maintain his rights in the manner employed by primitive mankind. How much soever he would be pleased to down a burglar, he might live through a score of lives without once enjoying the opportunity.

If the argument here submitted is sound, the wisest policy on the part of believers in physical training as a basis of intellectual efficiency is to discourage and, if possible, abolish that special form of intercollegiate contests which has assumed such striking proportions during the past ten years. We should not lose sight of the fact that the energy displayed in these contests is misdirected, and that a wise adaptation of means to ends requires athletic exercises to be a personal matter, in which each individual shall be interested in his own improvement rather than in his ability to outdo his fellows.

## IX

### PANEM ET CIRCENSES<sup>1</sup>

RICHARD RICE, JR.

In one of the great American universities there used to prevail a curious fashion, now abandoned, of heartening the 'varsity football team. Every afternoon during the week or ten days before the chief contest, the whole student body and a strong following of citizens marched in column from the campus to attend practise. With flags and trophies on high they paraded behind a brass band, encircled the gridiron a number of times, and then spent two hours on the bleachers glorying and cheering, while the evolutions of the 'varsity continued. Moreover, these last exercises, before the team went forth to victory or defeat, were only the culmination of a season-long performance in which the rest of the undergraduates appeared to have almost as important a daily part as the players themselves. The notion was generally encouraged that the team could do nothing at practise without a crowd of vociferous admirers. An undergraduate who failed to support this theory was generally known as a "quitter"; and, indeed, if he wanted to be thought a man of college spirit, the only obvious way was to attend practise assiduously and talk about it copiously—and very little else—from the first days of the season. The real state of the case can perhaps be judged by

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in part from an article in *The Nation*, through the courtesy of *The Nation*.

the fact that playing tennis or taking a country walk during the 'varsity practise hours was "the very worst form."

Then the university got a new president, and all this changed. The new president was very popular; but he played golf every afternoon himself, and believed that the purpose of a university is intellect. He saw some connection between intellect and sport, very little between intellect and bleachers.

## I

Those who know American colleges throughout the land have long realized that there are, in comparison to the total number of students, few players of games. Especially in the West sport is limited almost entirely to the so-called representative teams, which represent the name of the institution, but not an atmosphere of sportsmanship. At the most these teams are products of the anxiety of students to beat their rivals, and of an executive plan to achieve in this way a necessary amount of publicity. They are not products of intramural competition and of personal interest in the playing of games. It appears as if the prowess of the 'varsity team satisfied the athletic aspirations of all the other students.

That such a condition is bad for the tone of a college not everybody is ready to admit. There is an opinion that because the purpose of the college is intellect and study, then the more limited the athletic class the better for the institution. But this is a judgment based on a misconception of what athletics mean, a misconception fostered by the wide-spread indifference of undergraduates to the right sort of athletics. It is our general contention here that an academic institution will be sounder intel-

lectually if sport is prevalent or, at least, not limited to the so-called "representative" few, the specialists.

This we believe to be true for two reasons. Sport within the walls, popular athletic activity, offers a stimulating variety of personal employment and interest, a zest for living, and a means for clean physical health. Where the playing of games is prevalent, the tone of the whole student body is more alert, more vigorous and sane. This is the obvious and positive reason. The other reason is negative, and, though more difficult to grasp, is equally in point. Where 'varsity sport is not the outgrowth of general athletic activity, or where it seems to absorb all athletic enthusiasm without being productive of individual sportsmanship in the rank and file of students, where it is the advertisement instead of the real thing, it becomes antagonistic to intellect and study, because it furnishes a second-rate employment to the main body of students, and a second-hand diversion. Vicarious athletics on the bleachers, attending practise, "heeling the team," talking athletics, breathing athletics, without some daily personal realization of the matter, may well promote an aptitude for mental inertia. *Panem et circenses*—peanuts and ball games! Where the teams furnish the only games, sport is merely a show. It lacks the chief effects of play. The tone it lends to an institution is mainly the noise of a well-drilled college yell. And it does little for the individual student except that, when his team wins, his own chest expansion is vicariously increased.

This latter reason is especially weighty because it describes the trouble not only with college athletics, but with American athletics in general. It describes what is growing to be our national outlook on sport, the grand-stand outlook. This point of view, which college students ought

not to assume but to correct, is the result of so professionalizing, or highly specializing, our chief games that nobody but experts play them. The fact that this undoubtedly helps produce our great specialists, our winners at Olympic games, is beside the present point. We may have the greatest experts in the world; but as a nation our interest is centred in these experts, not in the games. We have become, even in our colleges, not sportsmen but "fans."

Now, of course, there is plenty of room for the "fan," and outside college days he is a humorous and commendable institution. On sweltering afternoons in Pittsburgh or Kansas City, it is entirely in keeping that he should take his exercise in the shade of the grand-stand, and become, by continual assistance there and by continual study of the *Sunday Supplement*, a very great authority. But nobody would dream of calling the "fan" a sportsman. He is, on the contrary, only a "sport," which is a term, if you will look it up in the dictionary, that means "an anomaly, a divergence from the species." The "sport," and especially the college "sport," is not the real thing. Yet part of the perversion of our attitude toward athletics comes, in this case, either from imagining that without him there would be no sportsmanship at all, or—if we are especially obtuse—from thinking that the "sport" or the "fan" is himself the representative American athlete. But the second case is so absurd that we already catch a glimpse of the fallacy in the first.

When rightly understood, this fallacy reveals the fact, intimated before, that the grand-stand athlete is primarily not the cause of our present evil situation, but rather a result. He may, of course, become a positive reason for failure to eradicate the cause, since he is so profitable. But the prime



reason why we have not a greater number of sportsmen in sport, why so few people themselves play games for the fun of it, why the entertainment of the "fan," viz., high specialization, is growing to be even in colleges the chief consideration, is not the "fan's" fanaticism, but our national miscomprehension of the true spirit of play—our ignorance of how to keep games in their playable form.

Think, for example, how we have *improved* the good game of football till nobody but trained and armed specialists dare to play it. Englishmen had invented eminently playable forms of this game, in which anybody with legs and lungs might be expected to take part. Nearly every English village and town, as well as the colleges, has its teams for soccer and Rugby, and hundreds of Englishmen are playing these two games every autumn afternoon, where hundreds of Americans are only looking on. The reason for this difference is not climate; it is a simpler reason. We took these playable games of football and reduced them, with more cleverness than foresight, to one type of extreme difficulty and considerable danger. It is a game that requires far more skill in leadership, in preconcerted plans and secret signals, in thorough training and team-play, than any of the English games. It is, in fact, a game that can be played with profit only by regularly coached teams of men who enjoy constitutions that occur in most families but once in several generations. It is not a popular game; it is only a spectacular game. The people do not play football in America.

Like Americans, in regard to most of our national sports, we say: "Let George do it; we'll watch." But thus specialized, with all eyes on him, George is no longer the player of a game; he is a man burdened with a tremendous duty, the duty of being a *representative* athlete. This duty

has been well described by a Harvard rowing man. He has put in black and white what most representative athletes will admit as frankly in private conversation. "The duty to get Yale beaten," says Mr. William James, Jr.,<sup>1</sup> "is just now reckoned to be the athlete's sole duty, while his duty to his present and future self looms small in the background, or vaguely in the middle distance. It is hard lines for men who are unable to adapt themselves to such a perspective, and who are made to feel ashamed of this as a weakness. They bear indeed the 'athlete's burden.' And there are too many such men—men who thoroughly dislike their work under the present extreme conditions, moral as well as physical, and who do it only from a vague feeling that it is 'up to them' to stake their persons in the general obligation to organize victory. The spirit that makes a man, when he has once undertaken a thing, put it through to a finish and win out no matter what it costs . . . is an excellent maxim for business or politics. . . . But such a maxim cannot be applied to athletics. It means the death of athletics. Its place is in the prize-ring or anywhere you please save in a branch of activity which is essentially a recreation. The true amateur athlete, the true sportsman, is one who takes up sport for the fun of it and the love of it, and to whom success or defeat is a secondary matter so long as the play is good." Mr. James goes on to explain that rivalry is a vital element of sport, but that the pleasure of doing a thing well need not be spoiled by the disappointment of not doing so well as the other man. "Pure rivalry is fighting, and the more its part is magnified in sport the more sport takes on the nature of a fight."

Do we prefer the fight to the sport? We do, just so long

<sup>1</sup> *The Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, December, 1903.

as we are grand-stand athletes. Curiously enough, it is by one of our fine sayings that we most clearly show this temper: "The whole college," we say, "is back of the team." In this phrase can be felt both the spirit of our students and their miscomprehension of play. Being "back of the team" does not mean supporting the team and its special sport by general activity in that sport, which would furnish resources in men for the future; it means being on the bleachers at practise, and in a dozen other attitudes, all non-athletic, exerting psychological influence, mental suggestion, by talking and willing the team on to victory. In this sort of enthusiasm, if there is something rather fine, there is also something very futile. For while one can rarely feel anything so seemingly powerful as this will of a great university, as it grows during the weeks preceding the final contests and asserts itself at last tensely, and thunderously across the field, while this undoubtedly has its moral value, it is nevertheless not an expression of the spirit of play. It does not arise out of personal experience in the game. It is second-hand. It is largely mere contagion.

What is true of football is in many colleges only less true of our other representative and more playable game of baseball; and, until a few years ago when the revival of interest in tennis all over the land brought in a sport that does not lend itself to vicarious enthusiasm, sport, outside the "representative" teams, was a dead letter in many of our institutions.

Tennis and golf, field and ice hockey, and some of the minor sports, so called because they are not spectacular, have in many places saved the spirit of play. And there is just now a general movement in town and college for a healthier physical life, for more outdoor activity without

undue sacrifice of time. Country clubs, rowing clubs, open-air gymnasiums, hockey fields, and other opportunities for physical culture are increasing appropriately to the needs and resources of many progressive communities where the enjoyment of life has not been forgotten. But compared with England we are still very backward. No college community in America has such economic facilities for sport as the twenty-two colleges of Oxford, where (to quote from a report), "each has its own boat-house on the river for the use of its rowing men, its own athletic field where are laid out a football field, a cricket field, a dozen or more tennis-courts, and a club house with lockers and baths." There are twenty-five hundred undergraduates at Oxford, and, "it is safe to say," the report continues, "that at least eighty per cent engage actively every day in one or more branches of sport."<sup>1</sup>

There is no American college where the facilities are so complete and arranged so economically in regard to proximity and opportunity. At Harvard, where a larger proportion of men regularly engage in some sport than at any other very large institution, the proportion would not be over one man in four. There are dozens of other institutions where it would not be over one in twenty, the university facilities and the inclinations of the students being about equally accountable in the matter.

## II

A knowledge of such academic conditions, with a firm belief in the value of regular sport, a knowledge that the finest intellectual tone exists in the schools where the

<sup>1</sup> L. C. Hull, in *The American Oxonian*, April, 1914: "Athletics at Oxford: The New Rules."

largest percentage of students are athletically active and not in institutions where they just "come to work," a belief that the body is ultimately as important as the mind and that the mind is nearly always dependent on the body, should lead to the means of improving, ere long, the general status of college athletics.

The means are various, and, of course, largely determined by local conditions. But they may be generally described under two heads. Obviously there should be facilities for a reasonable amount of daily sport—facilities which certain colleges most strenuously concerned with their representative teams have almost entirely neglected. Indeed it is a curious reflection on the efficiency of educational methods that tennis-courts adequate to a large university, and handball and basket-ball areas, which can be in use all winter, cost less than the housing of the smallest department and mean in terms of mental efficiency far more, yet are, as a rule, thought of last. Secondly, it seems as if the time had come to offer some sort of official encouragement to the general athletic prowess and physical culture of individuals, and to honor with a distinction, analogous to Phi Beta Kappa or Sigma Xi, the man who makes of his body what the college curriculum strives to make of his mind, a thing trained to be responsive and to work with the smallest waste of energy.

For this purpose, it is interesting to note that there has already been established in a number of universities and colleges a society called Sigma Delta Psi, membership in which is secured by passing a series of athletic tests that involve all the chief elements of physical efficiency—effort, speed, endurance, co-ordination. The all-round athlete, according to these tests, will be a man whose eyes, muscles, and will are in excellent accord, a man capable of a great variety

of physical actions which combine to a marked degree strength, motor power, and skill. His physical condition and ability may be the result of a slightly cultivated native athletic gift, but, oftener, of thorough physical training.

This society and its purpose, being so obviously for the encouragement of extensive rather than of intensive athletics, deserve here some description. The twelve tests for full standing in the society, decided on only after much conferring among experts all over the country, are as follows: 100-yard run, 11 $\frac{3}{4}$  seconds; 220-yard low hurdles, 31 seconds; running high jump, 5 feet; running broad jump, 17 feet; putting 16-pound shot, 30 feet for a man weighing 160 pounds, and proportionately shorter distances for men of lighter weight; pole vault, 8 feet 6 inches; throwing baseball, 250 feet; punting football, 120 feet; swim (for distance only), 100 yards; 2-mile run, 12 minutes 15 seconds; 10-mile walk, 2 hours 30 minutes; tumbling (front handspring, front dive over 4-foot obstacle, handstand maintained for 10 seconds). Full standing in the society means the accomplishment, during the period of matriculation, as undergraduate or graduate student, of all these records, except that the man who has received the 'varsity letter in any sport (who is a full-fledged member of one of the university teams), may substitute this letter for any one requirement in the society except swimming. There is a set of slightly lower records for junior standing.

At first glance these records for full standing may appear extremely easy. Compared to the records of the specialists they are not difficult. But to do them all, there's the rub. Hundreds of people can throw a baseball two hundred and fifty feet, swim one hundred yards, walk ten miles in two hours and a half. These usually prove for the aspirant the easiest tests. But now let him pick

out any other three events, to complete half the total number, and see how enormously the difficulty has increased. If he is a runner, he will do the hundred yards and the two-mile run, but can he do the low hurdles or the broad jump, which should also be somewhat in his line? The events most generally difficult are the low hurdles, the broad jump, the pole vault, the two-mile run, and the tumbling. For any student to accomplish the whole list, whether he has a high degree of native ability or not, will obviously require a considerable amount and variety of training. Yet it is probable that a man of first-rate physical and athletic ability should be able to qualify in all the tests at the end of a single year if he so desires; while any man of normal, sound physique might expect to qualify, with a longer period of training, in the junior standing. One hour a day, including dressing, is said to be ample time to devote to the matter.

The society thus helps any student, whether or not he foresees the possibility of admission to its ranks, to give point and interest to his necessary daily exercise. It helps to make a game out of what is often humdrum gymnasium work, to bring an amusing and not too strenuous sort of competition into self-training. For there is strongly in this whole idea one of the most useful elements in all sport, the contest with oneself. It is the element that makes golf so beneficial and so popular. Golf is made up of competition and introspection. However self-knowledge comes, it is undoubtedly useful; it is a satisfaction to know clearly what are one's capabilities and defects, where one stands among his fellows, and how to improve in many specific directions. This knowledge is here to be gained in interesting ways, by no means devoid of a certain excitement; for, like the golfer, the student

not only plays a game with himself and with the other man, but with Bogey, in this case the all-round athlete.

The entrance of such influences into college life as I have attempted to describe, with their emphasis on personal participation in sport, rather than on *panem et circenses*, is bound to have a wholesome effect on student life. Spare energies must go somewhere. We are not wholly intellectual. At present the idols of undergraduate ambition, the "activities" which Professor Gayley satirizes, and certain other dissipations, receive more than their due. They are largely waste. They create no energy in return, and intellect suffers. But with the entrance of the spirit of sportsmanship into a university a great storage of energy begins, and, besides this, a healthy criticism of university ideals. The scholar feels it less an honor to achieve learning at the expense of health, and the athletic specialist, who has devoted himself to acquiring fame in one line and who has, perhaps, like the studious grind, injured his constitution, sees things in truer proportion. The movement toward playing games and toward extensive physical culture is but part of the new reaction in college life from specialization toward unity, proportion, and balance. The fundamental business of the college is and always will be intellect, but the personal business of every student is to see to it that he has a body which will serve intellect—a business which the college should facilitate and encourage, and on which it might well place officially the seal of academic approval.



## X

### IDOLS<sup>1</sup>

CHARLES MILLS GAYLEY

Ephraim is joined to idols. Hosea 4 : 17

#### *A World of Opportunity*

The world was never better worth preparing for. The panorama unrolled before the mind was never more gorgeous:—a new renaissance revealing reaches unimagined; prophesying splendor unimaginable; unveiling mysteries of time and space and natural law and human potency.

Archæology uncovers with a spade the world of Ariadne and of Minos, of Agamemnon and of Priam. Where Jason launched the Argo, paintings are unearthed that antedate Apelles. Mummied crocodiles disgorge their papyri: and we read the administrative record of the Ptolemies. Bacchylides breaks the silence of centuries; himself Menander mounts the stage, and in no borrowed Roman sock; and Aristotle reappears to shed fresh light upon the constitution of the Athenians.

History, availing herself of cognate sciences, deciphers documents and conditions anew; and the vision of the past is reinterpreted in terms of social and economic actuality. Emigrations and conquests become a modern tale of commerce and industrial stress. Cæsar and Agrip-

<sup>1</sup> From "Idols of Education," in part a commencement address delivered at the University of Michigan in 1909, as a valedictory to President James B. Angell, then retiring after thirty-nine years of service. Reprinted through the courtesy of Charles Mills Gayley and of Messrs. Doubleday, Page and Company.

pina, Cromwell and Marie Antoinette, are all to read again; and the Bard of Venusia acquires a new and startling modernity as the literary advance agent of a plutocratic wine firm. As in a "glass prospective" literature is viewed; and kaleidoscopic transformations of *gest* and ballad, epic and drama, cross-sections of the crypt of fiction, dazzle the eye of critic and philologist and poet.

With golden keys of psychology, history, and philology the anthropologist unlocks the mind of primitive man. The student of the holier things invades the Temple itself; and from day to day the sacramental doors swing back on age-long galleries of worship.

Taking fresh heart of ethics, economics wears a new and most seductive smile. No longer the minimizing of material cost, but the maximizing of vital value, she regards. She seeks the psychic income, the margin of leisure for the soul, the margin of health for the body: the greatest of national assets—the true wealth of nations. To the modern problems of social and political theory and of jurisprudence, of municipal and national and colonial administration, a similar fascination of beneficent discovery attracts; and to that development of international politics which aims at constitutional law rather than the substantive private law of nations.

Geology multiplies her æons, and astronomy her glittering fields. "Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps" of new discovered cause "arise." "The idea of the electron has broken the framework of the old physics to pieces, has revived ancient atomistic hypotheses, and made of them principles," and radio-activity "has opened to the explorer a New America full of wealth yet unknown." The science of the law of celestial movements has given birth to the science of the substance of celestial bodies;

and, with astrophysics, we study more narrowly than ever our one star, and its outcasts, the planets. We wonderingly contemplate the transport of matter from star to star—and from planet to planet, maybe, of life.

Geology has given birth to physiography. We pass from inorganic to organic, and probe the interaction of physical environment and animate nature. In evolutionary science they are saying that new species leap into being at a wave of the wand of mutation; and the war between Mendelism and Darwinism wages. The knight-hood of the Quest of Life enrolls in the order of psychic mystery or the order of mechanism, and presses on. Though neither win to the Grail, each wins nearer to its law. By the delicate ministrations of surgery, life is prolonged. Immunization lifts ever higher her red cross.

Engineering advances, agriculture advances, commerce expands. We compass the earth, we swim the seas, we ride the air. Our voices pierce the intervals of space, and our thoughts the unplumbed waves of ether. And from her watch-tower scrutinizing all—science, pure and applied, history and art, mechanism and spirit, teleology, evolution—the science of sciences, Divine Philosophy rounds out her calm survey. Never more tempting, more vital, the problem than that which she faces now; the problem of the fundamental character of personality. “In the light of all this evolution or mutation, what is God?” she asks. “Is he, too, but a cosmic process in which we assist; or an eternal standard of perfection against which we measure ourselves and in terms of which we strive?”

### *An Indifferent Generation*

The world of learning was never better worth preparing for. Why is it, then, that from every university in

the land, and from every serious journal, there goes up the cry, "Our young people were never more indifferent."

How many nights a week does the student spend in pursuits non-academic; how great a proportion of his days? What with so-called "college activities," by which he must prove his allegiance to the university, and social functions by which he must recreate his jaded soul, no margin is left for the one and only college activity—which is study. Class meetings, business meetings, committee meetings, editorial meetings, football rallies, baseball rallies, pyjama rallies, vicarious athletics on the bleachers, garrulous athletics in the dining-room and parlor and on the porch, rehearsals of the glee club, rehearsals of the mandolin club and of the banjo, rehearsals for dramatics (a word to stand the hair on end), college dances and class banquets, fraternity dances and suppers, preparations for the dances and banquets, more committees for the preparations; a running up and down the campus for ephemeral items for ephemeral articles in ephemeral papers, a soliciting of advertisements, a running up and down for subscriptions to the dances and the dinners, and the papers and the clubs; a running up and down in college politics, making tickets, pulling wires, adjusting combinations, canvassing for votes—canvassing the girls for votes, spending hours at sorority houses for votes—spending hours at sorority houses for sentiment; talking rubbish unceasingly, thinking rubbish, revamping rubbish—rubbish about high jinks, rubbish about low, rubbish about rallies, rubbish about pseudo-civic honor, rubbish about girls;—what margin of leisure is left for the one activity of the college, which is study?

In Oxford and Cambridge, than which no universities have turned out finer, cleaner, more manly, more highly

cultivated, and more practically trained scholars, statesmen, empire builders, or more generous enthusiasts for general athletics and clean sport—in Oxford and Cambridge the purpose is study, and the honors are paid to the scholar. There are no undergraduate newspapers, no class meetings, no college politics, no football rallies, no business managers, no claques for organized applause, no yell leaders, no dances, no social functions of the mass. Social intercourse during term between the sexes is strictly forbidden; and it is a matter of college loyalty to live up to the rule. Of non-academic activities there are but two—athletics and conversation. They are not a function but a recreation; nor are they limited to specialists whose reputation is professed. Young Oxonians, in general, lead a serene and undistracted, but rich and wholesome life. They cultivate athletics because each is an active devotee of some form of sport. And conversation—in junior commons, in the informal clubs, in study or in tutor's room—it is an education, a passion, an art.

### *The Bandar-log*

A foreigner, attending, in an American university, an assembly of student speakers, will be justified in concluding that the university exists for nothing but so-called "student activities." The real purpose of the university will not be mentioned, for usually our undergraduates live two lives—distinct; one utterly non-academic. The non-academic is for them the real; the scholarly an encroachment. The student who regards the scholarly as paramount is deficient in "allegiance to his university."

Athletics, meanwhile, which should play a necessary part in the physical, and therefore spiritual, development of all students, are relegated to ten per cent of the stu-

dents. The rest assist—on the bleachers. The ninety per cent are killing two birds with one stone. They are taking second-hand exercise; and, by their grotesque and infantile applause, they are displaying what they call their “loyalty.”

Those *noctes cænæque deum* of history and poetry and philosophical discourse, to the memory of which the older generation reverts with rapture, have faded in this light of common day. In the hurry of mundane pursuit the student rarely halts to read, rarely to consider; rarely to discuss the concerns of the larger life.

President Schurman has recently said that there has been no decline of scholarship in the people's universities; but only in the older institutions of the East, to which rich parents send their sons with the view to the advantages of social position; and that in the people's universities the social standing of students has never cut so much figure as scholarship. The assurance is comfortable; but it obscures the issue. If by “social standing” the president of Cornell means position in the coteries of wealth, fashion, conviviality, it may be that “social standing” bulks larger in the older university than in the university of the state. But the fact is that, in student esteem, East and West, social standing means no such thing: it means the position achieved by prominence in non-academic or “campus” activities. And in student esteem such prominence cuts a far more important figure than that of either wealth or scholarship. Such prominence has been gaining ground for fifteen years. So long as the social pressure of the university is toward mundane pursuits, it will be vain to expect the student to achieve distinction in that for which the university stands.

This false standard of prominence, with its feigned

allegiance to the interests of the university, has produced that class of student which, adapting from the *Jungle Book*, I call the "Bandar-log."

Mowgli had never seen an Indian city before, and though this was almost a heap of ruins it seemed very wonderful and splendid. Some king had built it long ago on a little hill. . . . The Bandar-logs called the place their city, and pretended to despise the jungle people because they lived in the forest. And yet they never knew what the buildings were made for nor how to use them. They would sit in circles in the hall of the King's council-chamber and scratch for fleas and pretend to be men; or they would run in and out of the roofless houses and collect pieces of plaster and old bricks in the corner and forget where they had hidden them, and fight and cry in scuffling crowds, and then break off to play up and down the terraces of the King's garden, where they would shake the rose-trees and the oranges in sport to see the fruit and flowers fall. They explored all the passages and dark tunnels in the palace, and the hundreds of little dark rooms, but they never remembered what they had seen and what they had not, and so drifted about in ones and twos or crowds, telling one another that they were doing as men did—or shouting "there are none in the jungle so wise and good and clever and strong and gentle as the Bandar-log." Then they would tire and seek the treetop, hoping the jungle people would notice them . . . and then they joined hands and danced about and sang their foolish songs. "They have no law," said Mowgli to himself, "no hunting call and no leaders." . . . And he could not help laughing when they cried, "we are great, we are free, we are wonderful . . . we all say so, and so it must be true . . . you shall carry our words back to the jungle people that they may notice us in future."

The Bandar-log is with us. Busy to no purpose, imitative, aimless; boastful but unreliable; inquisitive but quickly losing his interest; fitful, inconsequential, plati-tudinous, forgetful; noisy, sudden, ineffectual.—The Bandar-log must go.

Because it is the spirit of the American university to prove the things that are new, to hold fast that which is

good; to face abuses boldly and to reform them; because I am the son of an American university, and have grown in her teaching, and in my observation of many universities and many schools, to regard the evil as transitory and abuses as remediable, I have ventured in this essay to set down simply, and with a frankness that I trust may not be misconstrued, some of the vagaries of our educational system at the present time, and some of the reasons for their existence. For I am sure that in the recognition of the cause is to be found the means of cure.

### *The Man of Argos*

Another class also of students makes, though unconsciously, for the wane of general scholarship—the class of the prematurely vocational. It is not futile, like that of the Bandar-log, but earnest, and with a definite end in view. Still, unwisely guided to immature choice and hasty study of a profession, it not only misses the liberal equipment necessary for the ultimate mastery of life, but indirectly diverts the general scope of education from its true ideals.

The spirit of the Renaissance, says a modern historian of poetry, is portrayed in a picture by Moretto. It is of a young Venetian noble. “The face is that of one in the full prime of life and of great physical strength; very handsome, heavy and yet tremulously sensitive, the large eyes gazing at some thing unseen, and seeming to dream of vastness. On his bonnet is a golden plaque with three words of Greek inscribed on it—*ἰὸν λίαν ποθῶ*—“Oh, but I am consumed with excess of desire.”

If this be the motto of the Renaissance, what shall we say is the motto of to-day? Not *ἰὸν λίαν ποθῶ*; no creed of vague insatiable yearning, but rather the *πάντα ἀντίκα*,



ποθῶ—the lust for immediate and universal possession:  
as who should cry,

“I want no little here below,  
I want it all, and quick.”

In one of his odes, Pindar, lauding the older times when the Muse had not yet learned to work for hire, breaks off “but now she biddeth us observe the saying of the Man of Argos, ‘Money maketh man’”—*χρήματα, χρήματ’ ἀνήρ*. If not money, then sudden success—that is the criterion of the Man of Argos to-day.

The Bandar-log and the Argive retard the advance of scholarship in the university; and not the university alone is responsible for their presence, but the elementary school as well.

[NOTE.—There follow here two sections treating of the lax conditions in our secondary schools consequent on the overwhelming demand for education. This “advance of democracy,” a splendid sign itself, creates new ideals, but it also sets up certain idols in the university.]

### *Idols of the Tribe*

Roger Bacon, long ago, and after him, Francis, in their quest of truth, perceived that there were four grounds of human error. Of these the first is “the false appearances that are imposed upon us by the general nature of the mind” of man. The mind is always prone to accept the affirmative or active as proof rather than the negative; so that if you hit the mark a few times you forget the many that you missed it. You worship Neptune for the numerous pictures in his temple of those that escaped shipwreck, but you omit to ask: “Where are the pictures of those that were drowned?” And because you are mentally equipped to seek uniformity, you ascribe to “Nature a greater equality and uniformity than is, in truth.” In

this refractory mind of man "the beams of things" do not "reflect according to their true incidence"; hence our fundamental superstitions, fallacies which Francis Bacon calls the Idols, or delusions, of the Race, or Tribe.

In matters of education the dearest delusion of our Tribe to-day is *that the university should reflect the public*. This is the idol of the Popular Voice. Once the university is joined to this idol, it is joined to all the idols of that Pantheon. It accepts the fallacy that our sons and daughters are equally gifted and zealous, and hence that each must profit by the higher education. This is the idol of Inevitable Grace; that is, of grace innate and irresistible by which every youth is predestinated to intellectual life, "without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto," or anything in the tutor. No Calvinistic favor this, by which some are chosen while others are ordained to ignorance and sloth; but a favor not contemplated in the Westminster Confession, by which all are elect and all, in due season, effectually called to learning, and quickened and renewed by the Spirit of Zeal, and so enabled to answer this call and embrace the Grace offered and conveyed in it. The university is then joined to the idol of Numbers. And of these worships the shibboleth is "mediocrity": for to raise the standard of university requirement is to discriminate between candidates, and to doubt Inevitable Grace; while to decrease the bloated registration is a sacrilege which Numbers will avenge with curtailment of prosperity. And the ritual march is by lock-step: for tests, competition, and awards are alien to the American spirit thus misrepresented—save athletic competition: that is a divine exception.

The university is next joined to the idol of Quick Returns. It accepts the fallacy of utilitarian purpose; and hence, that a profession must be chosen prematurely and immaturely entered; and hence that studies are not for discipline or intrinsic worth, but from the primary school to the Ph.D., for purely vocational value; and hence that every incipient vocation from making toy boats and paper mats to making tariffs and balloons must find its place in every school and in every grade for every man or woman child. And since the man or woman child may find perchance a vocation in the liberal arts, the child must bestride both horses, though with the usual aerial result.

And our students—they worship the idol of Incidental Issues: the fallacy that the aim of the university is deliberately to make character. As if character were worth anything without mind, and were any other, as President Wilson has wisely said, than the by-product of duty performed; or that the duty of the student were any other than to study. They accept the fallacy that the gauge of studentship is popularity, and that popularity during academic years is to be won by hasty achievement and the babbling strenuous life, by allegiance to a perverted image of the Alma Mater, by gregariousness, by playing at citizenship. Of this popularity the outward and visible index is mundane prominence and the lightly proffered laurel of the campus.

I said that the dearest delusion of the Tribe was that the university should reflect the public. But this delusion requires also *that our universities be continually figuring in the public eye*. So far as such activity is necessary to the building up of schools, and to the education of a community to an understanding of the ideals and the needs of higher

education, it is not only legitimate but laudable. But when, under the name of university extension, our universities undertake the higher education of the periphery, in dilettantism or methods of research, they run the risk of university attenuation and simulation. When, not dispassionately, they figure in public issues, they lay themselves open to the charge of partisanship. Time was when academic etiquette forbade the university professor to participate in political contests. Now there are who dare to inject the university into prejudiced affairs; even into criminal cases pending in the courts. They have joined themselves to the idol of Parade.

To this same false policy of figuring in the public eye our universities bow when they sanction amphitheatrical spectacles, at some of which money enough passes hands to build a battleship. Football is a most desirable recreation, and a moral and physical discipline of value to every able-bodied boy. Nay, more, athletics, physical sport, and emulation are necessary to spiritual health. Even excess in them is better, it has often been said, than that moral evil should abound. But is the alternative necessary? Must we have either gladiators or degenerates? Need athletics be professionalized, be specialized? Do specialized athletics benefit the morals of the ninety and nine who don't play? Do they not rather spoil sport, detract from time and tendency to exercise for oneself? Do they not substitute hysteria for muscular development? Football is a noble game; but it is with disgust that one views its degeneration from an exhilarating pastime for all into a profession of the few, a source of newspaper notoriety, a cause of extravagance, orgiastic self-abandonment, and educational shipwreck. This comes of bowing to the idol of Parade.

The university should not adopt the idols of the community. It should set the ideals. The American university is, and ever must be, democratic. It offers education to all who can profit by it. But education itself is aristocratic—of the best and for the best. The educated are those who, having striven, are the chosen few.

### *Idols of the Academic Market-Place*

Bewildered by the advance of democracy, educators not only have accepted fallacies of the Tribe, but have attempted to justify their acceptance by further fallacies of their own—based some upon a juggling with words, others upon the authority of some Pundit (living or dead), others upon individual ignorance and conceit. These are, respectively, what Bacon has called the idols of the Market-place, the idols of the Lecture-room or Theatre, the idols of the Cave.

Idols of the Market-place are fallacies proceeding from the misconception of words. Since we educators are an imitative race, many of these misconceptions have been fostered or confirmed by the influence of some great name, Rousseau, or Froebel, or Jacotot, or another; that is to say, by authority. Consequently, the idols of the Market-place are sometimes also idols of the Theatre, which is to say, of the Lecture-room, or master by whose words we swear.

“He that will write well in any tongue must follow this counsel of Aristotle, to speak as the common people speak, but think as wise men think.” From disregard of such counsel, many of our academic fallacies concerning education have arisen. We are involved in questions and differences because we have followed the false appearances

of words, instead of setting down in the beginning the definitions in which as wise men we may concur. In what definition of education is it possible that wise men may concur? All will agree that education is a process: not that of play, nor yet of work, but of artistic activity. Play meanders pleasantly toward an external end of no significance. Work drives straight for an end beyond, that is pleasant because of its worth. The process of Art has an end but not beyond. Its end is in itself; and it is pleasurable in its activity because its true activity is a result. From play the artistic process differs because its end is significant; from work it differs because its end is in its activity, and because its activity possesses the pleasure of worth. It is like religion: a process continually begun, and in its incompleteness complete. Its ideal is incapable of temporal fulfilment, but still, in each moment of development, it is spiritually perfect.

Education, then, is an art—the art of the individual realizing himself as a member of a society whose tabernacle is here, but whose home is a house not built with hands. Education is the process of knowing the best, enjoying the best, producing the best in knowledge, conduct, and the arts. Realization, expression of self, physical, intellectual, social, emotional, is its means and end. It implies faith in a moral order and continuing process, of which it is itself an integral and active part.

It is remarkable with what persistency the race of educators has indulged extremes. There has been accorded from time to time an apostle of the golden mean. But his disciples have ever proceeded to the ulterior limit: Among the ancients to the pole of self-culture or to the pole of uncultured service; in the Dark Ages to the ideal of the cloister or the ideal of the castle, to joyless learning

or to feudal, and feminine, approval; in the Middle Ages to the bigotry of the obscurantist or the allurements of the material; in the Renaissance to contempt of the ancients or to neo-paganism—to theological quibbles or to Castiglione, to the bonfire of vanities or the carnal songs of Lorenzo; in the Reformation, to compulsory discipline or the apotheosis of natural freedom; in the succeeding age to pedantry or deportment. Still later appear Rousseau and the philanthropists with the "return to nature," the worship of individuality, the methods of coddling and play; and then Jacotot—and the equal fitness of all for higher education, the exaggeration of inductive methods, the chimerical equivalence of studies. And now has arrived the subordination of the art to pure profit, or vaudeville, or seminars for sucklings.

Always the fallacy of the extreme!—If education is not for the fit it must be for imbeciles; if not for culture, for Mammon; if not for knowledge, for power; if not of incunabula, of turbines and limericks; if not by the cat-o'-nine-tails, by gum-drops. Why the mean of a Plato or a Quintilian could not obtain—the sanity of Melanchthon or Erasmus, of Sturm or Comenius, of Milton or the Port Royal, of Pestalozzi, Friedrich Wolf, or Thomas Arnold,—Heaven only knows, which in its unscrutable purpose has permitted the race of educators, following the devices of their own heart, to go astray after idols.

To know, to feel, to do aright and best, each and all in all and each of the fields of human activity, that is the art of education.

If we exaggerate one of these functions to the neglect of the rest, our education is no longer an ideal but an idol. If, forgetting that education is an art, we try to make of

it a pleasant meandering, we set up the idol of Play. If, forgetting that the activity of Art is of intrinsic value and delight, we glorify the empty means and merit of drudgery, then we have erected the idol of Pedantry: we beat the air for discipline, shuffle in and out of corners the straw of arid learning, and choke ourselves with the dust of our own sweeping. If we fix our eyes on the cash, we bow to the tribal idol of Quick Returns. If we forget that, as an art, there is for education a progressive ideal and a law of progress, too, we bow to the idol of Caprice. We fall not only into the fallacies already enumerated but into the fallacy of the equivalence of studies, the fallacy of shifting, the fallacy of dissipation. In Art each factor is in relation to the rest, and all to the whole: we proceed fatuously upon the assumption that the part *is* the whole; and therefore each part equal to each; and therefore one study as good as any other. In Art the means, which is the end, is relative, progressive: we assume comfortably that studies are independent of each other, that we can take any in any order, pass an examination and have done. In Art the end, which is the means, is absolute and self-referred and ideal: we figure that, by dissipating our energies, we shall happen to hit, here and now, the ideal. Disregarding the progressive unity of education we bow to Caprice.

The idols of the academic market-place to-day are Caprice and Quick Returns and Play, and, in unexpected corners, Pedantry, against which in reaction these three were set up. Of these, Quick Returns was borrowed from the tribe; and not alone, for of this subvention are other tribal gods too numerous to rehearse—specially Numbers and Inevitable Grace and Incidental Issues and Parade. To one or other of these false worships are due



the wane of scholarship, the utilitarian tendency, the excrescence of non-academic activities, the neglected discipline in our education at the present time.

[NOTE.—“The blame,” Professor Gayley continues, “is by no means wholly to be laid at the door of the university. It attaches, also, to our system of elementary education.” The book discusses other idols of education, and then goes on to propose remedies. “Some of the remedies have already been implied. Others, knowing that it is not the better part of valor, I shall venture to suggest. Having heard that Ephraim was joined to his idols, I have not let him alone. I have committed the indiscretion of writing a book about him—a Zoar of a book, to be sure; but then, I have laid myself open. If now, in addition, I write of ideals, what will Ephraim call them?” Part of the answer to this question is, as Professor Gayley says, already in our minds. His complete discussion of it could be read with great interest by all college men and women.]

## XI

### AN ADDRESS TO FRESHMEN <sup>1</sup>

WILLIAM DE WITT HYDE

A graduate of Christ Church College, Oxford, recently remarked to me: "One can have such a good time at Oxford, that it's a great waste of opportunity to work." The humor of this remark, however, was turned to pathos when his wife told me sadly that: "An Oxford training does not fit a man for anything. There is absolutely nothing my husband can do"; and then I learned that the only thing this thirty-year-old husband and father had ever done was to hold a sinecure political office, which he lost when the Conservative party went out of power; and the only thing he ever expected to do was to loaf about summer resorts in summer, and winter resorts in winter, until his father should die and leave him the estate. Fortunately, American society does not tolerate in its sons so worthless a career; yet the philosophy of college life which was behind that worthlessness, translated into such phrases as "Don't let your studies interfere with your college life," and "C is a gentleman's grade," is coming to prevail in certain academic circles in America.

Put your studies first; and that for three reasons: First, you will have a better time in college. Hard work is a necessary background for the enjoyment of everything else.

<sup>1</sup> Delivered to the incoming class at Bowdoin College in 1908. Reprinted through the courtesy of William De Witt Hyde and of *The Independent*.

Second, after the first three months you will stand better with your fellows. At first there will appear to be cheaper roads to distinction, but their cheapness is soon found out. Scholarship alone will not give you the highest standing with your fellows; but you will not get their highest respect without showing that you can do well something that is intellectually difficult. Third, your future career depends upon it. On a little card, five by eight inches, every grade you get is recorded. Four or eight years hence, when you are looking for business or professional openings, that record will, to some extent, determine your start in life. But you are making a more permanent record than that upon the card; you are writing in the nerve-cells and films of your brain habits of accuracy, thoroughness, order, power, or their opposites; and twenty, thirty, forty years hence that record will make or mar your success in whatever you undertake.

Make up your minds, then, to take a rank of A in some subject, at least B in pretty nearly everything, and nothing lower than C in anything. If you ask why I place such stress upon these letters let me tell you what they mean.

A means that you have grasped a subject; thought about it; reacted upon it; made it your own; so that you can give it out again with the stamp of your individual insight upon it.

B means that you have taken it in, and can give it out again in the same form in which it came to you. In details, what you say and write sounds like what the A man says and writes; but the words come from the book or the teacher, not from you. No B man can ever make a scholar; he will be a receiver rather than a giver, a creature rather than a creator, to the end of his days.

C means the same as B, only that your second-hand

information is partial and fragmentary, rather than complete.

D means that you have been exposed to a subject often enough and long enough to leave on the plate of your memory a few faint traces, which the charity of the examiner is able to identify. Poor and pitiful as such an exhibition is, we allow a limited number of D's to count toward a degree.

E means total failure. Two E's bring a letter to your parents, stating that if the college were to allow you to remain longer, under the impression that you are getting an education, it would be receiving money under false pretenses.

Please keep these definitions in mind, and send a copy to your parents for reference when the reports come home.

Whatever you do, do not try to cheat in examinations or written work. If you succeed, you write fraud, fraud, fraud, all over your diploma; and if you get caught—there will be no diploma for you.

Your own interest and taste are so much more important factors than any cut-and-dried scheme of symmetrical development, that we leave you free to choose your studies. At the same time, the subjects open to choice are so limited by conflict of hours, and the requirement of a major and minors, that you can hardly miss the two essentials of wise choice; the consecutive, prolonged, concentrated pursuit of one or two main subjects, and some slight acquaintance with each of the three great human interests—language and literature, mathematics and science, and history, economics, and philosophy.

Having put study first, college life is a close second. College is a world artificially created for the express purpose of your development and enjoyment. You little

dream how rich and varied it is. I was myself surprised in looking over the record of the last senior class to find that the members of that class won four hundred and sixty-seven kinds of connection and distinction, of sufficient importance to be printed in the official records of college achievement. On the other hand, I was a little disappointed to find that one hundred and forty-two of these distinctions were taken by five men, showing that the law, "to him that hath shall be given," applies in college as well as out of it. Some colleges, like Wellesley, have attempted to limit the number of these non-academic points an individual student may win.

Aim to win some of these distinctions, but not too many. Concentrate on a few for which you care most. Do you ask what they are?

There are eight fraternities, each with its own chapter house and its committees for the control of its own affairs; twelve sectional clubs, covering most of the geographical divisions from which students come; a Christian Association, of which a majority of the students, and a much larger majority of the best fellows among them, are members, and which every one of you ought to join who wants help and support in living the life you know you ought to live, and is willing to give help and support to others in living the Christian life in college. There is the Deutscher Verein, the Rumania, the History Club, the Good Government Club, the Chemical Club, devoted to their special subjects; the Ibis, which represents the combination of high scholarship and good fellowship, and whose members, together with the undergraduate members of Phi Beta Kappa, are ex-officio members of the Faculty Club, a literary club composed of members of the faculty and their families.

There is the Interfraternity Council; the Athletic Council; the Debating Council; there is the Glee Club; the Mandolin Club; the Chapel Choir; the College Band; the Dramatic Club; the Press Club; the Republican Club; the Democratic Club. We have three papers—the *Quill* for literature, the *Orient* for college news, the *Bugle* for college records and college humor.

Besides, there are public functions with their management and their subjects; rallies, banquets, assemblies, Ivy Day, Class Day, college teas, fraternity house parties.

Last, but not least, come athletics—baseball, football, track, tennis, hockey, fencing, gymnastics, cross-country running, with first and second teams, captains, managers, and assistant managers.

With all these positions open to you in these four years, every one of you ought to find opportunity for association with your fellows in congenial pursuits, and training in leadership and responsibility in the conduct of affairs.

As I said at the outset, taken apart from study these things are trivial, and absorption in them amounts to little more than mental dissipation; but taken in their proper relation to study, which is your main purpose here, the social experience and capacity for leadership they give are so valuable that if you take no responsible and effective part in them, you miss the pleasantest, and in some respects the most profitable, part of what the college offers you.

I suppose I ought to say a word about college temptations, though the man who enters heartily into his studies and these college activities will not be much troubled by them. That is the case with nine-tenths of the men who come here. But in every class there is a weaker five or ten per cent, and I suppose this class of 1912 is no exception.

I suppose there are half a dozen of you who are already addicted to vicious practises, and half a dozen more weak fellows, who are only waiting for some one to show them the ways before they fall into them. I do not know yet who you are; but within three months everybody here will know. Then we shall first do our best to change your plans; and if that fails, we shall promptly ask you to withdraw. You all know what these temptations are: they are the temptations of youth everywhere—smoking, drinking, gambling, and licentiousness.

To begin with the least serious. There is nothing intrinsically evil in the inhalation and exhalation of smoke. Among mature men, some are seriously injured by it; some apparently suffer little harm. Almost all youth of your age are seriously injured by it.

In the first place, it weakens your heart and makes your nerves unsteady. In the second place, it destroys your power of mental concentration and makes you scatter-brained. These evils are generally recognized. The most serious consequence is not so well understood. The habitual smoker tends to become content with himself as he is; he ceases to wrestle earnestly with moral and spiritual problems; falls out of the struggle to be continually rising to heights hitherto unattained. For the man who has attained his moral growth (if such there are) it is not so serious; but for the youth of eighteen or twenty it means arrested spiritual development, and an easy-going compromise instead of the more strenuous ideals. As you go up in a college class, the proportion of smokers falls; as you go down, it rises. While the college does not make smoking directly a subject of discipline, it is no mere coincidence that nineteen out of every twenty students whom we send away for either low scholarship or bad con-

duct are inveterate smokers. If you train for an athletic team, you have to stop smoking while training; if you are in the most earnest training for life, you will leave it off altogether.

Drinking, however excusable a consolation for hard-worked men of meagre mental and social resources, is inexcusable in young men with such a wealth of physical, intellectual, and social stimulus about them as college life affords. All the fraternities, of their own accord, exclude it from their chapter houses. Any student who injures himself or others by this abuse is liable to be requested to leave college in consequence.

Gambling is so utterly inconsistent with the purpose for which you come here, and, when once started, spreads so insidiously, that we always remove a student from college as soon as we discover that he is addicted to the practise.

Licentiousness involves such a hardening of the heart of the offender, such an antisocial attitude toward its victims, and brings such scandal on the institution, that "notorious and evil livers" in this respect are quietly, but firmly, removed at the end of an early year or term.

In dealing with these offenses, we hold no legal trial; we offer no formal proof of specific acts; we do not always succeed in convincing either students or parents of the justice of our action. In a little community like this, where everybody is intensely interested in everybody else, we know with absolute certainty; and, while we cannot always make public the nature and source of our knowledge, we act upon that knowledge. If this seems arbitrary, if any one of you does not wish to take his chance of summary dismissal, without formal proof of specific charges, on any of these grounds, he would do well to with-



draw voluntarily at the outset. This is our way of dealing with these matters, and you have fair warning in advance.

Such is college work; college life; college temptation. A million dollars in buildings and equipment; another million of endowment; the services of a score of trained, devoted teachers; the fellowship of hundreds of alumni, fellow students and younger brothers who will follow in the years to come; the name and fame, the traditions and influence of this ancient seat of learning; the rich and varied physical, intellectual, and social life among yourselves; all are freely yours on the single condition that you use them for your own good, and to the harm of no one else.

## XII

### KNOWLEDGE VIEWED IN RELATION TO LEARNING<sup>1</sup>

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

#### I

It were well if the English, like the Greek language, possessed some definite word to express, simply and generally, intellectual proficiency or perfection, such as "health," as used with reference to the animal frame, and "virtue," with reference to our moral nature. I am not able to find such a term;—talent, ability, genius, belong distinctly to the raw material, which is the subject-matter, not to that excellence which is the result of exercise and training. When we turn, indeed, to the particular kinds of intellectual perfection, words are forthcoming for our purpose, as, for instance, judgment, taste, and skill; yet even these belong, for the most part, to powers or habits bearing upon practise or upon art, and not to any perfect condition of the intellect, considered in itself. Wisdom, again, is certainly a more comprehensive word than any other, but it has a direct relation to conduct, and to human life. Knowledge, indeed, and science express purely intellectual ideas, but still not a state or quality of the intellect; for knowledge, in its ordinary sense, is but one of its circumstances, denoting a possession or a habit; and science has been appropriated to

<sup>1</sup> From *The Idea of a University*, part I, discourse VI.

the subject-matter of the intellect, instead of belonging in English, as it ought to do, to the intellect itself. The consequence is that, on an occasion like this, many words are necessary, in order, first, to bring out and convey what surely is no difficult idea in itself,—that of the cultivation of the intellect as an end; next, in order to recommend what surely is no unreasonable object; and lastly, to describe and make the mind realize the particular perfection in which that object consists. Every one knows practically what are the constituents of health or of virtue, and every one recognizes health and virtue as ends to be pursued; it is otherwise with intellectual excellence, and this must be my excuse if I seem to any one to be bestowing a good deal of labor on a preliminary matter.

In default of a recognized term, I have called the perfection or virtue of the intellect by the name of philosophy, philosophical knowledge, enlargement of mind, or illumination; terms which are not uncommonly given to it by writers of this day: but, whatever name we bestow on it, it is, I believe, as a matter of history, the business of a university to make this intellectual culture its direct scope, or to employ itself in the education of the intellect,—just as the work of a hospital lies in healing the sick or wounded, of a riding or fencing school or of a gymnasium in exercising the limbs, of an almshouse in aiding and solacing the old, of an orphanage in protecting innocence, of a penitentiary in restoring the guilty. I say, a university, taken in its bare idea, and before we view it as an instrument of the church, has this object and this mission; it contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production; it professes to exercise the mind neither in art nor in duty; its function is intellectual culture; here it may leave its scholars,

and it has done its work when it has done as much as this. It educates the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out toward truth, and to grasp it.

## II

This, I said in my foregoing discourse, was the object of a university, viewed in itself, and apart from the Catholic Church, or from the state, or from any other power which may use it; and I illustrated this in various ways. I said that the intellect must have an excellence of its own, for there was nothing which had not its specific good; that the word "educate" would not be used of intellectual culture, as it is used, had not the intellect had an end of its own; that, had it not such an end, there would be no meaning in calling certain intellectual exercises "liberal," in contrast with "useful," as is commonly done; that the very notion of a philosophical temper implied it, for it threw us back upon research and system as ends in themselves, distinct from effects and works of any kind; that a philosophical scheme of knowledge, or system of sciences, could not, from the nature of the case, issue in any one definite art or pursuit as its end; and that, on the other hand, the discovery and contemplation of truth, to which research and systematizing led, were surely sufficient ends, though nothing beyond them were added, and that they had ever been accounted sufficient by mankind.

Here, then, I take up the subject; and, having determined that the cultivation of the intellect is an end distinct and sufficient in itself, and that, so far as words go, it is an enlargement or illumination, I proceed to inquire what this mental breadth, or power, or light, or philoso-

phy consists in. A hospital heals a broken limb or cures a fever: what does an institution effect which professes the health, not of the body, not of the soul, but of the intellect? What is this good, which in former times, as well as our own, has been found worth the notice, the appropriation, of the Catholic Church?

I have then to investigate, in the discourses which follow, those qualities and characteristics of the intellect in which its cultivation issues or rather consists; and, with a view of assisting myself in this undertaking, I shall recur to certain questions which have already been touched upon. These questions are three, viz.: the relation of intellectual culture, first, to *mere* knowledge; secondly, to *professional* knowledge; and thirdly, to *religious* knowledge. In other words, are *acquirements* and *attainments* the scope of a university education? or *expertness in particular arts and pursuits*? or *moral and religious proficiency*? or something besides these three? These questions I shall examine in succession, with the purpose I have mentioned; and I hope to be excused if in this anxious undertaking I am led to repeat what, either in these discourses or elsewhere, I have already put upon paper. And first, of *Mere Knowledge*, or learning, and its connection with intellectual illumination or philosophy.

### III

I suppose the *primâ facie* view which the public at large would take of a university, considering it as a place of education, is nothing more or less than a place for acquiring a great deal of knowledge on a great many subjects. Memory is one of the first developed of the mental faculties; a boy's business when he goes to school

is to learn, that is, to store up things in his memory. For some years his intellect is little more than an instrument for taking in facts, or a receptacle for storing them; he welcomes them as fast as they come to him; he lives on what is without; he has his eyes ever about him; he has a lively susceptibility of impressions; he imbibes information of every kind; and little does he make his own in a true sense of the word, living rather upon his neighbors all around him. He has opinions, religious, political, and literary, and, for a boy, is very positive in them and sure about them; but he gets them from his schoolfellows, or his masters, or his parents, as the case may be. Such as he is in his other relations, such also is he in his school exercises; his mind is observant, sharp, ready, retentive, he is almost passive in the acquisition of knowledge. I say this in no disparagement of the idea of a clever boy. Geography, chronology, history, language, natural history, he heaps up the matter of these studies as treasures for a future day. It is the seven years of plenty with him: he gathers in by handfuls, like the Egyptians, without counting; and though, as time goes on, there is exercise for his argumentative powers in the elements of mathematics, and for his taste in the poets and orators, still, while at school, or at least till quite the last years of his time, he acquires, and little more; and when he is leaving for the university he is mainly the creature of foreign influences and circumstances, and made up of accidents, homogeneous or not, as the case may be. Moreover, the moral habits, which are a boy's praise, encourage and assist this result; that is, diligence, assiduity, regularity, dispatch, persevering application; for these are the direct conditions of acquisition, and naturally lead to it. Acquirements, again, are emphatically producible, and at a

moment; they are a something to show, both for master and scholar; an audience, even though ignorant themselves of the subjects of an examination, can comprehend when questions are answered and when they are not. Here again is a reason why mental culture is in the minds of men identified with the acquisition of knowledge.

The same notion possesses the public mind, when it passes on from the thought of a school to that of a university: and with the best of reasons so far as this, that there is no true culture without acquirements, and that philosophy presupposes knowledge. It requires a great deal of reading, or a wide range of information, to warrant us in putting forth our opinions on any serious subject; and without such learning the most original mind may be able indeed to dazzle, to amuse, to refute, to perplex, but not to come to any useful result or any trustworthy conclusion. There are, indeed, persons who profess a different view of the matter, and even act upon it. Every now and then you will find a person of vigorous or fertile mind, who relies upon his own resources, despises all former authors, and gives the world, with the utmost fearlessness, his views upon religion, or history, or any other popular subject. And his works may sell for a while; he may get a name in his day; but this will be all. His readers are sure to find in the long run that his doctrines are mere theories, and not the expression of facts, that they are chaff instead of bread, and then his popularity drops as suddenly as it rose.

Knowledge, then, is the indispensable condition of expansion of mind and the instrument of attaining to it; this cannot be denied, it is ever to be insisted on; I begin with it as a first principle; however, the very truth of it carries men too far, and confirms to them the notion

that it is the whole of the matter. A narrow mind is thought to be that which contains little knowledge; and an enlarged mind, that which holds a great deal; and what seems to put the matter beyond dispute is the fact of the great number of studies which are pursued in a university, by its very profession. Lectures are given on every kind of subject; examinations are held; prizes awarded. There are moral, metaphysical, physical professors; professors of languages, of history, of mathematics, of experimental science. Lists of questions are published, wonderful for their range and depth, variety and difficulty; treatises are written, which carry upon their very face the evidence of extensive reading or multifarious information; what, then, is wanting for mental culture to a person of large reading and scientific attainments? What is grasp of mind but acquirement? Where shall philosophical repose be found but in the consciousness and enjoyment of large intellectual possessions?

And yet this notion is, I conceive, a mistake, and my present business is to show that it is one, and that the end of a liberal education is not mere knowledge, or knowledge considered in its *matter*; and I shall best attain my object by actually setting down some cases, which will be generally granted to be instances of the process of enlightenment or enlargement of mind, and others which are not; and thus, by the comparison, you will be able to judge for yourselves, gentlemen, whether knowledge, that is, acquirement, is after all the real principle of the enlargement, or whether that principle is not rather something beyond it.



## IV

For instance,<sup>1</sup> let a person, whose experience has hitherto been confined to the more calm and unpretending scenery of these islands, whether here or in England, go for the first time into parts where physical nature puts on her wilder and more awful forms, whether at home or abroad, as into mountainous districts; or let one, who has ever lived in a quiet village, go for the first time to a great metropolis—then I suppose he will have a sensation which perhaps he never had before. He has a feeling not in addition or increase of former feelings, but of something different in its nature. He will perhaps be borne forward, and find for a time that he has lost his bearings. He has made a certain progress, and he has a consciousness of mental enlargement; he does not stand where he did, he has a new centre, and a range of thoughts to which he was before a stranger.

Again, the view of the heavens which the telescope opens upon us, if allowed to fill and possess the mind, may almost whirl it round and make it dizzy. It brings in a flood of ideas, and is rightly called an intellectual enlargement, whatever is meant by the term.

And so again, the sight of beasts of prey and other foreign animals, their strangeness, the originality (if I may use the term) of their forms and gestures and habits and their variety and independence of each other, throw us out of ourselves into another creation, and as if under another Creator, if I may so express the temptation which may come on the mind. We seem to have new faculties,

<sup>1</sup>The pages which follow are taken almost *verbatim* from the author's 14th (Oxford) University Sermon, which, at the time of writing this discourse, he did not expect ever to reprint.

or a new exercise for our faculties, by this addition to our knowledge; like a prisoner, who, having been accustomed to wear manacles or fetters, suddenly finds his arms and legs free.

Hence physical science generally, in all its departments, as bringing before us the exuberant riches and resources, yet the orderly course, of the universe, elevates and excites the student, and at first, I may say, almost takes away his breath, while in time it exercises a tranquillizing influence upon him.

Again, the study of history is said to enlarge and enlighten the mind, and why? Because, as I conceive, it gives it a power of judging of passing events, and of all events, and a conscious superiority over them, which before it did not possess.

And in like manner, what is called seeing the world, entering into active life, going into society, travelling, gaining acquaintance with the various classes of the community, coming into contact with the principles and modes of thought of various parties, interests, and races, their views, aims, habits and manners, their religious creeds and forms of worship—gaining experience how various yet how alike men are, how low-minded, how bad, how opposed, yet how confident in their opinions; all this exerts a perceptible influence upon the mind, which it is impossible to mistake, be it good or be it bad, and is popularly called its enlargement.

And then again, the first time the mind comes across the arguments and speculations of unbelievers, and feels what a novel light they cast upon what he has hitherto accounted sacred; and still more, if it gives in to them and embraces them, and throws off as so much prejudice what it has hitherto held, and, as if waking from a dream,

begins to realize to its imagination that there is now no such thing as law and the transgression of law, that sin is a phantom and punishment a bugbear, that it is free to sin, free to enjoy the world and the flesh; and still further, when it does enjoy them, and reflects that it may think and hold just what it will, that "the world is all before it where to choose," and what system to build up as its own private persuasion; when this torrent of wilful thoughts rushes over and inundates it, who will deny that the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or what the mind takes for knowledge, has made it one of the gods, with a sense of expansion and elevation—an intoxication in reality, still, so far as the subjective state of the mind goes, an illumination? Hence the fanaticism of individuals or nations who suddenly cast off their Maker. Their eyes are opened; and, like the judgment-stricken king in the tragedy, they see two suns and a magic universe, out of which they look back upon their former state of faith and innocence with a sort of contempt and indignation, as if they were then but fools and the dupes of imposture.

On the other hand, religion has its own enlargement, and an enlargement, not of tumult, but of peace. It is often remarked of uneducated persons, who have hitherto thought little of the unseen world, that, on their turning to God, looking into themselves, regulating their hearts, reforming their conduct, and meditating on death and judgment, heaven and hell, they seem to become, in point of intellect, different beings from what they were. Before, they took things as they came, and thought no more of one thing than another. But now every event has a meaning; they have their own estimate of whatever happens to them; they are mindful of times and seasons, and compare the present with the past; and the world,

no longer dull, monotonous, unprofitable, and hopeless, is a various and complicated drama, with parts and an object, and an awful moral.

## V

Now from these instances, to which many more might be added, it is plain, first, that the communication of knowledge certainly is either a condition or the means of that sense of enlargement or enlightenment, of which at this day we hear so much in certain quarters: this cannot be denied; but next, it is equally plain that such communication is not the whole of the process. The enlargement consists, not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and toward and among those new ideas, which are rushing in upon it. It is the action of a formative power, reducing to order and meaning the matter of our acquirements; it is a making the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own, or, to use a familiar word, it is a digestion of what we receive, into the substance of our previous state of thought; and without this no enlargement is said to follow. There is no enlargement, unless there be a comparison of ideas one with another, as they come before the mind, and a systematizing of them. We feel our minds to be growing and expanding *then*, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already. It is not the mere addition to our knowledge that is the illumination; but the locomotion, the movement onward, of that mental centre to which both what we know and what we are learning, the accumulating mass of our acquirements, gravitates. And therefore a truly

great intellect, and recognized to be such by the common opinion of mankind, such as the intellect of Aristotle, or of St. Thomas, or of Newton, or of Goethe (I purposely take instances within and without the Catholic pale, when I would speak of the intellect as such), is one which takes a connected view of old and new, past and present, far and near, and which has an insight into the influence of all these one on another; without which there is no whole, and no centre. It possesses the knowledge, not only of things, but also of their mutual and true relations; knowledge, not merely considered as acquirement, but as philosophy.

Accordingly, when this analytical, distributive, harmonizing process is away, the mind experiences no enlargement, and is not reckoned as enlightened or comprehensive, whatever it may add to its knowledge. For instance, a great memory, as I have already said, does not make a philosopher, any more than a dictionary can be called a grammar. There are men who embrace in their minds a vast multitude of ideas, but with little sensibility about their real relations toward each other. These may be antiquarians, annalists, naturalists; they may be learned in the law; they may be versed in statistics; they are most useful in their own place; I should shrink from speaking disrespectfully of them; still, there is nothing in such attainments to guarantee the absence of narrowness of mind. If they are nothing more than well-read men, or men of information, they have not what specially deserves the name of culture of mind, or fulfils the type of liberal education.

In like manner, we sometimes fall in with persons who have seen much of the world, and of the men who, in their day, have played a conspicuous part in it, but who

generalize nothing, and have no observation, in the true sense of the word. They abound in information in detail, curious and entertaining, about men and things; and, having lived under the influence of no very clear or settled principles, religious or political, they speak of every one and every thing only as so many phenomena, which are complete in themselves and lead to nothing, not discussing them, or teaching any truth, or instructing the hearer, but simply talking. No one would say that these persons, well informed as they are, had attained to any great culture of intellect or to philosophy.

The case is the same still more strikingly where the persons in question are beyond dispute men of inferior powers and deficient education. Perhaps they have been much in foreign countries, and they receive, in a passive, otiose, unfruitful way, the various facts which are forced upon them there. Seafaring men, for example, range from one end of the earth to the other; but the multiplicity of external objects, which they have encountered, forms no symmetrical and consistent picture upon their imagination; they see the tapestry of human life, as it were, on the wrong side, and it tells no story. They sleep, and they rise up, and they find themselves, now in Europe, now in Asia; they see visions of great cities and wild regions; they are in the marts of commerce, or amid the islands of the South; they gaze on Pompey's Pillar, or on the Andes; and nothing which meets them carries them forward or backward, to any idea beyond itself. Nothing has a drift or relation; nothing has a history or a promise. Everything stands by itself, and comes and goes in its turn, like the shifting scenes of a show, which leave the spectator where he was. Perhaps you are near such a man on a particular occasion, and expect him to

be shocked or perplexed at something which occurs; but one thing is much the same to him as another, or, if he is perplexed, it is as not knowing what to say, whether it is right to admire, or to ridicule, or to disapprove, while conscious that some expression of opinion is expected from him; for in fact he has no standard of judgment at all, and no landmarks to guide him to a conclusion. Such is mere acquisition, and, I repeat, no one would dream of calling it philosophy.

## VI

Instances, such as these, confirm, by the contrast, the conclusion I have already drawn from those which preceded them. That only is true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence. Thus is that form of universal knowledge, of which I have on a former occasion spoken, set up in the individual intellect, and constitutes its perfection. Possessed of this real illumination, the mind never views any part of the extended subject-matter of knowledge without recollecting that it is but a part, or without the associations which spring from this recollection. It makes everything in some sort lead to everything else; it would communicate the image of the whole to every separate portion, till that whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, everywhere pervading and penetrating its component parts, and giving them one definite meaning. Just as our bodily organs, when mentioned, recall their function in the body, as the word "creation" suggests the Creator, and "subjects" a

sovereign, so, in the mind of the philosopher, as we are abstractedly conceiving of him, the elements of the physical and moral world, sciences, arts, pursuits, ranks, offices, events, opinions, individualities, are all viewed as one, with correlative functions, and as gradually by successive combinations converging, one and all, to the true centre.

To have even a portion of this illuminative reason and true philosophy is the highest state to which nature can aspire in the way of intellect; it puts the mind above the influences of chance and necessity, above anxiety, suspense, unsettlement, and superstition, which is the lot of the many. Men, whose minds are possessed with some one object, take exaggerated views of its importance, are feverish in the pursuit of it, make it the measure of things which are utterly foreign to it, and are startled and despond if it happens to fail them. They are ever in alarm or in transport. Those, on the other hand, who have no object or principle whatever to hold by, lose their way, every step they take. They are thrown out, and do not know what to think or say, at every fresh juncture; they have no view of persons, or occurrences, or facts, which come suddenly upon them, and they hang upon the opinion of others, for want of internal resources. But the intellect, which has been disciplined to the perfection of its powers, which knows, and thinks while it knows, which has learned to leaven the dense mass of facts and events with the elastic force of reason, such an intellect cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be at a loss, cannot but be patient, collected, and majestically calm, because it discerns the end in every beginning, the origin in every end, the law in every interruption, the limit in each delay; because it ever knows where it stands, and how its path lies from one point to



another. It is the *τετραγώνος* of the Peripatetic, and has the "nil admirari" of the Stoic,—

"Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum  
Subiecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari."

There are men who, when in difficulties, originate at the moment vast ideas or dazzling projects; who, under the influence of excitement, are able to cast a light, almost as if from inspiration, on a subject or course of action which comes before them; who have a sudden presence of mind equal to any emergency, rising with the occasion, and an undaunted magnanimous bearing, and an energy and keenness which is but made intense by opposition. This is genius, this is heroism; it is the exhibition of a natural gift, which no culture can teach, at which no institution can aim; here, on the contrary, we are concerned, not with mere nature, but with training and teaching. That perfection of the intellect, which is the result of education, and its *beau idéal*, to be imparted to individuals in their respective measures, is the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them, each in its place, and with its own characteristics upon it. It is almost prophetic from its knowledge of history; it is almost heart-searching from its knowledge of human nature; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom from littleness and prejudice; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation, so intimate is it with the eternal order of things and the music of the spheres.

## VII

And now, if I may take for granted that the true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a university is not learning or acquirement, but rather, is thought or reason exercised upon knowledge, or what may be called philosophy, I shall be in a position to explain the various mistakes which at the present day beset the subject of university education.

I say, then, if we would improve the intellect, first of all, we must ascend; we cannot gain real knowledge on a level; we must generalize, we must reduce to method, we must have a grasp of principles, and group and shape our acquisitions by means of them. It matters not whether our field of operation be wide or limited; in every case, to command it, is to mount above it. Who has not felt the irritation of mind and impatience created by a deep, rich country, visited for the first time, with winding lanes, and high hedges, and green steeps, and tangled woods, and everything smiling indeed, but in a maze? The same feeling comes upon us in a strange city, when we have no map of its streets. Hence you hear of practised travellers, when they first come into a place, mounting some high hill or church tower, by way of reconnoitring its neighborhood. In like manner, you must be above your knowledge, not under it, or it will oppress you; and the more you have of it, the greater will be the load. The learning of a Salmasius or a Burman, unless you are its master, will be your tyrant. "Imperat aut servit"; if you can wield it with a strong arm, it is a great weapon; otherwise,

"Vis consili expers  
Mole ruit sua."

You will be overwhelmed, like Tarpeia, by the heavy wealth which you have exacted from tributary generations.

Instances abound; there are authors who are as pointless as they are inexhaustible in their literary resources. They measure knowledge by bulk, as it lies in the rude block, without symmetry, without design. How many commentators are there on the classics, how many on Holy Scripture, from whom we rise up, wondering at the learning which has passed before us, and wondering why it passed! How many writers are there of ecclesiastical history, such as Mosheim or Du Pin, who, breaking up their subject into details, destroy its life, and defraud us of the whole by their anxiety about the parts! The sermons, again, of the English divines in the seventeenth century, how often are they mere repertories of miscellaneous and officious learning! Of course Catholics also may read without thinking; and, in their case, equally as with Protestants, it holds good, that such knowledge is unworthy of the name, knowledge which they have not thought through, and thought out. Such readers are only possessed by their knowledge, not possessed of it; nay, in matter of fact they are often even carried away by it, without any volition of their own. Recollect, the memory can tyrannize as well as the imagination. Derangement, I believe, has been considered as a loss of control over the sequence of ideas. The mind, once set in motion, is henceforth deprived of the power of initiation, and becomes the victim of a train of associations, one thought suggesting another, in the way of cause and effect, as if by a mechanical process, or some physical necessity. No one, who has had experience of men of studious habits, but must recognize the existence of a parallel phenomenon in the case of those who have over-

stimulated the memory. In such persons reason acts almost as feebly and as impotently as in the madman; once fairly started on any subject whatever, they have no power of self-control; they passively endure the succession of impulses which are evolved out of the original exciting cause; they are passed on from one idea to another and go steadily forward, plodding along one line of thought in spite of the amplest concessions of the hearer, or wandering from it in endless digression in spite of his remonstrances. Now, if, as is very certain, no one would envy the madman the glow and originality of his conceptions, why must we extol the cultivation of that intellect, which is the prey, not indeed of barren fancies but of barren facts, of random intrusions from without, though not of morbid imaginations from within? And in thus speaking, I am not denying that a strong and ready memory is in itself a real treasure; I am not disparaging a well-stored mind, though it be nothing besides, provided it be sober, any more than I would despise a bookseller's shop:—it is of great value to others, even when not so to the owner. Nor am I banishing, far from it, the possessors of deep and multifarious learning from my ideal university; they adorn it in the eyes of men; I do but say that they constitute no type of the results at which it aims; that it is no great gain to the intellect to have enlarged the memory at the expense of faculties which are indisputably higher.

### VIII

Nor indeed am I supposing that there is any great danger, at least in this day, of overeducation; the danger is on the other side. I will tell you, gentlemen, what has been the practical error of the last twenty years,—not to

load the memory of the student with a mass of undigested knowledge, but to force upon him so much that he has rejected all. It has been the error of distracting and enfeebling the mind by an unmeaning profusion of subjects; of implying that a smattering in a dozen branches of study is not shallowness, which it really is, but enlargement, which it is not; of considering an acquaintance with the learned names of things and persons, and the possession of clever duodecimos, and attendance on eloquent lecturers, and membership with scientific institutions, and the sight of the experiments of a platform and the specimens of a museum, that all this was not dissipation of mind, but progress. All things now are to be learned at once, not first one thing, then another, not one well, but many badly. Learning is to be without exertion, without attention, without toil; without grounding, without advance, without finishing. There is to be nothing individual in it; and this, forsooth, is the wonder of the age. What the steam-engine does with matter, the printing-press is to do with mind; it is to act mechanically, and the population is to be passively, almost unconsciously enlightened, by the mere multiplication and dissemination of volumes. Whether it be the schoolboy, or the school-girl, or the youth at college, or the mechanic in the town, or the politician in the senate, all have been the victims in one way or other of this most preposterous and pernicious of delusions. Wise men have lifted up their voices in vain; and at length, lest their own institutions should be outshone and should disappear in the folly of the hour, they have been obliged, as far as they could with a good conscience, to humor a spirit which they could not withstand, and make temporizing concessions at which they could not but inwardly smile.

It must not be supposed that, because I so speak, therefore I have some sort of fear of the education of the people: on the contrary, the more education they have, the better, so that it is really education. Nor am I an enemy to the cheap publication of scientific and literary works, which is now in vogue: on the contrary, I consider it a great advantage, convenience, and gain; that is, to those to whom education has given a capacity for using them. Further, I consider such innocent recreations as science and literature are able to furnish will be a very fit occupation of the thoughts and the leisure of young persons, and may be made the means of keeping them from bad employments and bad companions. Moreover, as to that superficial acquaintance with chemistry, and geology, and astronomy, and political economy, and modern history, and biography, and other branches of knowledge, which periodical literature and occasional lectures and scientific institutions diffuse through the community, I think it a graceful accomplishment, and a suitable, nay, in this day a necessary accomplishment, in the case of educated men. Nor, lastly, am I disparaging or discouraging the thorough acquisition of any one of these studies, or denying that, as far as it goes, such thorough acquisition is a real education of the mind. All I say is, call things by their right names, and do not confuse together ideas which are essentially different. A thorough knowledge of one science and a superficial acquaintance with many, are not the same thing; a smattering of a hundred things or a memory for detail is not a philosophical or comprehensive view. Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. Do not say, the people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humor,

or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations of mind, are not a great gain; but they are not education. You may as well call drawing and fencing education, as a general knowledge of botany or conchology. Stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime, and a resource to the idle, but it is not education; it does not form or cultivate the intellect. Education is a high word; it is the preparation for knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation. We require intellectual eyes to know withal, as bodily eyes for sight. We need both objects and organs intellectual; we cannot gain them without setting about it; we cannot gain them in our sleep, or by haphazard. The best telescope does not dispense with eyes; the printing-press or the lecture-room will assist us greatly, but we must be true to ourselves; we must be parties in the work. A university is, according to the usual designation, an Alma Mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill.

## IX

I protest to you, gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called university, which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence, and gave its degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a university which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years, and then sent them away as the University of Oxford is said to have done some sixty years since; if I were asked which of these two methods was the better discipline of

the intellect,—mind, I do not say which is *morally* the better, for it is plain that compulsory study must be a good and idleness an intolerable mischief,—but if I must determine which of the two courses was the more successful in training, moulding, enlarging the mind, which sent out men the more fitted for their secular duties, which produced better public men, men of the world, men whose names would descend to posterity, I have no hesitation in giving the preference to that university which did nothing, over that which exacted of its members an acquaintance with every science under the sun. And, paradox as this may seem, still if results be the test of systems, the influence of the public schools and colleges of England, in the course of the last century, at least will bear out one side of the contrast as I have drawn it. What would come, on the other hand, of the ideal systems of education which have fascinated the imagination of this age, could they ever take effect, and whether they would not produce a generation frivolous, narrow-minded, and resourceless, intellectually considered, is a fair subject for debate; but so far is certain, that the universities and scholastic establishments, to which I refer, and which did little more than bring together first boys and then youths in large numbers, these institutions, with miserable deformities on the side of morals, with a hollow profession of Christianity and a heathen code of ethics,—I say, at least they can boast of a succession of heroes and statesmen, of literary men and philosophers, of men conspicuous for great natural virtues, for habits of business, for knowledge of life, for practical judgment, for cultivated tastes, for accomplishments, who have made England what it is,—able to subdue the earth, able to domineer over Catholics.

How is this to be explained? I suppose as follows:



When a multitude of young men, keen, open-hearted, sympathetic, and observant, as young men are, come together and freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them; the conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting, day by day. An infant has to learn the meaning of the information which its senses convey to it, and this seems to be its employment. It fancies all that the eye presents to it to be close to it, till it actually learns the contrary, and thus by practise does it ascertain the relations and uses of those first elements of knowledge which are necessary for its animal existence. A parallel teaching is necessary for our social being, and it is secured by a large school or a college; and this effect may be fairly called in its own department an enlargement of mind. It is seeing the world on a small field with little trouble; for the pupils or students come from very different places, and with widely different notions, and there is much to generalize, much to adjust, much to eliminate, there are interrelations to be defined, and conventional rules to be established, in the process, by which the whole assemblage is moulded together, and gains one tone and one character.

Let it be clearly understood, I repeat it, that I am not taking into account moral or religious considerations; I am but saying that that youthful community will constitute a whole, it will embody a specific idea, it will represent a doctrine, it will administer a code of conduct, and it will furnish principles of thought and action. It will give birth to a living teaching, which in course of time will take the shape of a self-perpetuating tradition, or a *genius loci*, as it is sometimes called; which haunts

the home where it has been born, and which imbues and forms, more or less, and one by one, every individual who is successively brought under its shadow. Thus it is that, independent of direct instruction on the part of superiors, there is a sort of self-education in the academic institutions of Protestant England; a characteristic tone of thought, a recognized standard of judgment is found in them, which, as developed in the individual who is submitted to it, becomes a twofold source of strength to him, both from the distinct stamp it impresses on his mind, and from the bond of union which it creates between him and others,—effects which are shared by the authorities of the place, for they themselves have been educated in it, and at all times are exposed to the influence of its ethical atmosphere. Here, then, is a real teaching, whatever be its standards and principles, true or false; and it at least tends toward cultivation of the intellect; it at least recognizes that knowledge is something more than a sort of passive reception of scraps and details; it is a something, and it does a something, which never will issue from the most strenuous efforts of a set of teachers, with no mutual sympathies and no intercommunion, of a set of examiners with no opinions which they dare profess, and with no common principles, who are teaching or questioning a set of youths who do not know them, and do not know each other, on a large number of subjects, different in kind, and connected by no wide philosophy, three times a week, or three times a year, or once in three years, in chill lecture-rooms or on a pompous anniversary.

## X

Nay, self-education in any shape, in the most restricted sense, is preferable to a system of teaching which, professing so much, really does so little for the mind. Shut your college gates against the votary of knowledge, throw him back upon the searchings and the efforts of his own mind; he will gain by being spared an entrance into your Babel. Few indeed there are who can dispense with the stimulus and support of instructors, or will do anything at all, if left to themselves. And fewer still (though such great minds are to be found) who will not, from such unassisted attempts, contract a self-reliance and a self-esteem, which are not only moral evils, but serious hindrances to the attainment of truth. And next to none, perhaps, or none, who will not be reminded from time to time of the disadvantage under which they lie, by their imperfect grounding, by the breaks, deficiencies, and irregularities of their knowledge, by the eccentricity of opinion and the confusion of principle which they exhibit. They will be too often ignorant of what every one knows and takes for granted, of that multitude of small truths which fall upon the mind like dust, impalpable and ever accumulating; they may be unable to converse, they may argue perversely, they may pride themselves on their worst paradoxes or their grossest truisms, they may be full of their own mode of viewing things, unwilling to be put out of their way, slow to enter into the minds of others;—but, with these and whatever other liabilities upon their heads, they are likely to have more thought, more mind, more philosophy, more true enlargement, than those earnest but ill-used persons who are forced to load their minds

with a score of subjects against an examination, who have too much on their hands to indulge themselves in thinking or investigation, who devour premise and conclusion together with indiscriminate greediness, who hold whole sciences on faith, and commit demonstrations to memory, and who too often, as might be expected, when their period of education is passed, throw up all they have learned in disgust, having gained nothing really by their anxious labors except, perhaps, the habit of application.

Yet such is the better specimen of the fruit of that ambitious system which has of late years been making way among us: for its result on ordinary minds, and on the common run of students, is less satisfactory still; they leave their place of education simply dissipated and relaxed by the multiplicity of subjects, which they have never really mastered, and so shallow as not even to know their shallowness. How much better, I say, is it for the active and thoughtful intellect, where such is to be found, to eschew the college and the university altogether, than to submit to a drudgery so ignoble, a mockery so contumelious! How much more profitable for the independent mind, after the mere rudiments of education, to range through a library at random, taking down books as they meet him, and pursuing the trains of thought which his mother wit suggests! How much healthier to wander into the fields, and there with the exiled Prince to find "tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks!" How much more genuine an education is that of the poor boy in the poem<sup>1</sup>—a poem, whether in conception or in

<sup>1</sup> Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*. This poem, let me say, I read on its first publication, above thirty years ago, with extreme delight, and have never lost my love of it; and on taking it up lately, found I was even more touched

execution, one of the most touching in our language—who, not in the wide world, but ranging day by day around his widowed mother's home, "a dexterous gleaner" in a narrow field, and with only such slender outfit

"as the village school and books a few  
Supplied,"

contrived from the beach, and the quay, and the fisher's boat, and the inn's fireside, and the tradesman's shop, and the shepherd's walk, and the smuggler's hut, and the mossy moor, and the screaming gulls, and the restless waves, to fashion for himself a philosophy and a poetry of his own!

But, in a large subject, I am exceeding my necessary limits. Gentlemen, I must conclude abruptly; and postpone any summing up of my argument, should that be necessary, to another day.

by it than heretofore. A work which can please in youth and age seems to fulfil (in logical language) the *accidental definition* of a classic. (A further course of twenty years has passed, and I bear the same witness in favor of this poem.)

Comm in dep  
Comp in int & idip

### XIII

## THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM

RICHARD RICE, JR.

President Eliot declared that a faithful reading of the books on his Five-Foot Shelf will give any man the essentials of a liberal education. This statement has made a great many people ask rather sceptically what these essentials really are. Is it possible in the infinite variety of modern life to speak of *the essentials* of education? Are not liberally educated men and women produced by experience and training the most diverse? Can we then say with assurance that liberal education is something made either of the information and ideas to be gleaned from the great books or of the culture to be absorbed from a society which the great books help create and which they represent? Even combining these two aspects of the matter, can we assert that the qualities typical of liberally educated men and women are chiefly the result of college training?

These are questions as interesting as they are old; but they hardly go to the centre of the matter. In the first place, as between society and books, or, let us say, between college life and the college curriculum, there is no true comparison for prior importance. Books are human, and men are largely bookish. They are long since part and parcel of each other; and whether a man feels his education to be furthered more by an essay or a dinner-party, by lectures in biology or the friendship of the pro-

fessor, are purely academic questions. In the second place, the obvious fact that liberally educated men and women are being produced in our modern society, just as they always have been, by a great variety of means, in no wise invalidates the statement that a study of the chief minds, and of the representative manners of thinking about the world we live in, is a method of securing liberal culture.

Culture of intellect, illuminative reason, as Newman has said, comes not from packing the brain with detail, but from comparing ideas one with another. The guide to wisdom is studying the great facts and interests of life in different modes of thought, with a view to seeing life from several sides. And since such books as President Eliot refers to on his five-foot shelf are nearly all by very great men, and since they treat of the great interests of life in the different modes of thought—science, poetry, and philosophy—his statement regarding those books has all the authority that human civilization can give it. Such writings are the long inheritance of society. For a man who perceives their significance, a comparison is inevitable, not only of book with book, but of his personal experience with the experience they depict; and this, of course, leads to comparison with the experience of his friends. Hence, may we not here further describe liberal culture as the assimilation of ideas by the individual in such *social* form as makes him wish to re-express them for himself? Is not this the opportunity which experience in life and the criticism of the great records of experience have to offer?

It is also the opportunity, therefore, which the curriculum of a liberal college endeavors to offer. For this programme is conceived from the idea that a training in the representative modes of thought is the essential thing in

education, and that this training should be had in a somewhat more personal way than is possible with books alone, and in a form more concentrated and ideally comprehensible than is the case in the life of any one man. An understanding of the real nature of this programme, the rigidity and the scope of its demands, and especially the modes of thought which it emphasizes, is then the purpose of this essay.

When the freshman enters college, with its variety of courses, he may have little notion why he, with certain tastes and abilities, must select almost the same set of representative studies as everybody else. Perhaps he does not understand why they are *representative*. Indeed, this is one of the things that often continue to puzzle him through the four years of a classical course, and sometimes there is very little illumination to be had on the matter from anybody concerned. Why should a man of strong practical bent, who knows what he wants to do in life, be made to choose courses quite outside the range of his serious tastes? With the ultimate intention of being a doctor, why should he devote a good deal of time for three or four years to such subjects as advanced mathematics, literature, and philosophy, to principles of calculus he may never learn to apply, to poetry he will probably forget, to logic he but faintly understands? To such questions he may not find many lucid answers forthcoming. Yet it is really important that he should be lucidly answered. A great deal of futility and evil can result from befogging his mind with conventionalities.

His father, who has come to the decision to send him to college, is often no more specific than to say that college, in spite of a lot of nonsense about the classics and a good deal of mere scientific lumber, is probably "a good thing."



His instructors themselves rarely seem to have thought the matter out in clear terms, and may feel at so hopeless a disadvantage when discussing the *raison d'être* of requirements in liberal arts with a man who has not already had their brand of education and does not understand their "background," that they conclude either by patronizing him or by doubting their own convictions. To say that the courses he is taking in Latin, Greek, mediæval history, blind fishes, dynamics, Emanuel Kant, and Egyptian architecture are for the purpose of training the mind is not felt nowadays to be a specific answer. Unquestionably these studies train the mind, unquestionably they are part of a liberal education; but what the inquisitive freshman wants to know is why these subjects have to be taught him, and not some others in which he could clearly see both ideal value as training and practical utility. In all these years, he wonders, why haven't we learned to kill the two birds with one stone? If the instructor explains, in a fashion quite out of date, that subjects taught for specific utility invite scientific treatment to such an extent that their ideal value as mental training is lessened, that seems no answer at all. The practical freshman will not see it that way.

What is lacking in all conventional answers to the charge of impracticality in the liberal-arts course is a clear idea of the purpose for which the course prepares. This purpose is to think about life's problems roundly and not flatly, to do what Matthew Arnold called seeing life steadily and seeing it whole. How much is summed up in such phrases that we dismiss with the uttering of them!

The essential purpose of liberal training is to train, not in one way, but in many ways of thinking about a fact or of applying an idea. It is to train in all the modes of thought

necessary to solve practical problems, though of these modes only one is nominally "the practical." This is not a paradox. The modes of thought are science, poetry, and philosophy. The problems of life are complex, and require more than one kind of thinking for their happy solution. Obviously they require thorough, orderly investigation of the facts, or practical, scientific thinking; also they often require, just as urgently, personal, imaginative, and emotional interest, or poetic thinking; and especially does any important matter require the light of an ultimate moral principle, or philosophic thinking.

In order to see what this means in a common problem, let us take the case of the hard-headed father of our freshman. How did he come to send the boy to college at all? Let us press him for an answer. A narrow sort of practicality might have led him to invest the two or three thousand dollars which college costs, and put his son into a good business. A broader practicality tells him he may get more back another way. He has statistics at his elbow which show that, other things being equal, the college man gets on better in business than his lay brother. A number of calculations of ways and means prove to him that the matter is feasible, and that he has a right to consult his feelings. Now, he has wanted his son to have the associations of college life, the friends, the memories, and that peculiar something which seems to come as a result. Being a practical man he won't use so vague a word as culture; but whatever it is that one gets from the contemplation of Latin and Greek poems and blind fishes, which makes life a little more fun, a little more vivid, which lets one in behind the scenes and yet only makes the illusion more interesting, he wishes to buy, at the rate of two or three thousand dollars, before putting his

son back on the farm or into a profession. This, moreover, is not all his reason. It isn't just for the sentiment of the thing that he is doing it, or just to make his son happy, or because he wants to get him into good society, or because he believes that all this will pay him back in the end even though the boy doesn't learn any definite job at college. There is something else in his mind, just as there is something else to be put into the back of a young man's head besides what will push him forward. As he has figured it out, there are going to be some hard problems to solve in this country, harder, perhaps, than any heretofore; and if there are thousands of men on every hand who have had the same sort of general training in thought, there will be more chance of their agreeing and working out a wise solution than if they had always been intent on their own private affairs. So whether college is practical or not as far as a man's personal success is concerned, there is a sort of public generosity about it—four years spent, not just on what will help him earn his own bread and butter, but on the humanities, the common-stock sense of the race. If he is a *wise* man, it will be this principle, or one of like nature, that will become the deciding factor in the situation. If he is principally a generous and sympathetic man, he will decide the matter more largely from sentiment. If he is a thoroughly practical man, and little else, he will decide it as he would decide a matter of business, by some guess at profit and loss. But who would decide such a question solely from one point of view, or in one mode of thought? The chances are that the decision is arrived at from many points of view, that it is a well-rounded, mature judgment, which thoroughly expresses the father's character.

Any problem may demand and bring into play such a

combination of faculties, and the infinite variety of life's problems makes it advisable that the mind should be trained theoretically or ideally in preparation for all of them, as well as practically for the few that can be foreseen. For the world, which we like to call the practical world, as if we thoroughly understood it, often turns out to be a fantastic melodrama or an inexplicable puzzle if viewed only from one standpoint. Therefore, the different modes of thought, science, poetry, philosophy, do not represent arbitrary processes in the mind of man, but rather man's effort to make his character correspond more closely to the variety and complexity of life that surrounds him.

Thus the purpose of the college course begins to be more evident. Its curriculum is intended to fit practically, imaginatively, and morally the changing conditions of life. Its seeming rigidity, its idealism, is based on a knowledge of the drift of those conditions. The demands which the curriculum makes and the limits which it places on the choice of studies mean that the student shall first of all be trained to think dexterously and variously, that he shall not devote himself to one kind of thinking about a few similar matters. Specialization and professional training, the liberal college believes, should, when possible, come later, for the very reason that specialization and professional training, when not mere imitation of a method, involve thinking complexly and originally to the highest degree.

If there is enough in this answer to warrant giving it a further hearing, let us next try to perceive the real significance of thinking liberally and complexly, or what the three modes of thought really mean.

Very few people, the practical man will be the first to remind us, enjoy or comprehend equally scientific, poetic,

and philosophic thought. Every one has his characteristic bent of mind. One man is practical and systematic, sticking closely to the immediate facts; another is vividly imaginative and emotional, living farther in expectancy and in recollection than that other man; a third is theoretical and abstractly far-sighted, avoiding, perhaps, the faults of the first man, but failing to secure the pleasures of the second. If each of these men could choose his own world, where his characteristic bent of mind would, so to speak, lie flattest, he might never need to employ any but his favorite or "natural" habit of thought. But there are few people so narrowly situated. There are few people who do not have constantly to employ a combination of these three modes, who do not have to be in thought and action at once practical and imaginative, closely accurate and abstractly far-sighted, theoretic and vivid.

Now, it is the art of being thus temperamentally versatile which prevents narrow-mindedness. The people we call narrow-minded are simply those who fail to think somewhat in all these combined ways. The narrow-minded scientific person will see things only in an external and impersonal light. He decides life's problems by natural law, by mechanical justice, and makes, as we say, cold, practical calculations. The narrow-minded poetic person can see things only in a personal and emotional light. He understands only when he can feel; hence, if he is rarely insincere, he may often be unjust. The narrow-minded philosophic person—and though these terms seem to contradict each other at the start, one may venture to conclude—is he who prefers to overlook real and immediate contingencies in order to see without embarrassment theoretic or ideal relationships. He is apt to be a fanatic: he is sometimes mistaken for a man of genius. None of

these limited persons in the face of life's problems is ever very successful, happy, or socially valuable.

The college curriculum can be conceived as an organized attempt to correct a certain native tendency in every one of us to some form of the narrow mind, and also as an organized attempt to help us find and follow our bent, which we all must follow, but not with our eyes too close together. It is, then, a preparation not in actual experiences and problems of life so much as in principles of thinking that must be understood by one who solves those problems with ultimate profit to himself and to his fellows. And just here is the chief part of our answer to the practical man. Actual experiences and problems, entailing, as a rule, immediate necessity for judgment, tend to make us think only in the vein where our chief facility runs; and the man equipped only with a technical education will frequently mistake this facility of judgment for wisdom, and fail to take advantage of larger issues than those involved by immediate necessity. He has too often formed habits of imitation instead of far-reaching methods of thought. College is a time for strengthening ourselves in such a way that we shall expand many faculties, instead of sharpening but one, in the tests of practical necessity.

Obviously it is not technical skill itself that produces one-sidedness. But without some sort of liberal outlook on life, technical skill is not always of real benefit to a man; and, indeed, it sometimes appears to the short-sighted to be the ironical means of enslaving him. For facility at some minor trick has often prevented a man from rising at will beyond it. Does not Mr. Debs, the socialist, call attention constantly to the folly of narrow vocational training for those who are not to control the machinery of their craft? Lack of ownership in this case

is similar, in ultimate effect, to a lack of capabilities. One-sidedness comes not from a man's positive capabilities in one direction, but from his lack of them in any other. More than this, it is only in the most imitative and slender techniques that there is real danger of one-sidedness through too complete devotion. Supremacy in most specialties is reached from broad foundations, and means inevitably a fairly broad outlook. Yet it remains true that in all technical skill there is both a bondage and a freedom, the relation of which describes the character and the culture of the craftsman—what is one man's bondage being often another man's freedom.

The liberal curriculum furnishes to every student a criticism of his narrow-mindedness. It makes an attempt to show him how to be rid of his natural encumbrances, and how to utilize the valuable elements that remain. It furnishes him with a specially balanced experience from which he may learn to recognize his real mind, his whole mind, through a comparison of his facilities in the various modes of thought. This is why a student in the liberal college of arts and sciences takes a course in zoology, spends half a year reading Goethe's *Faust*, and at the same time follows the reasoning of a philosopher like Herbert Spencer. For one great purpose of the curriculum is to have him see the same principles of life from quite different angles; and, in the case just cited, merely to perceive that they are the same principles is the kind of cure for the narrow mind which shows supremely the soundness of traditional education.

Here is a man who from his freshman year follows easily the literal reasoning of mathematics or political science, and the arbitrary reasoning of grammar or chemistry; yet he needs much practise, as he says, before he can follow

thought that continues by means of suggestion, emotion, rhythm, and symbol, in a poem. He can see plainly the perspective of a figure in conic sections, and yet he fails to be impressed by the perfect proportions of a great statue. All through his college course he prefers science in any of its systems to poetry in any of its forms. He thereby discovers and tests practically his bent. He would make a great mistake not to follow this clew, not to become, let us say, an engineer. Yet the curriculum, because it is a liberal plan of study, insists on a training in each phase of thought, the imaginative as well as the literal; and the engineer will some day understand, not alone theoretically but practically, while trying to solve a problem that is as much a problem of human wills as it is a problem for his technique, that science is not the only practical part of learning.

The true cure for one-sidedness, and the most important force that all through life, and especially in youth, makes for liberal culture, is not, however, discovered outside ourselves. It grows normally from within. It is curiosity, not opportunity, that primarily counts. They are, of course, counterparts, these two; they foster each other. But man is originally an adventurer, and his world of opportunity, whatever it may be, is largely an extension of his own spirit. Variety is the spice of life, but curiosity is the spice of learning. It is the curiosity of students that in great measure produces variety in the modern curriculum. Curiosity is the typical college virtue. It covers the largest number of college faults. Nobody has any business in college who is not forearmed with at least a fair share of it. And by curiosity we mean the desire and the energy to know something of the variety of life. There are, however, two kinds of curiosity, and they distinguish



college students rather sharply one from another: curiosity as to facts, and curiosity that extends to modes of thought about facts—curiosity, that is, about men's minds.

Look at the curriculum of a modern college and you will see exactly what this means. Here is one group of professors, grown old in their specialty, making it their chief aim to persuade the student of the importance of the scientific attitude toward nature. They keep him thinking, let us say, about rocks and mountains geologically, or about the starry universe astronomically, and rarely vary their point of view from the scientific. Another group is intent on showing him nature as it appears in the eye and mind of artists, on contemplating rocks and mountains, not for evidences of thrust in the earth's cooling surface, but as poetic images of a heightened mental state or of a moral purpose. From being an external fact, the universe here becomes a sensation. With a third group the student is asked to assume quite a new, and, as it at first may appear to him, a rather unnatural attitude toward nature. The philosophers ask him how he knows that mountains and rocks exist at all, externally and sensationally, how he knows that they are not pure conceptions of the mind. The student has suddenly to examine the character of his knowledge from a totally new angle. He sees much in the character of science and of art, in the relationship of the geologist's mountain to the poet's mountain, that he never dreamed of with the poet or saw clearly with the geologist. And if at first this may not have appeared a very useful exercise, now it is out of this defined relationship that the philosopher goes on to derive a theory of life and of the whole universe which is both science and poetry, which is true to fact and not illogical in fancy, which gives a new and far-reaching reason for

further scientific and for further poetic investigation, and which serves to idealize the final mysteries that neither science nor poetry can solve. The liberal curriculum in science, poetry, and philosophy, when intelligently prescribed and devotedly followed, can be the means of stimulating the curiosity of youth, of collecting and synthesizing its experiences, of rendering valuable, in the end, its enthusiasm, doubts, and disillusionments. Its purpose is the unity and maturity of the mind. "There is no enlargement," says Cardinal Newman, "unless there be a comparison of ideas one with another, as they come before the mind, and a systematizing of them. We feel our minds to be growing and expanding *then*, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already." This is education; this is the discovery of the world and of ourselves.

But we come to college for special as well as liberal reasons. How does liberal education bring us to the practical consideration in this whole matter—our knowledge of our own special abilities and the choice of a career? How does the curriculum effect that?

The answer is already implied. It is an obvious corollary to the chief proposition, that, in learning to think in each mode and in combinations of modes about facts and ideas, we learn to perceive, as a matter of course, what sort of facts and ideas can be more naturally, more vividly, more thoroughly comprehended in one mode than in another according to their intrinsic nature and to the purposes of the thinker. It is a necessary part of this general exercise that one all the time, consciously and unconsciously, trains himself according to his natural bent. In the liberal college, it is true, he must do it *ideally*. But to go about the discovery of a natural bent by studying in

succession a series of professions and crafts before a man has many whisperings of what is within him, before his general and ideal knowledge has been enlarged, is usually a wasteful performance. It is a forcing process that rarely secures the maturest result. It is as apt to lead to a temporary bending as to discovery or development of the true bent. It is a method that counts for its success on the good-humored adaptability of human nature rather than on its originality. The liberal method is, on the other hand, more apt to be truly economic and far-sighted. If a man understands the essential character of the courses he has taken in college as types of thinking, whether or not they point directly toward some profession or craft, if he can differentiate his interest and ability in each type, he has already the surest indication of his tastes and the most practical advice about his future.

To illustrate this specifically is difficult for the reason that the temperament of the individual student must play the chief part in our calculations, and Jones and Smith, who seem to be men of similar tastes and abilities, and who have chosen precisely the same college courses, become of their own choice, and after a great deal of effort, one a doctor and the other a lawyer. But for the sake of describing the estimate which college makes of temperament, let us suppose that Smith has cared most for courses that open an unending problem, like calculus, which has lured him from year to year through mazes of algebra to momentary applications, only to suggest again new vistas of abstraction. If this is the kind of thing Smith likes best, the chances are, other things being equal, that he should take up some profession where there are problems that may continue more or less romantically through life. Medicine and surgery offer many such problems. If, then,

Smith has found the courses in anatomy and biology also to his taste he will be fairly safe in becoming a doctor; if he has not he might become an engineer, whose problems nowadays are surely as long as any man's. Supposing again that Jones, whose character and energies are to be estimated by this purely hypothetical method, has done the following things. He has read *The Life of Sir Walter Scott* and has been far more interested in the technicalities of Scott's financial status than in any other phase of that absorbing book; also he has read Browning, but without great admiration till he reached the story of *The Ring and the Book*; and he has studied general European history with interest, but knew, as soon as he began a course in English constitutional history and dipped into Stubbs's original documents, that he had "got somewhere" at last. Even from such slight evidence Jones would be fairly safe in trying the law or a highly systematized business.

But you must not work it out too narrowly, for one of the virtues of the liberal curriculum is that it rarely binds a man to some preconceived specific notion of his destiny. The initial strictness of its demands is ultimately the very thing that makes possible the flexibility and range of the student's choice. College graduates, more than any other class of men, do what they wish, not because of superior social position but because of their emancipating knowledge of the field of opportunity and of themselves.

That such a type of knowledge results from the liberal curriculum in greater degree than from a curriculum chiefly vocational and technical in character, need not lead us into a futile comparison with the professional schools. They have their own definite and unassailable purposes. They do not require defense or even explanation. What is necessary to keep in mind is the grave re-

sponsibility that rests on those who have the arrangement of the liberal curriculum in their hands. In the constant and somewhat radical revision necessary to make it accord with modern life and our era of radical progress, there is no need, because of the existence of technical schools on every hand, of forgetting what the central idea in the liberal curriculum has meant. No new quality and no other meaning can safely take the place of that.

## XIV

### LOSING ONE'S RELIGION: A STUDENT EXPERIENCE <sup>1</sup>

HENRY THOMAS COLESTOCK

There is one word that some of us who look back on our college life wish had been spoken to us in the midst of our college course; for, lacking this word of explanation, we have had to learn *ab initio*, in the severe school of personal experience, one of the lessons worked out by the race through centuries of conflict. Not infrequently has it happened, in working out this problem for ourselves, that the process, compressing into a few months or years the anxiety, the anguish, of a racial experience, brings to the individual moments and days never to be forgotten. But not all learn the lesson when left to themselves, and this is an irreparable injury to the individual; for failure means indifference or even hostility to the most helpful things in life. I refer to the process of adjustment between religious faith and a growing knowledge.

In the experience of the race this problem of adjustment between religious faith and a growing knowledge is one of the great problems of every period characterized by intellectual progress. Nor is it difficult to understand the reason for this age-long conflict between faith and knowledge. The explanation is a psychological one.

Religious faith being one of the dearest and most sacred

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted through the courtesy of Henry Thomas Colestock and of *The Outlook*.

possessions of mankind, it is natural to transfer to our explanations of faith the sacredness of faith itself. Failing to make this distinction between religious faith, which is a life of fellowship with God, and the *explanations* of this fellowship, which necessarily must vary according to the temperament and the enlightenment of the individual, the problem of adjustment between religious faith and the growing knowledge of the age has at times absorbed the attention and the strength of nations.

The same problem of adjustment between faith and knowledge confronts the student. He comes to college with certain religious ideas and beliefs, and in the progress of his studies finds an antagonism between his religious beliefs and his growing knowledge. At first he puts aside as false whatever does not accord with his religious opinions. Students have been known to go through college rejecting every position in science or philosophy which did not harmonize with their inherited religious beliefs. This, however, is not true of many students. On the other hand, the reasonableness of the conclusions of science and of philosophy wins the assent of the student even against his will. But it seems impossible for him to accept these conclusions and retain his religious beliefs which he thinks of as his religion. He may fight for a time the rising tide of new ideas, but sooner or later he finds resistance useless. He awakens to the fact that these new ideas, hostile to his religion though they be, as it appears to him, are possessing him.

Now ensues one of the tragic struggles of his life. As the new ideas possess him, they undermine certain religious beliefs which he holds on to with terrible earnestness for a while, only to find at last that these beliefs do not mean to him what they once did. Few individuals who have

passed through the heartrending experience of losing their religion can ever forget that experience. Some, after a very trying and painful struggle, learn that *religious faith* and *religious opinions* are two very different things; others never learn this lesson, and, having lost their early religious opinions, think they have lost their religion and easily drift into an indifference toward the duties and claims of the religious life. When approached, such persons will tell you, in moments of confidence, that religious matters do not mean anything to them now—they had to give all that up in college.

It is possible, of course, to lose one's religion in college; to degenerate in character, to become immoral and irreligious; as it is possible to become dissolute anywhere. But I have not at present such a class of individuals in mind; but rather those whose characters have not degenerated, but whose religious opinions no longer mean to them what they once did, and who think consequently that they have lost their religion.

The word which some of us wish had been spoken to us who have passed through one phase or another of this struggle of adjustment between faith and knowledge is this: Religious faith is a life of fellowship with God; religion is the living of one's life in view of this fellowship; religious beliefs are explanations of this life of fellowship with God, and it is reasonable to expect that these explanations will vary according to our intellectual progress, being different with the same individual in different stages of his development; and differing also in the thought of different persons owing to training and temperament.

With this distinction between religious faith and religious beliefs firmly grasped, the student need not feel that he is losing his religion when he is being compelled to give up



some of his early, inadequate religious conceptions. Rather he will welcome all new ideas which enable him to explain this fellowship and to understand more fully its meaning. With this distinction between religious faith and the explanations of faith kept in mind, the student can fearlessly investigate any subject in science or history or philosophy without disturbing his religion, for he thinks of religion as a life in fellowship with God; but as new light dawns he may be compelled to reinterpret all of the soul's relations with God. His explanations of faith change; his faith abides, grows, develops.

## XV

### THE RELIGION OF A COLLEGE STUDENT<sup>1</sup>

FRANCIS G. PEABODY

We have heard many appeals to the college student concerning his duty to the Christian church. He should be, it is urged, a more constant attendant at its worship; he should commit himself more openly to its cause; he should guard himself against the infidelity and indecision which attack him with such strategy under the conditions of college life. May it not be of advantage, however, to consider this relation from the opposite point of view? May it not be instructive to inquire what the Christian church must provide in order to meet the needs of an educated young man, and what the college student demands that the church shall teach and illustrate? What has a young man the right to demand as a condition of his loyalty and devotion? What is there which the Christian church must learn concerning the character and ideals of a normal, educated, modern youth before it can hope to lead the heart of such a youth to an unconstrained obedience? What is the religion of a college student?

There are, of course, certain limitations to such an inquiry. We must assume on both sides open-mindedness, teachableness, seriousness, and good faith. We cannot take into account either a foolish student or a foolish

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted through the courtesy of Francis G. Peabody and of *The Forum*.

church. There are, on the one hand, some youths of the college age whom no conceivable adaptation of religious teaching can hope to reach. They are self-absorbed, self-conscious, self-satisfied, self-conceited. There is little that the church can do for them but to pray that, as they grow older, they may grow more humble, and, therefore, more teachable. On the other hand, there are some methods of religious activity which cannot reasonably anticipate the co-operation of educated men. Here and there an imaginative young person may be won by emotional appeals or ecclesiastical picturesqueness; but the normal type of thoughtful youth demands of the church soberness, intellectual satisfaction, and verifiable claims. We must dismiss from consideration both the unreasoning youth and the unreasonable church. We set before ourselves, on the one hand, an alert, open-minded, well-trained youth, looking out with eager eyes into the mystery of the universe; and, on the other hand, a thoughtful, candid, sensible church, resting its claim not on tradition or passion, but on its perception and maintenance of verifiable truth. How shall these two factors of modern life—the chief factors of its future stability—the life of thoughtful youth and the truth of the Christian religion, come to know and help each other; and what are the traits of Christian teaching which must be unmistakably recognized before it can commend itself to the young student of the modern world?

To these questions it must be answered, that the religion of a college student is marked, first of all, by a passion for reality. No effort of the church is more mistaken than the attempt to win the loyalty of intelligent young people by multiplying the accessories or incidentals of the religious life—its ecclesiastical forms, its emotional ecstasies, its elaborateness of organization, its opportunities of socia-

bility. The modern college student, while in many respects very immature, is extraordinarily alert in his discernment of anything which seems to him of the nature of indirectness or unreality. He has a passion for reality. The first demand he makes of his companions or his teachers is the demand for sincerity, straightforwardness, and simplicity. He is not likely to be won to the Christian life by any external persuasion, laboriously planned "to draw in young people," and to make religion seem companionable and pleasant. These incidental activities of the church have their unquestionable usefulness as expressions of Christian sentiment and service, but they are misapplied when converted into decoys. They are corollaries of religious experience, not preliminaries of it; they are what one wants to do when he is a Christian, but not what makes a thoughtful man believe in Christ. The modern young man sees these things just as they are. Indeed, he is inclined to be on his guard against their strategy. He will nibble at the bait, but he will not take the hook. He will consume the refreshments of the church, he will serve on its committees, he will enjoy its æsthetic effects, but he still withholds himself from the personal consecration which these were designed to induce. He will accept no substitute for reality. He wants the best. He is not old enough to be diffident or circuitous in his desires; he does not linger in the outer courts of truth; he marches straight into the Holy of Holies, and lifts the veil from the central mystery. Thus the church often fails of its mission to the student, because it imagines him to be frivolous and indifferent, when in reality he is tremendously in earnest and passionately sincere.

And suppose, on the other hand, that the church meets this candid creature just where he is, and, instead of offer-

ing him accessories and incidentals as adapted to his frivolous mind, presents to him, with unadorned and sober reasonableness, the realities of religion. What discovery is the church then likely to make? It may discover, to its own surprise, and often to the surprise of the youth himself, an unanticipated susceptibility in him to religious reality, and a singular freshness and vitality of religious experience. A great many people imagine that the years from seventeen to twenty-two are not likely to be years of natural piety. The world, it is urged, is just making its appeal to the flesh and to the mind with overmastering power, while the experience of life has not yet created for itself a stable religion. Fifteen years ago it was determined in Harvard University that religion should be no longer regarded as a part of academic discipline, but should be offered to youth as a privilege and an opportunity. It was then argued by at least one learned person that the system was sure to fail because, by the very conditions of their growth, young men were unsusceptible to religion. They had outgrown, he urged, the religion of their childhood, and had not yet grown into the religion of their maturity; so that a plan which rested on faith in the inherent religiousness of young men was doomed to disappointment. If, however, the voluntary system of religion applied to university life has proved anything in these fifteen years, it has proved the essentially religious nature of the normal, educated young man of America. To offer religion not as an obligation of college life, but as its supreme privilege, was an act of faith in young men. It assumed that when religion was honestly and intelligently presented to the mind of youth it would receive a reverent and responsive recognition.

The issue of this undertaking has serious lessons for the

Christian church. It disposes altogether of the meagre expectation with which the life of youth is frequently regarded. I have heard a preacher, addressing a college audience, announce that just as childhood was so assailed by infantile diseases and mishaps that it was surprising to see any child grow up, so youth was assailed by so many sins that it was surprising to see any young man grow up unstained. There is no rational basis for this enervating scepticism. The fact is that it is natural for a young man to be good, just as it is natural for a child to grow up. A much wiser word was spoken by one of my colleagues, who, having been asked to address an audience on the temptations of the college life, said that he should devote himself chiefly to its temptations to excellence. A college boy, that is to say, is not, as many suppose, a peculiarly misguided and essentially light-minded person. He is, on the contrary, set in conditions which tempt to excellence and is peculiarly responsive to every sincere appeal to his higher life. Behind the mask of light-mindedness or self-assertion which he assumes, his interior life is wrestling with fundamental problems, as Jacob wrestled with the angel and would not let it go until it blessed him. "Your young men," said the prophet, with deep insight into the nature of youth, "shall see visions." They are our natural idealists. The shades of the prison-house of common life have not yet closed about their sense of the romantic, the heroic, the noble.

To this susceptibility of youth the church, if it is wise, must address its teaching. It must believe in a young man, even when he does not believe in himself. It must attempt no adaptation of truth to immaturity or indifference. It must assume that a young man, even though he disguises the fact by every subterfuge of modesty or mock defiance.

is a creature of spiritual vision, and that his secret desire is to have that vision interpreted and prolonged. When Jesus met the young men whom he wanted for his disciples, his first relation with them was one of absolute, and apparently unjustified, confidence. He believed in them and in their spiritual responsiveness. He disclosed to them the secrets of their own hearts. He dismissed accessories and revealed realities. He did not cheapen religion or make small demands. He bade these men leave all and follow him. He took for granted that their nature called for the religion he had to offer, and he gave it to them without qualification or fear. The young men for whom the accidental aspects of religion were thus stripped away and its heart laid bare, leaped to meet this revelation of reality. "We have found the Messiah," they told each other. They had been believed in even before they believed in themselves, and that which the new sense of reality disclosed to them as real, they at last in reality became.

Such is the first aspect of the religion of the student—its demand for reality. (To reach the heart of an educated young man the message of the church must be unequivocal, uncomplicated, genuine, masculine, direct, real. This, however, is but a part of a second quality in the religion of educated youth. The teaching of the church to which such a mind will listen must be, still further, consistent with truth as discerned elsewhere. It must involve no partition of life between thinking and believing. It must be, that is to say, a rational religion. (The religion of a college student is one expression of his rational life. To say this is not to say that religion must be stripped of its mystery or reduced to the level of a natural science in order to commend itself to educated youth. On the

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contrary, the tendencies of the higher education lead in precisely the opposite direction. They lead to the conviction that all truth, whether approached by the way of science, philosophy, art, or religion, opens before a serious student into a world of mystery, a sense of the unattained, a spacious region of idealism, where one enters with reverence and awe. Instead of demanding that religion shall be reduced to the level of other knowledge, it will appear to such a student more reasonable to demand that all forms of knowledge shall be lifted into the realm of faith, mystery, and idealism. It is, however, quite another matter to discover in the teaching of religion any fundamental inconsistency with the spirit of research and the method of proof which the student elsewhere candidly accepts; and we may be sure that it is this sense of inconsistency which is the chief source of any reaction from religious influence now to be observed among educated young men.

Under the voluntary system of religion at Harvard University we have established a meeting-place, known as "The Preacher's Room," where the minister conducting morning prayers spends some hours each day in free and unconstrained intimacy with such students as may seek him. This room has witnessed many frank confessions of religious difficulty and denial, and as each member of our staff of preachers recalls his experiences at the university he testifies that the most fruitful hours of his service have been those of confidential conference in the privacy of The Preacher's Room. But if one were further called to describe those instances of religious bewilderment and helplessness which have seemed to him in his official duty most pathetic and most superfluous, he would not hesitate to admit that they were the by no means infre-



quent cases of young men who have been brought up in a conception of religion which becomes untenable under the conditions of university life. A restricted denominationalism, a backward-looking ecclesiasticism, an ignorant defiance of biblical criticism, and, no less emphatically, an intolerant and supercilious liberalism—these habits of mind become simply impossible when a young man finds himself thrown into a world of wide learning, religious liberty, and intellectual hospitality. Then ensues, for many a young mind, a pathetic and even tragic period of spiritual hesitation and reconstruction. The young man wanders through dry places, seeking rest and finding none; and it is quite impossible for his mind to say: "I will return unto my house from whence I came out." Meantime his loving parents and his anxious pastor observe with trembling his defection from the old ways, deplore the influence of the university upon religious faith, and pray for a restoration of belief which is as contrary to nature as the restoration of the oak to the acorn from which it grew.

Now, in all this touching experience, where is the gravest blame to be laid? It must, no doubt, be confessed that among the conditions of college life there are some which tend to encourage in a young man a certain pertness and priggishness of mind which make the old ways of faith seem old-fashioned and primitive. Indeed, it seems to some young men that any way of faith is superfluous to a thorough man of the world, such as the average sophomore ought to be. But these cheerful young persons, for whom the past has no lessons and the future no visions, and for whom the new ideal of self-culture has for the moment suppressed the earlier ideals of self-sacrifice or service, are not a type of student life which need be taken seriously. They are the lookers-on of the academic world,

the dilettante and amateur minds in a community of scholars. The strenuous game of real learning goes on; and these patrons of the strife sit, as it were, along the side lines and wear the college colors, but do not participate in the training or the conflict or the victory. We are thinking of that much more significant body of youth who are in deadly earnest with their thought, and who find it an essential of their intellectual peace to attain some sense of unity in their conception of the world. For this type of college youth—the most conscientious, most thoughtful, most precious—the blame for inconsistency between the new learning and the inherited faith lies, for the most part, not with the college, but with the church. There was once a time when these young minds could be secluded by solicitous parents and anxious pastors from most of the signs of change in modern thought. They could be prohibited from approaching great tracts of literature; they could be hidden in the cloistered life of a strictly guarded college; their learning could be insured to be in safe conformity with a predetermined creed. There is now no corner of the intellectual world where this seclusion is possible. Out of the most unexpected sources—a novel, a poem, a newspaper—issues the contagion of modern thought; and, in an instant, the life that has been shut in and has seemed secure is hopelessly affected.

And how does the young man, touched with the modern spirit, come to regard the faith which he is thus forced to reject? Sometimes he regards it with a sense of pathos, as an early love soon lost; sometimes with a deep indignation, as the source of scepticism and denial. For one educated youth who is alienated from religion by the persuasions of science, philosophy, or art, ten, we may be sure,

are thus affected by the irrational or impracticable teaching of religion. It is not an inherent issue between learning and faith which forces them out of the church in which they were born; it is an unscientific and reactionary theory of faith. It is not the college which must renew its conformity to the church; it is the church which must open its eyes to the marvellous expansion of intellectual horizon which lies before the mind of every college student to-day.

There is another aspect of the same experience. This process of intellectual growth is often accompanied, not by a reaction from religion, but by a new appreciation of its reasonableness. In a degree which few who represent the church have as yet realized, the expansion of the sphere of truth is at the same time an enlargement and enrichment of religious confidence. There is going on, within the college, often without the knowledge of the church, a restoration of religious faith through the influence of intellectual liberty. I have seen more than one student come to college in a mood of complete antagonism to his earlier faith, and then I have seen that same youth in four years graduate from college, and with a passionate consecration give himself to the calling of the Christian ministry which he had so lately thought superfluous and outgrown. It was the simple consequence of his discovery that the religious life is not in conflict with the interests and aims of a university, but is precisely that ideal of conduct and service toward which the spirit of a university logically leads. "I beseech you, brethren," says the Apostle who knew most about the relation of philosophy to faith, "that ye present . . . a reasonable service." It is a charge which the Christian church still needs to hear. The service of the church which is to meet the religion of a college student must be a reasonable service, consistent

with all reverent truth-seeking, open to the light, hospitable to progress, rational, teachable, free. The church which sets itself against the currents of reasonable thought, and has for great words like evolution, higher criticism, morality, beauty, law, only an undiscerning sneer, is in reality not the defender of the faith, but a positive contributor to the infidelity of the present age. The church which asks no loyalty that is not rational, no service of the heart that is not an offering of the mind, comes with its refreshing message to many a bewildered young mind, and is met by a renewed dedication to a reasonable service.

So far, however, I have described the religion of a college student as it appears in every thoughtful age. There remains one aspect of the religious life which is peculiarly characteristic of a college student in our own generation, and of which the church in its relation to the young must take fresh account. Protestant teaching, from the time of Luther, has laid special emphasis on the Pauline distinction between faith and works. It is not a man's performance, either of moral obligations or ritual observances, that justifies him in the sight of God. He must offer that total consecration of the heart, that conversion of the nature, which makes him find his life in God. This teaching was a necessary protest against the externalism and ecclesiastical practises which had been for centuries regarded by many as of the essence of the religious life. "We are justified by faith"; "the just shall live by faith"—these great words give to religion a profounder, more spiritual, and more personal significance as a relation between the individual soul and the living God.

But suppose that this touch of the life of God is felt by the soul of man, and that the soul desires to express its religious life—what is to be its channel of utterance?

The history of Protestantism for the most part answers: "The organ of religious expression is the tongue. When the life is moved by the Holy Ghost, it is led to speak as the spirit gives it utterance. It tells rejoicingly of its new birth; it confesses Christ before its fellows; it preaches to others the message which has brought it hope and peace." Here is the basis of a large part of the organization of the Protestant churches—their meetings for free expression of prayer; their association for religious utterance; their test of faith through spoken confession. It is obvious that this channel of expression is legitimate and often inevitable. The fulness of religious emotion which descends from God to man leaps out of many lives into forms of speech, as naturally as the water which descends from the high hills leaps out from its conduit into the air.

What the present age, however, is teaching us, as the world was never taught before, is that another and equally legitimate channel of expression is open to the life of faith. It is the language of works. We have come in these days to a time devoted in an unprecedented degree to the spirit of philanthropy. It is the age of social service. No life can yield itself to the current of the time without being swept into its movement of passionate fraternity and social justice. But what is the attitude of the Christian church to this modern phenomenon of social service? It is quite true that the church is one of the most active agents of this philanthropic renaissance. The sense of social responsibility is manifested by the prodigious increase of parish charities, parish organizations, institutional churches, and general benevolence. The church, however, has failed adequately to recognize the legitimate place of action as a trustworthy witness of faith. To do

for others has seemed to the tradition of the church a superadded and secondary effect of religion, not one of its essential and original factors. First, one is to be religious; and then, as a consequence or ornament of his religion, he is to concern himself with the better ordering of the human world.

A much deeper relation between faith and works is indicated by those solemn words in which Jesus sums up, as he says, "the whole law and the prophets." There is, he teaches, a kinship of nature between the love of God and the love of man. The second commandment is like the first. Both are parts of a complete religion. When a modern life, that is to say, is moved by the spirit of philanthropy, that impulse is not something which the church may stand apart from and commend as of another sphere. It is, in fact, one legitimate expression of the religious life; uttering itself not by the tongue, but by the hand, as though there had been heard the great word of the Apostle: "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" In other words, the church has permitted this modern movement of philanthropy to proceed as though it were not an essential part of the Christian life, when in reality this whole vast enterprise is the way in which the modern world is actually uttering that faith in the possible redemption of mankind, to accomplish which the church of Jesus Christ was expressly designed and inspired. I stood one day in the house of a women's settlement, set in the most squalid conditions of the life of a city and purifying the neighborhood with its unassuming devotion, and a minister of the Christian church who was present looked about him and said: "This is a very beautiful and noble work, but I wish there were more of Christ in it." How could

there, one felt like asking, be more of Christ than was already there? Would technical confession or oral expression add any significance to such a work in his eyes who said: "Not every one that sayeth to me, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father"? Was there ever, indeed, a work more full of Christ? Might not Jesus, if he should come again on earth, pass without notice many a splendid structure reared in his name, and, seeking out these servants of the broken-hearted and the bruised of the world, say to them: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these least, ye have done it unto me"? Why is the church not far-sighted enough to claim for herself what is justly her own? She clings to the test of faith by a single form of expression, when in fact the spirit of God is manifesting itself at the present time by another way of expression. And so it comes to pass that the most immediate problem for the church is to find a place within her religious experience for the new manifestation of self-effacing philanthropy, and to claim the age of social service as at heart an age of faith.

Now, at precisely this point, where the first expression of the spirit of God takes the form of the service of man, the Christian church meets the religion of the college student. The normal type of a serious-minded young man at the present time does not talk much about religion. Sometimes this reserve proceeds from self-consciousness and ought to be overcome, but quite as often it proceeds from modesty and ought to be revered. At any rate, such is the college student—a person disinclined to much profession of piety, and not easy to shape into the earlier type of expressed discipleship. Yet, at the same time, this young man is extraordinarily responsive to the new call for human service. I suppose that never in the history

of education were so many young men and young women in our colleges profoundly stirred by a sense of social responsibility and a passion for social justice. The first serious question which the college student asks is not "Can I be saved? Do I believe?" but "What can I do for others? What can I do for those less fortunate than I?" No one can live in a community of these young lives without perceiving a quality of self-sacrificing altruism so beautiful and so eager that it is akin to the emotions which in other days brought in a revival of religion.

What is the duty of the church to a mood like this? The duty of the church—or rather the privilege of the church—is to recognize that this is a revival of religion; that in this generous movement of human sympathy there is a legitimate and acceptable witness of the life of God in the soul of the modern world. It may not be that form of evidence which other times have regarded as valid; it may, perhaps, not be the most direct way of religious expression; but none the less it happens to be the way through which the Holy Spirit is at the present time directing the emotional life of youth to natural utterance. "I am not very religious," said one frank youth to me one day, "but I should like to do a little to make of Harvard College something more than a winter watering-place." But was not that youth religious? Was it not the spirit of God which was stirring his young heart? What, indeed, is the final object of religion if it is not to include the making of that better world which he in his dream desired to see? In this quality of the religion of a college student the church must believe. It must take him as he is, and let him testify by conduct if he will not testify by words. If the student might be assured that the religion which the church represents is a practical, working, min-



istering faith; if he could see that the mission of the church was not the saving of a few fortunate souls from a wrecked and drifting world, but the bringing of the world itself, like a still seaworthy vessel, with its whole cargo of hopes and fears, safe to its port; if he could believe that in the summons of the time to unselfish service he was in reality hearing the call of the living God; then he would see in the church not, as he is often inclined to see, an obstinate defender of impossible opinions, or a hothouse for exotic piety, or a cold-storage warehouse to preserve traditions which would perish in the open air, but the natural expression of organized righteousness, the body of those who are sanctified for others' sakes, and to such a church he would offer his honest and practical loyalty.

These are the tests to which the church must submit if it would meet the religion of a college student—the tests of reality, reasonableness, and practical service. A religion without reality—formal, external, technical, obscurantist; a religion without reasonableness—omniscient, dogmatic, timid; a religion which does not greet the spirit of practical service as the spirit of Christ—a religion of such a kind may win the loyalty of emotional or theological or ecclesiastical minds, but it is not acceptable to the normal type of educated American youth. Such natures demand first a genuine, then a rational, and then a practical religion, and they are held to the Christian church by no bond of sentiment or tradition which will prevent their seeking a more religious life elsewhere. And what is this but a wholesome challenge to the church of Christ to renew its vitality at the sources of its real power? The intellectual issues of the present time are too real to be met by artificiality and too rational to be interpreted by traditionalism; the practical philanthropy of the present

time is too absorbing and persuasive to be subordinated or ignored. It is a time for the church to dismiss all affectations and all assumptions of authority, and to give itself to the reality of rational religion and to the practical redemption of an unsanctified world. This return to simplicity and service will be at the same time a recognition of the religion of a college student and a renewal of the religion of Jesus Christ.

## XVI

### INAUGURAL ADDRESS <sup>1</sup>

ALEXANDER MEIKLEJOHN

In the discussions concerning college education there is one voice which is all too seldom raised and all too often disregarded. It is the voice of the teacher and the scholar, of the member of the college faculty. It is my purpose to devote this address to a consideration of the ideals of the teacher, of the problems of instruction as they present themselves to the men who are giving the instruction. And I do this not because I believe that just now the teachers are wiser than others who are dealing with the same questions, but rather as an expression of a definite conviction with regard to the place of the teacher in our educational scheme. It is, I believe, the function of the teacher to stand before his pupils and before the community at large as the intellectual leader of his time. If he is not able to take this leadership, he is not worthy of his calling. If the leadership is taken from him and given to others, then the very foundations of the scheme of instruction are shaken. He who in matters of teaching must be led by others is not the one to lead the imitative undergraduate, not the one to inspire the confidence and loyalty and discipleship on which all true teaching depends. If there are others who can do these things better than the college teacher of to-day, then we must bring them

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted through the courtesy of Alexander Meiklejohn and of *The Amherst Graduates' Quarterly*.

within the college walls. But if the teacher is to be deemed worthy of his task, then he must be recognized as the teacher of us all, and we must listen to his words as he speaks of the matters intrusted to his charge.

In the consideration of the educational creed of the teacher I will try to give, first, a brief statement of his belief; second, a defense of it against other views of the function of the college; third, an interpretation of its meaning and significance; fourth, a criticism of what seem to me misunderstandings of their own meaning prevalent among the teachers of our day; and, finally, a suggestion of certain changes in policy which must follow if the belief of the teacher is clearly understood and applied in our educational procedure.

## I

First, then, What do our teachers believe to be the aim of college instruction? Wherever their opinions and convictions find expression there is one contention which is always in the foreground, namely, that to be liberal a college must be essentially intellectual. It is a place, the teachers tell us, in which a boy, forgetting all things else, may set forth on the enterprise of learning. It is a time when a young man may come to awareness of the thinking of his people, may perceive what knowledge is and has been and is to be. Whatever light-hearted undergraduates may say, whatever the opinions of solicitous parents, of ambitious friends, of employers in search of workmen, of leaders in church or state or business,—whatever may be the beliefs and desires and demands of outsiders,—the teacher within the college, knowing his mission as no one else can know it, proclaims that mission to be the

leading of his pupil into the life intellectual. The college is primarily not a place of the body, nor of the feelings, nor even of the will; it is, first of all, a place of the mind.

## II

Against this intellectual interpretation of the college our teachers find two sets of hostile forces constantly at work. Outside the walls there are the practical demands of a busy commercial and social scheme; within the college there are the trivial and sentimental and irrational misunderstandings of its own friends. Upon each of these our college teachers are wont to descend as Samson upon the Philistines, and when they have had their will, there is little left for another to accomplish.

As against the immediate practical demands from without, the issue is clear and decisive. College teachers know that the world must have trained workmen, skilled operatives, clever buyers and sellers, efficient directors, resourceful manufacturers, able lawyers, ministers, physicians, and teachers. But it is equally true that, in order to do its own work, the liberal college must leave the special and technical training for these trades and professions to be done in other schools and by other methods. In a word, the liberal college does not pretend to give all the kinds of teaching which a young man of college age may profitably receive; it does not even claim to give all the kinds of intellectual training which are worth giving. It is committed to intellectual training of the liberal type, whatever that may mean, and to that mission it must be faithful. One may safely say, then, on behalf of our college teachers, that their instruction is intended to be radically different from that given in the technical school or even

in the professional school. Both these institutions are practical in a sense which the college, as an intellectual institution, is not. In the technical school the pupil is taught how to do some one of the mechanical operations which contribute to human welfare. He is trained to print, to weave, to farm, to build; and for the most part he is trained to do these things by practise rather than by theory. His possession when he leaves the school is not a stock of ideas, of scientific principles, but a measure of skill, a collection of rules of thumb. His primary function as a tradesman is not to understand but to do, and in doing what is needed he is following directions which have first been thought out by others and are now practised by him. The technical school intends to furnish training which, in the sense in which we use the term, is not intellectual but practical.

In a corresponding way the work of the professional school differs from that of the liberal college. In the teaching of engineering, medicine, or law we are or may be beyond the realm of mere skill and within the realm of ideas and principles. But the selection and the relating of these ideas is dominated by an immediate practical interest which cuts them off from the intellectual point of view of the scholar. If an undergraduate should take away from his studies of chemistry, biology, and psychology only those parts which have immediate practical application in the field of medicine, the college teachers would feel that they had failed to give to the boy the kind of instruction demanded of a college. It is not their purpose to furnish applied knowledge in this sense. They are not willing to cut up their sciences into segments and to allow the student to select those segments which may be of service in the practise of an art or a profession. In one way

or another the teacher feels a kinship with the scientist and the scholar which forbids him to submit to this domination of his instruction by the demands of an immediate practical interest. Whatever it may mean, he intends to hold the intellectual point of view and to keep his students with him if he can. In response, then, to demands for technical and professional training our college teachers tell us that such training may be obtained in other schools; it is not to be had in a college of liberal culture.

In the conflict with the forces within the college our teachers find themselves fighting essentially the same battle as against the foes without. In a hundred different ways the friends of the college—students, graduates, trustees, and even colleagues—seem to them so to misunderstand its mission as to minimize or to falsify its intellectual ideals. The college is a good place for making friends; it gives excellent experience in getting on with men; it has exceptional advantages as an athletic club; it is a relatively safe place for a boy when he first leaves home; on the whole it may improve a student's manners; it gives acquaintance with lofty ideals of character, preaches the doctrine of social service, exalts the virtues and duties of citizenship. All these conceptions seem to the teacher to hide or to obscure the fact that the college is fundamentally a place of the mind, a time for thinking, an opportunity for knowing. And perhaps in proportion to their own loftiness of purpose and motive they are the more dangerous as tending all the more powerfully to replace or to nullify the underlying principle upon which they all depend. Here again, when misconception clears away, one can have no doubt that the battle of the teacher is a righteous one. It is well that a boy should have four good years of athletic sport, playing his own games and watch-

ing the games of his fellows; it is well that his manners should be improved; it is worth while to make good friends; it is very desirable to develop the power of understanding and working with other men; it is surely good to grow in strength and purity of character, in devotion to the interests of society, in readiness to meet the obligations and opportunities of citizenship. If any one of these be lacking from the fruits of a college course we may well complain of the harvest. And yet is it not true that by sheer pressure of these, by the driving and pulling of the social forces within and without the college, the mind of the student is constantly torn from its chief concern? Do not our social and practical interests distract our boys from the intellectual achievements which should dominate their imagination and command their zeal? I believe that one may take it as the deliberate judgment of the teachers of our colleges to-day that the function of the college is constantly misunderstood, and that it is subjected to demands which, however friendly in intent, are yet destructive of its intellectual efficiency and success.

### III

But now that the contention of the teacher has been stated and reaffirmed against objections, it is time to ask: What does it mean? And how can it be justified? By what might does a company of scholars invite young men to spend with them four years of discipleship? Do they, in their insistence upon the intellectual quality of their ideal, intend to give an education which is avowedly unpractical? If so, how shall they justify their invitation, which may perhaps divert young men from other interests and other companionships which are valuable to them-



selves and to their fellows? In a word, what is the underlying motive of the teacher, what is there in the intellectual interests and activities which seems to him to warrant their domination over the training and instruction of young men during the college years?

It is no fair answer to this question to summon us to faith in intellectual ideals, to demand of us that we live the life of the mind with confidence in the virtues of intelligence, that we love knowledge and because of our passion follow after it. Most of us are already eager to accept intellectual ideals, but our very devotion to them forbids that we accept them blindly. I have often been struck by the inner contradictoriness of the demand that we have faith in intelligence. It seems to mean, as it is so commonly made to mean, that we must unintelligently follow intelligence, that we must ignorantly pursue knowledge, that we must question everything except the business of asking questions, that we think about everything except the use of thinking itself. As Mr. F. H. Bradley would say, the dictum, "Have faith in intelligence," is so true that it constantly threatens to become false. Our very conviction of its truth compels us to scrutinize and test it to the end.

How, then, shall we justify the faith of the teacher? What reason can we give for our exaltation of intellectual training and activity? To this question two answers are possible. First, knowledge and thinking are good in themselves. Secondly, they help us in the attainment of other values in life which without them would be impossible. Both these answers may be given and are given by college teachers. Within them must be found whatever can be said by way of explanation and justification of the work of the liberal college.

The first answer receives just now far less of recognition than it can rightly claim. When the man of the world is told that a boy is to be trained in thinking just because of the joys and satisfactions of thinking itself, just in order that he may go on thinking as long as he lives, the man of the world has been heard to scoff and to ridicule the idle dreaming of scholarly men. But if thinking is not a good thing in itself, if intellectual activity is not worth while for its own sake, will the man of the world tell us what is? There are those among us who find so much satisfaction in the countless trivial and vulgar amusements of a crude people that they have no time for the joys of the mind. There are those who are so closely shut up within a little round of petty pleasures that they have never dreamed of the fun of reading and conversing and investigating and reflecting. And of these one can only say that the difference is one of taste, and that their tastes seem to be relatively dull and stupid. Surely it is one function of the liberal college to save boys from that stupidity, to give them an appetite for the pleasures of thinking, to make them sensitive to the joys of appreciation and understanding, to show them how sweet and captivating and wholesome are the games of the mind. At the time when the play element is still dominant it is worth while to acquaint boys with the sport of facing and solving problems. Apart from some of the experiences of friendship and sympathy, I doubt if there are any human interests so permanently satisfying, so fine and splendid in themselves, as are those of intellectual activity. To give our boys that zest, that delight in things intellectual, to give them an appreciation of a kind of life which is well worth living, to make them men of intellectual culture—that certainly is one part of the work of any liberal college.

On the other hand, the creation of culture as so defined can never constitute the full achievement of the college. It is essential to awaken the impulses of inquiry, of experiment, of investigation, of reflection, the instinctive cravings of the mind. But no liberal college can be content with this. The impulse to thinking must be questioned and rationalized as must every other instinctive response. It is well to think, but what shall we think about? Are there any lines of investigation and reflection more valuable than others, and, if so, how is their value to be tested? Or again, if the impulse for thinking comes into conflict with other desires and cravings, how is the opposition to be solved? It has sometimes been suggested that our man of intellectual culture may be found, like Nero, fiddling with words while all the world about him is aflame. And the point of the suggestion is not that fiddling is a bad and worthless pastime, but rather that it is inopportune on such an occasion, that the man who does it is out of touch with his situation, that his fiddling does not fit his facts. In a word, men know with regard to thinking, as with regard to every other content of human experience, that it cannot be valued merely in terms of itself. It must be measured in terms of its relation to other contents and to human experience as a whole. Thinking is good in itself,—but what does it cost of other things; what does it bring of other values? Place it amid all the varied contents of our individual and social experience, measure it in terms of what it implies, fix it by means of its relations, and then you will know its worth not simply in itself but in that deeper sense which comes when human desires are rationalized and human lives are known in their entirety, as well as they can be known by those who are engaged in living them.

In this consideration we find the second answer of the teacher to the demand for justification of the work of the college. Knowledge is good, he tells us, not only in itself, but in its enrichment and enhancement of the other values of our experience. In the deepest and fullest sense of the words, knowledge pays. This statement rests upon the classification of human actions into two groups, those of the instinctive type and those of the intellectual type. By far the greater part of our human acts are carried on without any clear idea of what we are going to do or how we are going to do it. For the most part our responses to our situations are the immediate responses of feeling, of perception, of custom, of tradition. But slowly and painfully, as the mind has developed, action after action has been translated from the feeling to the ideational type; in wider and wider fields men have become aware of their own modes of action, more and more they have come to understanding, to knowledge of themselves and of their needs. And the principle underlying all our educational procedure is that, on the whole, actions become more successful as they pass from the sphere of feeling to that of understanding. Our educational belief is that in the long run, if men know what they are going to do and how they are going to do it, and what is the nature of the situation with which they are dealing, their response to that situation will be better adjusted and more beneficial than are the responses of the feeling type in like situations.

It is all too obvious that there are limits to the validity of this principle. If men are to investigate, to consider, to decide, then action must be delayed and we must pay the penalty of waiting. If men are to endeavor to understand and know their situations, then we must be prepared to see them make mistakes in their thinking, lose

their certainty of touch, wander off into pitfalls and illusions and fallacies of thought, and in consequence secure for the time results far lower in value than those of the instinctive response which they seek to replace. The delays and mistakes and uncertainties of our thinking are a heavy price to pay, but it is the conviction of the teacher that the price is as nothing when compared with the goods which it buys. You may point out to him the loss when old methods of procedure give way before the criticism of understanding, you may remind him of the pain and suffering when old habits of thought and action are replaced, you may reprove him for all the blunders of the past; but in spite of it all he knows, and you know, that in human lives taken separately and in human life as a whole men's greatest lack is the lack of understanding, their greatest hope to know themselves and the world in which they live.

Within the limits of this general educational principle the place of the liberal college may easily be fixed. In the technical school pupils are prepared for a specific work and are kept for the most part on the plane of perceptual action, doing work which others understand. In the professional school, students are properly within the realm of ideas and principles, but they are still limited to a specific human interest with which alone their understanding is concerned. But the college is called liberal as against both of these because the instruction is dominated by no special interest, is limited to no single human task, but is intended to take human activity as a whole, to understand human endeavors not in their isolation but in their relations to one another and to the total experience which we call the life of our people. And just as we believe that the building of ships has become more successful as

men have come to a knowledge of the principles involved in their construction; just as the practise of medicine has become more successful as we have come to a knowledge of the human body, of the conditions within it and the influences without;—just so the teacher in the liberal college believes that life as a total enterprise, life as it presents itself to each one of us in his career as an individual, —human living,—will be more successful in so far as men come to understand it and to know it as they attempt to carry it on. To give boys an intellectual grasp on human experience—this it seems to me is the teacher's conception of the chief function of the liberal college.

May I call attention to the fact that this second answer of the teacher defines the aim of the college as avowedly and frankly practical? Knowledge is to be sought chiefly for the sake of its contribution to the other activities of human living. But, on the other hand, it is as definitely declared that in method the college is fully and unreservedly intellectual. If we can see that these two demands are not in conflict, but that they stand together in the harmonious relation of means and ends, of instrument and achievement, of method and result, we may escape many a needless conflict and keep our educational policy in singleness of aim and action. To do this we must show that the college is intellectual, not as opposed to practical interests and purposes, but as opposed to unpractical and unwise methods of work. The issue is not between practical and intellectual aims but between the immediate and the remote aim, between the hasty and the measured procedure, between the demand for results at once and the willingness to wait for the best results. The intellectual road to success is longer and more roundabout than any other, but they who are strong and willing for the climb-

ing are brought to higher levels of achievement than they could possibly have attained had they gone straight forward in the pathway of quick returns. If this were not true the liberal college would have no proper place in our life at all. In so far as it is true the college has a right to claim the best of our young men to give them its preparation for the living they are to do.

#### IV

But now that we have attempted to interpret the intellectual mission of the college, it may be fair to ask: "Are the teachers and scholars of our day always faithful to that mission? Do their statements and their practise always ring in accord with the principle which has been stated?" It seems to me that at two points they are constantly off the key, constantly at variance with the reasons by which alone their teaching can be justified.

In the first place, it often appears as if our teachers and scholars were deliberately in league to mystify and befog the popular mind regarding this practical value of intellectual work. They seem not to wish too much said about the results and benefits. Their desire is to keep aloft the intellectual banner, to proclaim the intellectual gospel, to demand of student and public alike adherence to the faith. And in general when they are questioned as to results they give little satisfaction except to those who are already pledged to unwavering confidence in their *ipse dixit*. And largely as a result of this attitude the American people seem to me to have little understanding of the intellectual work of the college. Our citizens and patrons can see the value of games and physical exercises; they readily perceive the importance of the social give and take

of a college democracy; they can appreciate the value of studies which prepare a young man for his profession and so anticipate or replace the professional school; they can even believe that if a boy is kept at some sort of thinking for four years his mind may become more acute, more systematic, more accurate, and hence more useful than it was before. But as for the content of a college course, as for the value of knowledge, what a boy gains by knowing Greek or economics, philosophy or literature, history or biology, except as they are regarded as having professional usefulness, I think our friends are in the dark and are likely to remain so until we turn on the light. When our teachers say, as they sometimes do say, that the effect of knowledge upon the character and life of the student must always be for the college an accident, a circumstance which has no essential connection with its real aim or function, then it seems to me that our educational policy is wholly out of joint. If there be no essential connection between instruction and life, then there is no reason for giving instruction except in so far as it is pleasant in itself, and we have no educational policy at all. As against this hesitancy, this absence of a conviction, we men of the college should declare in clear and unmistakable terms our creed—the creed that knowledge is justified by its results. We should say to our people so plainly that they cannot misunderstand: “Give us your boys, give us the means we need, and we will so train and inform the minds of those boys that their own lives and the lives of the men about them shall be more successful than they could be without our training. Give us our chance and we will show your boys what human living is, for we are convinced that they can live better in knowledge than they can in ignorance.”



There is a second wandering from the faith which is so common among investigators that it may fairly be called the "fallacy of the scholar." It is the belief that all knowledge is so good that all parts of knowledge are equally good. Ask many of our scholars and teachers what subjects a boy should study in order that he may gain insight for human living, and they will say: "It makes no difference in what department of knowledge he studies; let him go into Sanscrit or bacteriology, into mathematics or history; if only he goes where men are actually dealing with intellectual problems, and if only he learns how to deal with problems himself, the aim of education is achieved, he has entered into intellectual activity." This point of view, running through all the varieties of the elective system, seems to me hopelessly at variance with any sound educational doctrine. It represents the scholar of the day at his worst both as a thinker and as a teacher. In so far as it dominates a group of college teachers it seems to me to render them unfit to determine and to administer a college curriculum. It is an announcement that they have no guiding principles in their educational practise, no principles of selection in their arrangement of studies, no genuine grasp on the relationship between knowledge and life. It is the concerted statement of a group of men each of whom is lost within the limits of his own special studies, and who as a group seem not to realize the organic relationships between them nor the common task which should bind them together.

In bringing this second criticism against our scholars I am not urging that the principle of election of college studies should be entirely discontinued. But I should like to inquire by what right and within what limits it is justified. The most familiar argument in its favor is that if

a student is allowed to choose along the lines of his own intellectual or professional interest he will have enthusiasm, the eagerness which comes with the following of one's own bent. Now just so far as this result is achieved, just so far as the quality of scholarship is improved, the procedure is good, and we may follow it if we do not thereby lose other results more valuable than our gain. But if the special interest comes into conflict with more fundamental ones, if what the student prefers is opposed to what he ought to prefer, then we of the college cannot leave the choice with him. We must say to him frankly: "If you do not care for liberal training you had better go elsewhere; we have a special and definite task assigned us which demands that we keep free from the domination of special or professional pursuits. So long as we are faithful to that task we cannot give you what you ask."

In my opinion, however, the fundamental motive of the elective system is not the one which has been mentioned. In the last resort our teachers allow students to choose their own studies, not in order to appeal to intellectual or to professional interest, but because they themselves have no choice of their own in which they believe with sufficient intensity to impose it upon their pupils. And this lack of a dominating educational policy is in turn an expression of an intellectual attitude, a point of view, which marks the scholars of our time. In a word, it seems to me that our willingness to allow students to wander about in the college curriculum is one of the most characteristic expressions of a certain intellectual agnosticism, a kind of intellectual bankruptcy, into which, in spite of all our wealth of information, the spirit of the time has fallen. Let me explain my meaning.

The old classical curriculum was founded by men who

had a theory of the world and of human life. They had taken all the available content of human knowledge and had wrought it together into a coherent whole. What they knew was, as judged by our standards, very little in amount. But upon that little content they had expended all the infinite pains of understanding and interpretation. They had taken the separate judgments of science, philosophy, history, and the arts, and had so welded them together, so established their relationships with one another, so freed them from contradictions and ambiguities that, so far as might be in their day and generation, human life as a whole and the world about us were known, were understood, were rationalized. They had a knowledge of human experience by which they could live and which they could teach to others engaged in the activities of living.

But with the invention of methods of scientific investigation and discovery there came pouring into the mind of Europe great masses of intellectual material,—astronomy, physics, chemistry. This content for a time it could not understand, could not relate to what it already knew. The old boundary-lines did not enclose the new fields; the old explanations and interpretations would not fit the new facts. Knowledge had not grown, it had simply been enlarged, and the two masses of content, the old and the new, stood facing each other with no common ground of understanding. Here was the intellectual task of the great leaders of the early modern thought of Europe: to re-establish the unity of knowledge, to discover the relationships between these apparently hostile bodies of judgments, to know the world again, but with all the added richness of the new insights and the new information. This was the work of Leibnitz and Spinoza, of Kant and Hegel, and

those who labored with them. And in a very considerable measure the task had been accomplished, order had been restored. But again with the inrush of the newer discoveries, first in the field of biology and then later in the world of human relationships, the difficulties have returned, multiplied a thousandfold. Every day sees a new field of facts opened up, a new method of investigation invented, a new department of knowledge established. And in the rush of it all these new sciences come merely as additions, not to be understood but simply numbered, not to be interpreted but simply listed in the great collection of separate fields of knowledge. If you will examine the work of any scientist within one of these fields, you will find him ordering, systematizing, reducing to principles—in a word, knowing every fact in terms of its relation to every other fact and to the whole field within which it falls. But at the same time these separate sciences, these separate groups of judgment, are left standing side by side with no intelligible connections, no establishment of relationships, no interpretation in the sense in which we insist upon it with each of the fields taken by itself. Is it not the characteristic statement of a scholar of our time to say: "I do not know what may be the ultimate significance of these facts and these principles; all that I know is that if you will follow my methods within my field you will find the facts coming into order, the principles coming into simple and coherent arrangement. With any problems apart from this order and this arrangement I have intellectually no concern."

It has become an axiom with us that the genuine student labors within his own field. And if the student ventures forth to examine the relations of his field to the surrounding country he very easily becomes a popularizer,

a litterateur, a speculator, and, worst of all, unscientific. Now I do not object to a man's minding his own intellectual business if he chooses to do so, but when a man minds his own business because he does not know any other business, because he has no knowledge whatever of the relationships which justify his business and make it worth while, then I think one may say that though such a man minds his own affairs he does not know them, he does not understand them. Such a man, from the point of view of the demands of a liberal education, differs in no essential respect from the tradesman who does not understand his trade or the professional man who merely practises his profession. Just as truly as they, he is shut up within a special interest; just as truly as they, he is making no intellectual attempt to understand his experience in its unity. And the pity of it is that more and more the chairs in our colleges are occupied by men who have only this special interest, this specialized information, and it is through them that we attempt to give our boys a liberal education, which the teachers themselves have not achieved.

I should not like to be misunderstood in making this railing accusation against our teachers and our time. If I say that our knowledge is at present a collection of scattered observations about the world rather than an understanding of it, fairness compels the admission that the failure is due to the inherent difficulties of the situation and to the novelty of the problems presented. If I cry out against the agnosticism of our people it is not as one who has escaped from it, nor as one who would point the way back to the older synthesis, but simply as one who believes that the time has come for a reconstruction, for a new synthesis. We have had time enough now to get some notion of our bearings, shocks enough to get over

our nervousness and discomfiture when a new one comes along. It is the opportunity and the obligation of this generation to think through the content of our knowing once again, to understand it, so far as we can. And in such a battle as this, surely it is the part of the college to take the lead. Here is the mission of the college teacher as of no other member of our common life. Surely he should stand before his pupils and before all of us as a man who has achieved some understanding of this human situation of ours, but, more than that, as one who is eager for the conflict with the powers of darkness and who can lead his pupils in enthusiastic devotion to the common cause of enlightenment.

## V

And now, finally, after these attacks upon the policies which other men have derived from their love of knowledge, may I suggest two matters of policy which seem to me to follow from the definition of education which we have taken? The first concerns the content of the college course; the second has to do with the method of its presentation to the undergraduate.

We have said that the system of free election is natural for those to whom knowledge is simply a number of separate departments. It is equally true that just in so far as knowledge attains unity, just so far as the relations of the various departments are perceived, freedom of election by the student must be limited. For it at once appears that on the one side there are vast ranges of information which have virtually no significance for the purposes of a liberal education, while on the other hand there are certain elements so fundamental and vital that without any one of them a liberal education is impossible.

I should like to indicate certain parts of human knowledge which seem to me so essential that no principle of election should ever be allowed to drive them out of the course of any college student.

First, a student should become acquainted with the fundamental motives and purposes and beliefs which, clearly or unclearly recognized, underlie all human experience and bind it together. He must perceive the moral strivings, the intellectual endeavors, the æsthetic experiences of his race, and closely linked with these, determining and determined by them, the beliefs about the world which have appeared in our systems of religion. To investigate this field, to bring it to such clearness of formulation as may be possible, is the task of philosophy—an essential element in any liberal education. Secondly, as in human living, our motives, purposes, and beliefs have found expression in institutions—those concerted modes of procedure by which we work together—a student should be made acquainted with these. He should see and appreciate what is intended, what accomplished, and what left undone by such institutions as property, the courts, the family, the church, the mill. To know these as contributing and failing to contribute to human welfare is the work of our social or humanistic sciences, into which a boy must go on his way through the liberal college. Thirdly, in order to understand the motives and the institutions of human life one must know the conditions which surround it, the stage on which the game is played. To give this information is the business of astronomy, geology, physics, chemistry, biology, and the other descriptive sciences. These a boy must know, so far as they are significant and relevant to his purpose. Fourthly, as all three of these factors, the motives, the institutions, the natural processes,

have sprung from the past and have come to be what they are by change upon change in the process of time, the student of human life must try to learn the sequence of events from which the present has come. The development of human thought and attitude, the development of human institutions, the development of the world and of the beings about us—all these must be known, as throwing light upon present problems, present instrumentalities, present opportunities in the life of human endeavor. And in addition to these four studies which render human experience in terms of abstract ideas, a liberal education must take account of those concrete representations of life which are given in the arts, and especially in the art of literature. It is well that a boy should be acquainted with his world not simply as expressed by the principles of knowledge, but also as depicted by the artist with all the vividness and definiteness which are possible in the portrayal of individual beings in individual relationships. These five elements, then, a young man must take from a college of liberal training: the contributions of philosophy, of humanistic science, of natural science, of history, and of literature. So far as knowledge is concerned, these at least he should have, welded together in some kind of interpretation of his own experience and of the world in which he lives.

My second suggestion is that our college curriculum should be so arranged and our instruction so devised that its vital connection with the living of men should be obvious even to an undergraduate. A little while ago I heard one of the most prominent citizens of this country speaking of his college days, and he said: "I remember so vividly those few occasions on which the professor would put aside the books and talk like a real man about



real things." Oh, the bitterness of those words to the teacher! Our books are not dealing with the real things, and for the most part we are not real men either, but just old fogies and bookworms. And to be perfectly frank about the whole matter, I believe that in large measure our pupils are indifferent to their studies simply because they do not see that these are important.

Now if we really have a vital course of study to present I believe that this difficulty can in large measure be overcome. It is possible to make a freshman realize the need of translating his experience from the forms of feeling to those of ideas. He can and he ought to be shown that now, his days of mere tutelage being over, it is time for him to face the problems of his people, to begin to think about those problems for himself, to learn what other men have learned and thought before him—in a word, to get himself ready to take his place among those who are responsible for the guidance of our common life by ideas and principles and purposes. If this could be done, I think we should get from the reality-loving American boy something like an intellectual enthusiasm, something of the spirit that comes when he plays a game that seems to him really worth playing. But I do not believe that this result can be achieved without a radical reversal of the arrangement of the college curriculum. I should like to see every freshman at once plunged into the problems of philosophy, into the difficulties and perplexities about our institutions, into the scientific accounts of the world especially as they bear on human life, into the portrayals of human experience which are given by the masters of literature. If this were done by proper teaching, it seems to me the boy's college course would at once take on significance for him; he would understand what he is about;

and though he would be a sadly puzzled boy at the end of the first year, he would still have before him three good years of study, of investigation, of reflection, and of discipleship, in which to achieve, so far as may be, the task to which he has been set. Let him once feel the problems of the present, and his historical studies will become significant; let him know what other men have discovered and thought about his problems, and he will be ready to deal with them himself. But in any case, the whole college course will be unified and dominated by a single interest, a single purpose—that of so understanding human life as to be ready and equipped for the practise of it. And this would mean for the college, not another seeking of the way of quick returns, but rather an escape from aimless wanderings in the mere bypaths of knowledge, a resolute climbing on the highroad to a unified grasp upon human experience.

I have taken so much of your time this morning that an apology seems due for the things I have omitted to mention. I have said nothing of the organization of the college, nothing of the social life of the students, nothing of the relations with the alumni, nothing of the needs and qualifications of the teachers, and even within the consideration of the course of study, nothing of the value of specialization or of the disciplinary subjects or of the training in language and expression. And I have put these aside deliberately, for the sake of a cause which is greater than any of them—a cause which lies at the very heart of the liberal college. It is the cause of making clear to the American people the mission of the teacher, of convincing them of the value of knowledge: not the specialized knowledge which contributes to immediate practical aims, but the unified understanding which is Insight.

## XVII

### THE STRENUOUS LIFE <sup>1</sup>

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

In speaking to you, men of the greatest city of the West, men of the State which gave to the country Lincoln and Grant, men who pre-eminently and distinctly embody all that is most American in the American character, I wish to preach, <sup>remembered</sup> not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, <sup>effort</sup> the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph.

A life of slothful ease, a life of that peace which springs merely from lack either of desire or of power to strive after great things, is as little worthy of a nation as of an individual. I ask only that what every self-respecting American demands from himself and from his sons shall be demanded of the American nation as a whole. Who among you would teach your boys that ease, that peace is to be the first consideration in their eyes—to be the ultimate goal after which they strive? You men of Chicago have made this city great, you men of Illinois have

<sup>1</sup> A speech before the Hamilton Club, Chicago, April 10, 1899. Reprinted from the volume entitled *The Strenuous Life, Essays and Addresses*, through the courtesy of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt and of The Century Company.

done your share, and more than your share, in making America great, because you neither preach nor practise such a doctrine. You work yourselves, and you bring up your sons to work. If you are rich and are worth your salt, you will teach your sons that, though they may have leisure, it is not to be spent in idleness; for wisely used leisure merely means that those who possess it, being free from the necessity of working for their livelihood, are all the more bound to carry on some kind of non-remunerative work in science, in letters, in art, in exploration, in historical research—work of the type we most need in this country, the successful carrying out of which reflects most honor upon the nation. We do not admire the man of timid peace. We admire the man who embodies victorious effort; the man who never wrongs his neighbor, who is prompt to help a friend, but who has those virile qualities necessary to win in the stern strife of actual life. It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed. In this life we get nothing save by effort. Freedom from effort in the present merely means that there has been stored up effort in the past. A man can be freed from the necessity of work only by the fact that he or his fathers before him have worked to good purpose. If the freedom thus purchased is used aright, and the man still does actual work, though of a different kind, whether as a writer or a general, whether in the field of politics or in the field of exploration and adventure, he shows he deserves his good fortune. But if he treats this period of freedom from the need of actual labor as a period, not of preparation, but of mere enjoyment, even though perhaps not of vicious enjoyment, he shows that he is simply a cumberer of the earth's surface, and he surely unfits himself to hold his own with his fellows if the need to do

so should again arise. A mere life of ease is not in the end a very satisfactory life, and, above all, it is a life which ultimately unfits those who follow it for serious work in the world.

In the last analysis a healthy state can exist only when the men and women who make it up lead clean, vigorous, healthy lives; when the children are so trained that they shall endeavor, not to shirk difficulties, but to overcome them; not to seek ease, but to know how to wrest triumph from toil and risk. The man must be glad to do a man's work, to dare and endure and to labor; to keep himself, and to keep those dependent upon him. The woman must be the housewife, the helpmeet of the home maker, the wise and fearless mother of many healthy children. In one of Daudet's powerful and melancholy books he speaks of "the fear of maternity, the haunting terror of the young wife of the present day." When such words can be truthfully written of a nation, that nation is rotten to the heart's core. When men fear work or fear righteous war, when women fear motherhood, they tremble on the brink of doom; and well it is that they should vanish from the earth, where they are fit subjects for the scorn of all men and women who are themselves strong and brave and high-minded.

As it is with the individual, so it is with the nation. It is a base untruth to say that happy is the nation that has no history. Thrice happy is the nation that has a glorious history. Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat. If in 1861 the men who loved the Union had believed that

peace was the end of all things, and war and strife the worst of all things, and had acted up to their belief, we would have saved hundreds of thousands of lives; we would have saved hundreds of millions of dollars. Moreover, besides saving all the blood and treasure we then lavished, we would have prevented the heart-break of many women, the dissolution of many homes, and we would have spared the country those months of gloom and shame when it seemed as if our armies marched only to defeat. We could have avoided all this suffering simply by shrinking from strife. And if we had thus avoided it, we would have shown that we were weaklings, and that we were unfit to stand among the great nations of the earth. Thank God for the iron in the blood of our fathers, the men who upheld the wisdom of Lincoln and bore sword or rifle in the armies of Grant! Let us, the children of the men who proved themselves equal to the mighty days, let us, the children of the men who carried the great Civil War to a triumphant conclusion, praise the God of our fathers that the ignoble counsels of peace were rejected; that the suffering and loss, the blackness of sorrow and despair, were unflinchingly faced, and the years of strife endured; for in the end the slave was freed, the Union restored, and the mighty American republic placed once more as a helmeted queen among nations.

We of this generation do not have to face a task such as that our fathers faced, but we have our tasks, and woe to us if we fail to perform them! We cannot, if we would, play the part of China, and be content to rot by inches in ignoble ease within our borders, taking no interest in what goes on beyond them, sunk in a scrambling commercialism; heedless of the higher life, the life of aspiration, of toil and risk, busying ourselves only with the

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be done

wants of our bodies for the day, until suddenly we should find, beyond a shadow of question, what China has already found, that in this world the nation that has trained itself to a career of unwarlike and isolated ease is bound, in the end, to go down before other nations which have not lost the manly and adventurous qualities. If we are to be a really great people, we must strive in good faith to play a great part in the world. We cannot avoid meeting great issues. All that we can determine for ourselves is whether we shall meet them well or ill. In 1898 we could not help being brought face to face with the problem of war with Spain. All we could decide was whether we should shrink like cowards from the contest, or enter into it as beseemed a brave and high-spirited people; and, once in, whether failure or success should crown our banners. So it is now. We cannot avoid the responsibilities that confront us in Hawaii, Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines. All we can decide is whether we shall meet them in a way that will redound to the national credit, or whether we shall make of our dealings with these new problems a dark and shameful page in our history. To refuse to deal with them at all merely amounts to dealing with them badly. We have a given problem to solve. If we undertake the solution, there is, of course, always danger that we may not solve it aright; but to refuse to undertake the solution simply renders it certain that we cannot possibly solve it aright. The timid man, the lazy man the man who distrusts his country, the overcivilized man, who has lost the great fighting, masterful virtues, the ignorant man, and the man of dull mind, whose soul is incapable of feeling the mighty lift that thrills "stern men with empires in their brains"—all these, of course, shrink from seeing the nation under-

take its new duties; shrink from seeing us build a navy and an army adequate to our needs; shrink from seeing us do our share of the world's work, by bringing order out of chaos in the great, fair tropic islands from which the valor of our soldiers and sailors has driven the Spanish flag. These are the men who fear the strenuous life, who fear the only national life which is really worth leading. They believe in that cloistered life which saps the hardy virtues in a nation, as it saps them in the individual; or else they are wedded to that base spirit of gain and greed which recognizes in commercialism the be-all and end-all of national life, instead of realizing that, though an indispensable element, it is, after all, but one of the many elements that go to make up true national greatness. No country can long endure if its foundations are not laid deep in the material prosperity which comes from thrift, from business energy and enterprise, from hard, unsparing effort in the fields of industrial activity; but neither was any nation ever yet truly great if it relied upon material prosperity alone. All honor must be paid to the architects of our material prosperity, to the great captains of industry who have built our factories and our railroads, to the strong men who toil for wealth with brain or hand; for great is the debt of the nation to these and their kind. But our debt is yet greater to the men whose highest type is to be found in a statesman like Lincoln, a soldier like Grant. They showed by their lives that they recognized the law of work, the law of strife; they toiled to win a competence for themselves and those dependent upon them; but they recognized that there were yet other and even loftier duties—duties to the nation and duties to the race.

We cannot sit huddled within our own borders and



avow ourselves merely an assemblage of well-to-do hucksters who care nothing for what happens beyond. Such a policy would defeat even its own end; for as the nations grow to have ever wider and wider interests, and are brought into closer and closer contact, if we are to hold our own in the struggle for naval and commercial supremacy, we must build up our power without our own borders. We must build the isthmian canal, and we must grasp the points of vantage which will enable us to have our say in deciding the destiny of the oceans of the East and the West.

*epic*  
So much for the commercial side. From the standpoint of international honor the argument is even stronger. The guns that thundered off Manila and Santiago left us echoes of glory, but they also left us a legacy of duty. If we drove out a mediæval tyranny only to make room for savage anarchy, we had better not have begun the task at all. It is worse than idle to say that we have no duty to perform, and can leave to their fates the islands we have conquered. Such a course would be the course of infamy. It would be followed at once by utter chaos in the wretched islands themselves. Some stronger, manlier power would have to step in and do the work, and we would have shown ourselves weaklings, unable to carry to successful completion the labors that great and high-spirited nations are eager to undertake.

The work must be done; we cannot escape our responsibility; and if we are worth our salt, we shall be glad of the chance to do the work—glad of the chance to show ourselves equal to one of the great tasks set modern civilization. But let us not deceive ourselves as to the importance of the task. Let us not be misled by vainglory into underestimating the strain it will put on our powers.

Above all, let us, as we value our own self-respect, face the responsibilities with proper seriousness, courage, and high resolve. We must demand the highest order of integrity and ability in our public men who are to grapple with these new problems. We must hold to a rigid accountability those public servants who show unfaithfulness to the interests of the nation or inability to rise to the high level of the new demands upon our strength and our resources.

*Detail* Of course we must remember not to judge any public servant by any one act, and especially should we beware of attacking the men who are merely the occasions and not the causes of disaster. Let me illustrate what I mean by the army and the navy. If twenty years ago we had gone to war, we should have found the navy as absolutely unprepared as the army. At that time our ships could not have encountered with success the fleets of Spain any more than nowadays we can put untrained soldiers, no matter how brave, who are armed with archaic black-powder weapons, against well-drilled regulars armed with the highest type of modern repeating rifle. But in the early eighties the attention of the nation became directed to our naval needs. Congress most wisely made a series of appropriations to build up a new navy, and under a succession of able and patriotic secretaries, of both political parties, the navy was gradually built up, until its material became equal to its splendid personnel, with the result that in the summer of 1898 it leaped to its proper place as one of the most brilliant and formidable fighting navies in the entire world. We rightly pay all honor to the men controlling the navy at the time it won these great deeds, honor to Secretary Long and Admiral Dewey, to the captains who handled the ships in action, to the dar-

ing lieutenants who braved death in the smaller craft, and to the heads of bureaus at Washington who saw that the ships were so commanded, so armed, so equipped, so well engined, as to insure the best results. But let us also keep ever in mind that all of this would not have availed if it had not been for the wisdom of the men who during the preceding fifteen years had built up the navy. Keep in mind the secretaries of the navy during those years; keep in mind the senators and congressmen who by their votes gave the money necessary to build and to armor the ships, to construct the great guns, and to train the crews; remember also those who actually did build the ships, the armor, and the guns; and remember the admirals and captains who handled battleship, cruiser, and torpedo-boat on the high seas, alone and in squadrons, developing the seamanship, the gunnery, and the power of acting together, which their successors utilized so gloriously at Manila and off Santiago. And, gentlemen, remember the converse, too. Remember that justice has two sides. Be just to those who built up the navy, and, for the sake of the future of the country, keep in mind those who opposed its building up. Read the *Congressional Record*. Find out the senators and congressmen who opposed the grants for building the new ships; who opposed the purchase of armor, without which the ships were worthless; who opposed any adequate maintenance for the Navy Department and strove to cut down the number of men necessary to man our fleets. The men who did these things were one and all working to bring disaster on the country. They have no share in the glory of Manila, in the honor of Santiago. They have no cause to feel proud of the valor of our sea-captains, of the renown of our flag. Their motives may or may not have been good, but their

acts were heavily fraught with evil. They did ill for the national honor, and we won in spite of their sinister opposition.

Now, apply all this to our public men of to-day. Our army has never been built up as it should be built up. I shall not discuss with an audience like this the puerile suggestion that a nation of seventy millions of freemen is in danger of losing its liberties from the existence of an army of one hundred thousand men, three-fourths of whom will be employed in certain foreign islands, in certain coast fortresses, and on Indian reservations. No man of good sense and stout heart can take such a proposition seriously. If we are such weaklings as the proposition implies, then we are unworthy of freedom in any event. To no body of men in the United States is the country so much indebted as to the splendid officers and enlisted men of the regular army and navy. There is no body from which the country has less to fear, and none of which it should be prouder, none which it should be more anxious to upbuild.

Our army needs complete reorganization—not merely enlarging—and the reorganization can only come as the result of legislation. A proper general staff should be established, and the positions of ordnance, commissary, and quartermaster officers should be filled by detail from the line. Above all, the army must be given the chance to exercise in large bodies. Never again should we see, as we saw in the Spanish War, major-generals in command of divisions who had never before commanded three companies together in the field. Yet, incredible to relate, Congress has shown a queer inability to learn some of the lessons of the war. There were large bodies of men in both branches who opposed the declaration of war, who

opposed the ratification of peace, who opposed the up-building of the army, and who even opposed the purchase of armor at a reasonable price for the battleships and cruisers, thereby putting an absolute stop to the building of any new fighting-ships for the navy. If, during the years to come, any disaster should befall our arms, afloat or ashore, and thereby any shame come to the United States, remember that the blame will lie upon the men whose names appear upon the roll-calls of Congress on the wrong side of these great questions. On them will lie the burden of any loss of our soldiers and sailors, of any dishonor to the flag; and upon you and the people of this country will lie the blame if you do not repudiate, in no unmistakable way, what these men have done. The blame will not rest upon the untrained commander of untried troops, upon the civil officers of a department the organization of which has been left utterly inadequate, or upon the admiral with an insufficient number of ships; but upon the public men who have so lamentably failed in forethought as to refuse to remedy these evils long in advance, and upon the nation that stands behind those public men.

So, at the present hour, no small share of the responsibility for the blood shed in the Philippines, the blood of our brothers, and the blood of their wild and ignorant foes, lies at the thresholds of those who so long delayed the adoption of the treaty of peace, and of those who, by their worse than foolish words, deliberately invited a savage people to plunge into a war fraught with sure disaster for them—a war, too, in which our own brave men who follow the flag must pay with their blood for the silly, mock humanitarianism of the prattlers who sit at home in peace.

The army and the navy are the sword and the shield which this nation must carry if she is to do her duty among the nations of the earth—if she is not to stand merely as the China of the western hemisphere. Our proper conduct toward the tropic islands we have wrested from Spain is merely the form which our duty has taken at the moment. Of course we are bound to handle the affairs of our own household well. We must see that there is civic honesty, civic cleanliness, civic good sense in our home administration of city, State, and nation. We must strive for honesty in office, for honesty toward the creditors of the nation and of the individual; for the widest freedom of individual initiative where possible, and for the wisest control of individual initiative where it is hostile to the welfare of the many. But because we set our own household in order we are not thereby excused from playing our part in the great affairs of the world. A man's first duty is to his own home, but he is not thereby excused from doing his duty to the State; for if he fails in this second duty it is under the penalty of ceasing to be a freeman. In the same way, while a nation's first duty is within its own borders, it is not thereby absolved from facing its duties in the world as a whole; and if it refuses to do so, it merely forfeits its right to struggle for a place among the peoples that shape the destiny of mankind.

In the West Indies and the Philippines alike we are confronted by most difficult problems. It is cowardly to shrink from solving them in the proper way; for solved they must be, if not by us, then by some stronger and more manful race. If we are too weak, too selfish, or too foolish to solve them, some bolder and abler people must undertake the solution. Personally, I am far too firm a believer in the greatness of my country and the power of

my countrymen to admit for one moment that we shall ever be driven to the ignoble alternative.

The problems are different for the different islands. Porto Rico is not large enough to stand alone. We must govern it wisely and well, primarily in the interest of its own people. Cuba is, in my judgment, entitled ultimately to settle for itself whether it shall be an independent State or an integral portion of the mightiest of republics. But until order and stable liberty are secured, we must remain in the island to insure them; and infinite tact, judgment, moderation, and courage must be shown by our military and civil representatives in keeping the island pacified, in relentlessly stamping out brigandage, in protecting all alike, and yet in showing proper recognition to the men who have fought for Cuban liberty. The Philippines offer a yet graver problem. Their population includes half-caste and native Christians, warlike Moslems, and wild pagans. Many of their people are utterly unfit for self-government, and show no signs of becoming fit. Others may in time become fit, but at present can only take part in self-government under a wise supervision, at once firm and beneficent. We have driven Spanish tyranny from the islands. If we now let it be replaced by savage anarchy, our work has been for harm and not for good. I have scant patience with those who fear to undertake the task of governing the Philippines, and who openly avow that they do fear to undertake it, or that they shrink from it because of the expense and trouble; but I have even scantier patience with those who make a pretense of humanitarianism to hide and cover their timidity, and who cant about "liberty" and the "consent of the governed" in order to excuse themselves for their unwillingness to play the part of men. Their doctrines, if carried out,

would make it incumbent upon us to leave the Apaches of Arizona to work out their own salvation, and to decline to interfere in a single Indian reservation. Their doctrines condemn your forefathers and mine for ever having settled in these United States.

England's rule in India and Egypt has been of great benefit to England, for it has trained up generations of men accustomed to look at the larger and loftier side of public life. It has been of even greater benefit to India and Egypt. And finally, and most of all, it has advanced the cause of civilization. So, if we do our duty aright in the Philippines, we will add to that national renown which is the highest and finest part of national life, will greatly benefit the people of the Philippine Islands, and, above all, we will play our part well in the great work of uplifting mankind. But to do this work, keep ever in mind that we must show in a very high degree the qualities of courage, of honesty, and of good judgment. Resistance must be stamped out. The first and all-important work to be done is to establish the supremacy of our flag. We must put down armed resistance before we can accomplish anything else, and there should be no parleying, no faltering, in dealing with our foe. As for those in our own country who encourage the foe, we can afford contemptuously to disregard them; but it must be remembered that their utterances are not saved from being treasonable merely by the fact that they are despicable.

When once we have put down armed resistance, when once our rule is acknowledged, then an even more difficult task will begin, for then we must see to it that the islands are administered with absolute honesty and with good judgment. If we let the public service of the islands be turned into the prey of the spoils politician, we shall have



begun to tread the path which Spain trod to her own destruction. We must send out there only good and able men, chosen for their fitness, and not because of their partisan service, and these men must not only administer impartial justice to the natives and serve their own government with honesty and fidelity, but must show the utmost tact and firmness, remembering that, with such people as those with whom we are to deal, weakness is the greatest of crimes, and that next to weakness comes lack of consideration for their principles and prejudices.

I preach to you, then, my countrymen, that our country calls not for the life of ease but for the life of strenuous endeavor. The twentieth century looms before us big with the fate of many nations. If we stand idly by, if we seek merely swollen, slothful ease and ignoble peace, if we shrink from the hard contests where men must win at hazard of their lives and at the risk of all they hold dear, then the bolder and stronger peoples will pass us by, and will win for themselves the domination of the world. Let us therefore boldly face the life of strife, resolute to do our duty well and manfully; resolute to uphold righteousness by deed and by word; resolute to be both honest and brave, to serve high ideals, yet to use practical methods. Above all, let us shrink from no strife, moral or physical, within or without the nation, provided we are certain that the strife is justified, for it is only through strife, through hard and dangerous endeavor, that we shall ultimately win the goal of true national greatness.

## XVIII

### AN APOLOGY FOR IDLERS <sup>1</sup>

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

"BOSWELL: *We grow weary when idle.*

"JOHNSON: *That is, sir, because others being busy, we want company; but if we were idle, there would be no growing weary; we should all entertain one another.*"

Just now, when every one is bound, under pain of a decree in absence convicting them of *lèse-respectability*, to enter on some lucrative profession, and labor therein with something not far short of enthusiasm, a cry from the opposite party who are content when they have enough, and like to look on and enjoy in the meanwhile, savors a little of bravado and gasconade. And yet this should not be. Idleness so called, which does not consist in doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognized in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class, has as good a right to state its position as industry itself. It is admitted that the presence of people who refuse to enter in the great handicap race for sixpenny pieces is at once an insult and a disenchantment for those who do. A fine fellow (as we see so many) takes his determination, votes for the sixpences, and, in the emphatic Americanism, "goes for" them. And while such an one is ploughing distressfully up the road, it is not hard to understand his resentment, when he perceives cool persons in the

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Virginibus Puerisque*.

meadows by the wayside, lying with a handkerchief over their ears and a glass at their elbow. Alexander is touched in a very delicate place by the disregard of Diogenes. Where was the glory of having taken Rome for these tumultuous barbarians who poured into the Senate house and found the Fathers sitting silent and unmoved by their success? It is a sore thing to have labored along and scaled the arduous hilltops, and, when all is done, find humanity indifferent to your achievement. Hence physicists condemn the unphysical; financiers have only a superficial toleration for those who know little of stocks; literary persons despise the unlettered; and people of all pursuits combine to disparage those who have none.

But, though this is one difficulty of the subject, it is not the greatest. You could not be put in prison for speaking against industry, but you can be sent to Coventry for speaking like a fool. The greatest difficulty with most subjects is to do them well; therefore, please to remember this is an apology. It is certain that much may be judiciously argued in favor of diligence; only there is something to be said against it, and that is what, on the present occasion, I have to say. To state one argument is not necessarily to be deaf to all others, and that a man has written a book of travels in Montenegro is no reason why he should never have been to Richmond.

It is surely beyond a doubt that people should be a good deal idle in youth. For though here and there a Lord Macaulay may escape from school honors with all his wits about him, most boys pay so dear for their medals that they never afterward have a shot in their locker, and begin the world bankrupt. And the same holds true during all the time a lad is educating himself, or suffering others to educate him. It must have been a very fool-

ish old gentleman who addressed Johnson at Oxford in these words: "Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task." The old gentleman seems to have been unaware that many other things besides reading grow irksome, and not a few become impossible, by the time a man has to use spectacles and cannot walk without a stick. Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life. It seems a pity to sit, like the Lady of Shalott, peering into a mirror, with your back turned on all the bustle and glamour of reality. And if a man reads very hard, as the old anecdote reminds us, he will have little time for thoughts.

If you look back on your own education, I am sure it will not be the full, vivid, instructive hours of truancy that you regret; you would rather cancel some lack-lustre periods between sleep and waking in the class. For my own part, I have attended a good many lectures in my time. I still remember that the spinning of a top is a case of Kinetic Stability. I still remember that Emphyseus is not a disease, nor Stillicide a crime. But though I would not willingly part with such scraps of science, I do not set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that I came by in the open street while I was playing truant. This is not the moment to dilate on that mighty place of education, which was the favorite school of Dickens and of Balzac, and turns out yearly many inglorious masters in the Science of the Aspects of Life. Suffice it to say this: if a lad does not learn in the streets, it is because he has no faculty of learning. Nor is the truant always in the streets, for, if he prefers, he may go out by the gardened suburbs into the country.

He may pitch on some tuft of lilacs over a burn, and smoke innumerable pipes to the tune of the water on the stones. A bird will sing in the thicket. And there he may fall into a vein of kindly thought, and see things in a new perspective. Why, if this be not education, what is? We may conceive Mr. Worldly Wiseman accosting such an one, and the conversation that should thereupon ensue:

“How now, young fellow, what dost thou here?”

“Truly, sir, I take mine ease.”

“Is not this the hour of the class? and shouldst thou not be plying thy Book with diligence, to the end thou mayest obtain knowledge?”

“Nay, but thus also I follow after Learning, by your leave.”

“Learning, quotha! After what fashion, I pray thee? Is it mathematics?”

“No, to be sure.”

“Is it metaphysics?”

“Nor that.”

“Is it some language?”

“Nay, it is no language.”

“Is it a trade?”

“Nor a trade neither.”

“Why, then, what is't?”

“Indeed, sir, as a time may soon come for me to go upon Pilgrimage, I am desirous to note what is commonly done by persons in my case, and where are the ugliest Sloughs and Thickets on the Road; as also, what manner of Staff is of the best service. Moreover, I lie here, by this water, to learn by root-of-heart a lesson which my master teaches me to call Peace, or Contentment.”

Hereupon Mr. Worldly Wiseman was much commoved

with passion, and shaking his cane with a very threatening countenance, broke forth upon this wise: "Learning, quotha!" said he; "I would have all such rogues scourged by the Hangman!"

And so he would go his way, ruffling out his cravat with a crackle of starch, like a turkey when it spread its feathers.

Now this, of Mr. Wiseman's, is the common opinion. A fact is not called a fact, but a piece of gossip, if it does not fall into one of your scholastic categories. An inquiry must be in some acknowledged direction, with a name to go by; or else you are not inquiring at all, only lounging; and the workhouse is too good for you. It is supposed that all knowledge is at the bottom of a well or the far end of a telescope. Sainte-Beuve, as he grew older, came to regard all experience as a single great book, in which to study for a few years ere we go hence; and it seemed all one to him whether you should read in chapter XX, which is the differential calculus, or in chapter XXXIX, which is hearing the band play in the gardens. As a matter of fact, an intelligent person, looking out of his eyes and hearkening in his ears, with a smile on his face all the time, will get more true education than many another in a life of heroic vigils. There is certainly some chill and arid knowledge to be found upon the summits of formal and laborious science; but it is all round about you, and for the trouble of looking, that you will acquire the warm and palpitating facts of life. While others are filling their memory with a lumber of words, one-half of which they will forget before the week be out, your truant may learn some really useful art: to play the fiddle, to know a good cigar, or to speak with ease and opportunity to all varieties of men. Many who have "plied

their book diligently," and know all about some one branch or another of accepted lore, come out of the study with an ancient and owl-like demeanor, and prove dry, stockish, and dyspeptic in all the better and brighter parts of life. Many make a large fortune, who remain underbred and pathetically stupid to the last. And meantime there goes the idler, who began life along with them —by your leave, a different picture. [ He has had time to take care of his health and his spirits; he has been a great deal in the open air, which is the most salutary of all things for both body and mind; and if he has never read the great Book in very recondite places, he has dipped into it and skimmed it over to excellent purpose. Might not the student afford some Hebrew roots, and the business man some of his half-crowns, for a share of the idler's knowledge of life at large, and Art of Living? Nay, and the idler has another and more important quality than these. I mean his wisdom. He who has much looked on at the childish satisfaction of other people in their hobbies will regard his own with only a very ironical indulgence. He will not be heard among the dogmatists. He will have a great and cool allowance for all sorts of people and opinions. If he finds no out-of-the-way truths, he will identify himself with no very burning falsehood. His way takes him along a by-road, not much frequented, but very even and pleasant, which is called Commonplace Lane, and leads to the Belvedere of Common Sense. Thence he shall command an agreeable, if no very noble prospect; and while others behold the East and West, the Devil and the Sunrise, he will be contentedly aware of a sort of morning hour upon all sublunary things, with an army of shadows running speedily and in many different directions into the great daylight of Eternity. The shadows and the gen-

erations, the shrill doctors and the plangent wars, go by into ultimate silence and emptiness; but underneath all this, a man may see, out of the Belvedere windows, much green and peaceful landscape; many firelit parlors; good people laughing, drinking, and making love as they did before the Flood or the French Revolution; and the old shepherd telling his tale under the hawthorn.

(Extreme *busyness*, whether at school or college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity. There is a sort of dead-alive, hackneyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country, or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and, unless Necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still. It is no good speaking to such folk: they *cannot* be idle, their nature is not generous enough; and they pass those hours in a sort of coma, which are not dedicated to furious moiling in the gold-mill. When they do not require to go to the office, when they are not hungry and have no mind to drink, the whole breathing world is a blank to them. If they have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. To see them, you would suppose there was nothing to look at and no one to speak with; you would imagine they were paralyzed or alienated; and yet very possibly they are hard workers in their own way, and have good eyesight for a flaw in a deed or a turn of the market. They have been to school and college, but all



the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play; until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another, while they wait for the train. Before he was breeched, he might have clambered on the boxes; when he was twenty he would have stared at the girls; but now the pipe is smoked out, the snuff-box empty, and my gentleman sits bolt upright upon a bench, with lamentable eyes. This does not appeal to me as being Success in Life.

But it is not only the person himself who suffers from his busy habits, but his wife and children, his friends and relations, and down to the very people he sits with in a railway carriage or an omnibus. Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of many other things. And it is not by any means certain that a man's business is the most important thing he has to do. To an impartial estimate it will seem clear that many of the wisest, most virtuous, and most beneficent parts that are to be played upon the Theatre of Life are filled by gratuitous performers, and pass, among the world at large, as phases of idleness. For in that Theatre, not only the walking gentlemen, singing chambermaids, and diligent fiddlers in the orchestra, but those who look on and clap their hands from the benches, do really play a part and fulfil important offices toward the general result. You are no doubt very dependent on the care of your lawyer and stockbroker, of the guards and signalmen who convey you rapidly from place to place,

and the policemen who walk the streets for your protection; but is there not a thought of gratitude in your heart for certain other benefactors who set you smiling when they fall in your way, or season your dinner with good company? Colonel Newcome helped to lose his friend's money; Fred Bayham had an ugly trick of borrowing shirts; and yet they were better people to fall among than Mr. Barnes. — And though Falstaff was neither sober nor very honest, I think I could name one or two long-faced Barabbases whom the world could better have done without. Hazlitt mentions that he was more sensible of obligation to Northcote, who had never done him anything he could call a service, than to his whole circle of ostentatious friends; for he thought a good companion emphatically the greatest benefactor. I know there are people in the world who cannot feel grateful unless the favor has been done them at the cost of pain and difficulty. But this is a churlish disposition. A man may send you six sheets of letter-paper covered with the most entertaining gossip, or you may pass half an hour pleasantly, perhaps profitably, over an article of his; do you think the service would be greater if he had made the manuscript in his heart's blood, like a compact with the devil? Do you really fancy you should be more beholden to your correspondent if he had been damning you all the while for your importunity? Pleasures are more beneficial than duties because, like the quality of mercy, they are not strained, and they are twice blest. There must always be two to a kiss, and there may be a score in a jest; but wherever there is an element of sacrifice, the favor is conferred with pain, and, among generous people, received with confusion. There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy,

we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or, when they are disclosed, surprise nobody so much as the benefactor. The other day, a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble with so jolly an air that he set every one he passed into a good humor; one of these persons, who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money with this remark: "You see what sometimes comes of looking pleased." If he had looked pleased before, he had now to look both pleased and mystified. For my part, I justify this encouragement of smiling rather than tearful children; I do not wish to pay for tears anywhere but upon the stage; but I am prepared to deal largely in the opposite commodity. A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of good-will; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that—they practically demonstrate the great Theorem of the Livableness of Life. Consequently, if a person cannot be happy without remaining idle, idle he should remain. It is a revolutionary precept; but, thanks to hunger and the workhouse, one not easily to be abused; and within practical limits, it is one of the most incontestable truths in the whole Body of Morality. Look at one of your industrious fellows for a moment, I beseech you. He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest and receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return. Either he absents himself entirely from all fellowship, and lives a recluse in a garret, with carpet slippers and a leaden ink-pot; or he comes among people swiftly

and bitterly, in a contraction of his whole nervous system, to discharge some temper before he returns to work. I do not care how much or how well he works, this fellow is an evil feature in other people's lives. They would be happier if he were dead. They could easier do without his services in the Circumlocution Office than they can tolerate his fractious spirits. He poisons life at the well-head. It is better to be beggared out of hand by a scape-grace nephew than daily hag-ridden by a peevish uncle.

And what, in God's name, is all this pother about? For what cause do they embitter their own and other people's lives? That a man should publish three or thirty articles a year, that he should finish or not finish his great allegorical picture, are questions of little interest to the world. The ranks of life are full; and, although a thousand fall, there are always some to go into the breach. When they told Joan of Arc she should be at home minding women's work, she answered there were plenty to spin and wash. And so even with your own rare gifts! When nature is "so careless of the single life," why should we coddle ourselves into the fancy that our own is of exceptional importance? Suppose Shakespeare had been knocked on the head some dark night in Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves, the world would have wagged on better or worse, the pitcher gone to the well, the scythe to the corn, and the student to his book; and no one been any the wiser of the loss. There are not many works extant, if you look the alternative all over, which are worth the price of a pound of tobacco to a man of limited means. This is a sobering reflection for the proudest of our earthly vanities. Even a tobacconist may, upon consideration, find no great cause for personal vainglory in the phrase; for, although tobacco is an admirable sedative, the quali-

ties necessary for retailing it are neither rare nor precious in themselves. Alas and alas! you may take it how you will, but the services of no single individual are indispensable. Atlas was just a gentleman with a protracted nightmare! And yet you see merchants who go and labor themselves into a great fortune and thence into the bankruptcy court; scribblers who keep scribbling at little articles until their temper is a cross to all who come about them, as though Pharaoh should set the Israelites to make a pin instead of a pyramid; and fine young men who work themselves into a decline, and are driven off in a hearse with white plumes upon it. Would you not suppose these persons had been whispered, by the Master of the Ceremonies, the promise of some momentous destiny; and that this lukewarm bullet on which they play their farces was the bull's-eye and centre point of all the universe? And yet it is not so. The ends for which they give away their priceless youth, for all they know, may be chimerical or hurtful; the glory and riches they expect may never come, or may find them indifferent; and they and the world they inhabit are so inconsiderable that the mind freezes at the thought.

## XIX

### CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH<sup>1</sup>

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*"You know my mother now and then argues very notably; always very warmly at least. I happen often to differ from her; and we both think so well of our own arguments, that we very seldom are so happy as to convince one another. A pretty common case, I believe, in all vehement debatings. She says, I am too witty; Anglicè, too pert; I, that she is too wise; that is to say, being likewise put into English, not so young as she has been."*

—MISS HOWE to MISS HARLOWE, *Clarissa* (vol. ii, Letter xiii).

There is a strong feeling in favor of cowardly and prudential proverbs. The sentiments of a man while he is full of ardor and hope are to be received, it is supposed, with some qualification. But when the same person has ignominiously failed and begins to eat up his words, he should be listened to like an oracle. Most of our pocket wisdom is conceived for the use of mediocre people, to discourage them from ambitious attempts, and generally console them in their mediocrity. And since mediocre people constitute the bulk of humanity, this is no doubt very properly so. But it does not follow that the one sort of proposition is any less true than the other, or that Icarus is not to be more praised, and perhaps more envied, than Mr. Samuel Budgett, the Successful Merchant. The one is dead, to be sure, while the other is still in his counting-house counting out his money; and doubtless this is a consideration. But we have, on the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Virginibus Puerisque*.

some bold and magnanimous sayings common to high races and natures, which set forth the advantage of the losing side, and proclaim it better to be a dead lion than a living dog. It is difficult to fancy how the mediocrities reconcile such sayings with their proverbs. According to the latter, every lad who goes to sea is an egregious ass; never to forget your umbrella through a long life would seem a higher and wiser flight of achievement than to go smiling to the stake; and so long as you are a bit of a coward and inflexible in money matters, you fulfil the whole duty of man.

It is a still more difficult consideration for our average men, that while all their teachers, from Solomon down to Benjamin Franklin and the ungodly Binney, have inculcated the same ideal of manners, caution, and respectability, those characters in history who have most notoriously flown in the face of such precepts are spoken of in hyperbolic terms of praise, and honored with public monuments in the streets of our commercial centres. This is very bewildering to the moral sense. You have Joan of Arc, who left a humble but honest and reputable livelihood under the eyes of her parents to go a-colonelling, in the company of rowdy soldiers, against the enemies of France; surely a melancholy example for one's daughters! And then you have Columbus, who may have pioneered America, but, when all is said, was a most imprudent navigator. His life is not the kind of thing one would like to put into the hands of young people; rather, one would do one's utmost to keep it from their knowledge, as a red flag of adventure and disintegrating influence in life. The time would fail me if I were to recite all the big names in history whose exploits are perfectly irrational and even shocking to the business mind. The incongruity

is speaking; and I imagine it must engender among the mediocrities a very peculiar attitude toward the nobler and showier sides of national life. They will read of the Charge of Balaclava in much the same spirit as they assist at a performance of the *Lyons Mail*. Persons of substance take in the *Times* and sit composedly in pit or boxes according to the degree of their prosperity in business. As for the generals who go galloping up and down among bombshells in absurd cocked hats—as for the actors who rattle their faces and demean themselves for hire upon the stage—they must belong, thank God! to a different order of beings, whom we watch as we watch the clouds careering in the windy, bottomless inane, or read about like characters in ancient and rather fabulous annals. Our offspring would no more think of copying their behavior, let us hope, than of doffing their clothes and painting themselves blue in consequence of certain admissions in the first chapter of their school history of England.

Discredited as they are in practise, the cowardly proverbs hold their own in theory; and it is another instance of the same spirit, that the opinions of old men about life have been accepted as final. All sorts of allowances are made for the illusions of youth; and none, or almost none, for the disenchantments of age. It is held to be a good taunt, and somehow or other to clinch the question logically, when an old gentleman waggles his head and says: "Ah, so I thought when I was your age." It is not thought an answer at all, if the young man retorts: "My venerable sir, so I shall most probably think when I am yours." And yet the one is as good as the other: pass for pass, tit for tat, a Roland for an Oliver.

"Opinion in good men," says Milton, "is but knowledge



in the making." All opinions, properly so called, are stages on the road to truth. It does not follow that a man will travel any further; but if he has really considered the world and drawn a conclusion, he has travelled as far. This does not apply to formulæ got by rote, which are stages on the road to nowhere but second childhood and the grave. To have a catchword in your mouth is not the same thing as to hold an opinion; still less is it the same thing as to have made one for yourself. There are too many of these catchwords in the world for people to rap out upon you like an oath and by way of an argument. They have a currency as intellectual counters; and many respectable persons pay their way with nothing else. They seem to stand for vague bodies of theory in the background. The imputed virtue of folios full of knock-down arguments is supposed to reside in them, just as some of the majesty of the British Empire dwells in the constable's truncheon. They are used in pure superstition, as old clodhoppers spoil Latin by way of an exorcism. And yet they are vastly serviceable for checking unprofitable discussion and stopping the mouths of babes and sucklings. And when a young man comes to a certain stage of intellectual growth, the examination of these counters forms a gymnastic at once amusing and fortifying to the mind.

Because I have reached Paris, I am not ashamed of having passed through Newhaven and Dieppe. They were very good places to pass through, and I am none the less at my destination. All my old opinions were only stages on the way to the one I now hold, as itself is only a stage on the way to something else. I am no more abashed at having been a red-hot Socialist with a panacea of my own than at having been a sucking infant. Doubtless the

world is quite right in a million ways; but you have to be kicked about a little to convince you of the fact. And in the meanwhile you must do something, be something, believe something. It is not possible to keep the mind in a state of accurate balance and blank; and even if you could do so, instead of coming ultimately to the right conclusion, you would be very apt to remain in a state of balance and blank to perpetuity. Even in quite intermediate stages, a dash of enthusiasm is not a thing to be ashamed of in the retrospect: if St. Paul had not been a very zealous Pharisee, he would have been a colder Christian. For my part, I look back to the time when I was a Socialist with something like regret. I have convinced myself (for the moment) that we had better leave these great changes to what we call great blind forces; their blindness being so much more perspicacious than the little, peering, partial eyesight of men. I seem to see that my own scheme would not answer; and all the other schemes I ever heard propounded would depress some elements of goodness just as much as they encouraged others. Now I know that in thus turning Conservative with years, I am going through the normal cycle of change and traveling in the common orbit of men's opinions. I submit to this, as I would submit to gout or gray hair, as a concomitant of growing age or else of failing animal heat; but I do not acknowledge that it is necessarily a change for the better—I dare say it is deplorably for the worse. I have no choice in the business, and can no more resist this tendency of my mind than I could prevent my body from beginning to totter and decay. If I am spared (as the phrase runs) I shall doubtless outlive some troublesome desires; but I am in no hurry about that; nor, when the time comes, shall I plume myself on the immunity. Just

in the same way, I do not greatly pride myself on having outlived my belief in the fairy-tales of Socialism. Old people have faults of their own; they tend to become cowardly, niggardly, and suspicious. Whether from the growth of experience or the decline of animal heat, I see that age leads to these and certain other faults; and it follows, of course, that while in one sense I hope I am journeying toward the truth, in another I am indubitably posting toward these forms and sources of error.

As we go catching and catching at this or that corner of knowledge, now getting a foresight of generous possibilities, now chilled with a glimpse of prudence, we may compare the headlong course of our years to a swift torrent in which a man is carried away; now he is dashed against a boulder, now he grapples for a moment to a trailing spray; at the end, he is hurled out and overwhelmed in a dark and bottomless ocean. We have no more than glimpses and touches; we are torn away from our theories; we are spun round and round and shown this or the other view of life, until only fools or knaves can hold to their opinions. We take a sight at a condition in life, and say we have studied it; our most elaborate view is no more than an impression. If we had breathing space, we should take the occasion to modify and adjust; but at this breakneck hurry we are no sooner boys than we are adult, no sooner in love than married or jilted, no sooner one age than we begin to be another, and no sooner in the fulness of our manhood than we begin to decline toward the grave. It is in vain to seek for consistency or expect clear and stable views in a medium so perturbed and fleeting. This is no cabinet science, in which things are tested to a scruple; we theorize with a pistol to our head; we are confronted with a new set of

conditions on which we have not only to pass a judgment, but to take action, before the hour is at an end. And we cannot even regard ourselves as a constant; in this flux of things, our identity itself seems in a perpetual variation; and not infrequently we find our own disguise the strangest in the masquerade. In the course of time, we grow to love things we hated and hate things we loved. Milton is not so dull as he once was, nor perhaps Ainsworth so amusing. It is decidedly harder to climb trees, and not nearly so hard to sit still. There is no use pretending; even the thrice royal game of hide-and-seek has somehow lost in zest. All our attributes are modified or changed, and it will be a poor account of us if our views do not modify and change in a proportion. To hold the same views at forty as we held at twenty is to have been stupefied for a score of years, and take rank, not as a prophet, but as an unteachable brat, well birched and none the wiser. It is as if a ship captain should sail to India from the Port of London; and having brought a chart of the Thames on deck at his first setting out, should obstinately use no other for the whole voyage.

And mark you, it would be no less foolish to begin at Gravesend with a chart of the Red Sea. *Si Jeunesse savait, si Vieillesse pouvait*, is a very pretty sentiment, but not necessarily right. In five cases out of ten, it is not so much that the young people do not know, as that they do not choose. There is something irreverent in the speculation, but perhaps the want of power has more to do with the wise resolutions of age than we are always willing to admit. It would be an instructive experiment to make an old man young again and leave him all his *savoir*. I scarcely think he would put his money in the Savings Bank after all; I doubt if he would be such an

admirable son as we are led to expect; and as for his conduct in love, I believe firmly he would out-Herod Herod, and put the whole of his new compeers to the blush. Prudence is a wooden Juggernaut, before whom Benjamin Franklin walks with the portly air of a high priest, and after whom dances many a successful merchant in the character of Atys. But it is not a deity to cultivate in youth. If a man lives to any considerable age, it cannot be denied that he laments his imprudences, but I notice he often laments his youth a deal more bitterly and with a more genuine intonation.

It is customary to say that age should be considered, because it comes last. It seems just as much to the point, that youth comes first. And the scale fairly kicks the beam, if you go on to add that age, in a majority of cases, never comes at all. Disease and accident make short work of even the most prosperous persons; death costs nothing, and the expense of a headstone is an inconsiderable trifle to the happy heir. To be suddenly snuffed out in the middle of ambitious schemes is tragical enough at best; but when a man has been grudging himself his own life in the meanwhile, and saving up everything for the festival that was never to be, it becomes that hysterically moving sort of tragedy which lies on the confines of farce. The victim is dead—and he has cunningly overreached himself: a combination of calamities none the less absurd for being grim. To husband a favorite claret until the batch turns sour is not at all an artful stroke of policy; and how much more with a whole cellar—a whole bodily existence! People may lay down their lives with cheerfulness in the sure expectation of a blessed immortality; but that is a different affair from giving up youth with all its admirable pleasures, in the hope of a better quality

of gruel in a more than problematical, nay, more than improbable, old age. We should not compliment a hungry man, who should refuse a whole dinner and reserve all his appetite for the dessert, before he knew whether there was to be any dessert or not. If there be such a thing as imprudence in the world, we surely have it here. We sail in leaky bottoms and on great and perilous waters; and to take a cue from the dolorous old naval ballad, we have heard the mermaidens singing, and know that we shall never see dry land any more. Old and young, we are all on our last cruise. If there is a fill of tobacco among the crew, for God's sake pass it round, and let us have a pipe before we go!

Indeed, by the report of our elders, this nervous preparation for old age is only trouble thrown away. We fall on guard, and after all it is a friend who comes to meet us. After the sun is down and the west faded, the heavens begin to fill with shining stars. So, as we grow old, a sort of equable jog-trot of feeling is substituted for the violent ups and downs of passion and disgust; the same influence that restrains our hopes, quiets our apprehensions; if the pleasures are less intense, the troubles are milder and more tolerable; and, in a word, this period for which we are asked to hoard up everything as for a time of famine, is, in its own right, the richest, easiest, and happiest of life. Nay, by managing its own work and following its own happy inspiration, youth is doing the best it can to endow the leisure of age. A full, busy youth is your only prelude to a self-contained and independent age; and the muff inevitably develops into the bore. There are not many Dr. Johnsons to set forth upon their first romantic voyage at sixty-four. If we wish to scale Mont Blanc or visit a thieves' kitchen in the East

End, to go down in a diving-dress or up in a balloon, we must be about it while we are still young. It will not do to delay until we are clogged with prudence and limping with rheumatism, and people begin to ask us: "What does Gravity out of bed?" Youth is the time to go flashing from one end of the world to the other both in mind and body; to try the manners of different nations; to hear the chimes at midnight; to see sunrise in town and country; to be converted at a revival; to circumnavigate the metaphysics, write halting verses, run a mile to see a fire, and wait all day long in the theatre to applaud *Hernani*. There is some meaning in the old theory about wild oats; and a man who has not had his green-sickness, and got done with it for good, is as little to be depended on as an unvaccinated infant. "It is extraordinary," says Lord Beaconsfield, one of the brightest and best preserved of youths up to the date of his last novel,<sup>1</sup> "it is extraordinary how hourly and how violently change the feelings of an inexperienced young man." And this mobility is a special talent intrusted to his care; a sort of indestructible virginity; a magic armor, with which he can pass unhurt through great dangers and come unbedaubed out of the miriest passages. Let him voyage, speculate, see all that he can, do all that he may; his soul has as many lives as a cat, he will live in all weathers, and never be a halfpenny the worse. Those who go to the devil in youth, with anything like a fair chance, were probably little worth saving from the first; they must have been feeble fellows—creatures made of putty and pack-thread, without steel or fire, anger or true joyfulness in their composition; we may sympathize with their parents, but there is not much cause to go into mourning for themselves;

<sup>1</sup> *Lothair*.

for, to be quite honest, the weak brother is the worst of mankind.

When the old man waggles his head and says, "Ah, so I thought when I was your age," he has proved the youth's case. Doubtless, whether from growth of experience or decline of animal heat, he thinks so no longer; but he thought so while he was young; and all men have thought so while they were young, since there was dew in the morning or hawthorn in May; and here is another young man adding his vote to those of previous generations and riveting another link to the chain of testimony. It is as natural and as right for a young man to be imprudent and exaggerated, to live in swoops and circles, and beat about his cage like any other wild thing newly captured, as it is for old men to turn gray, or mothers to love their offspring, or heroes to die for something worthier than their lives.

By way of an apologue for the aged, when they feel more than usually tempted to offer their advice, let me recommend the following little tale. A child who had been remarkably fond of toys (and in particular of lead soldiers) found himself growing to the level of acknowledged boyhood without any abatement of this childish taste. He was thirteen; already he had been taunted for dallying overlong about the play box; he had to blush if he was found among his lead soldiers; the shades of the prison-house were closing about him with a vengeance. There is nothing more difficult than to put the thoughts of children into the language of their elders; but this is the effect of his meditations at this juncture: "Plainly," he said, "I must give up my playthings, in the meanwhile, since I am not in a position to secure myself against idle jeers. At the same time, I am sure that playthings are



the very pick of life; all people give them up out of the same pusillanimous respect for those who are a little older; and if they do not return to them as soon as they can, it is only because they grow stupid and forget. I shall be wiser; I shall conform for a little to the ways of their foolish world; but so soon as I have made enough money, I shall retire and shut myself up among my playthings until the day I die." Nay, as he was passing in the train along the Esterel Mountains between Cannes and Fréjus, he remarked a pretty house in an orange garden at the angle of a bay, and decided that this should be his Happy Valley. Astrea Redux; childhood was to come again! The idea has an air of simple nobility to me, not unworthy of Cincinnatus. And yet, as the reader has probably anticipated, it is never likely to be carried into effect. There was a worm in the bud, a fatal error in the premises. Childhood must pass away, and then youth, as surely as age approaches. The true wisdom is to be always seasonable, and to change with a good grace in changing circumstances. To love playthings well as a child, to lead an adventurous and honorable youth, and to settle, when the time arrives, into a green and smiling age, is to be a good artist in life and deserve well of yourself and your neighbor.

You need repent none of your youthful vagaries. They may have been over the score on one side, just as those of age are probably over the score on the other. But they had a point; they not only befitted your age and expressed its attitude and passions, but they had a relation to what was outside of you, and implied criticisms on the existing state of things, which you need not allow to have been undeserved, because you now see that they were partial. All error, not merely verbal, is a strong way of stating that the current truth is incomplete. The follies of youth

have a basis in sound reason, just as much as the embarrassing questions put by babes and sucklings. Their most antisocial acts indicate the defects of our society. When the torrent sweeps the man against a boulder, you must expect him to scream, and you need not be surprised if the scream is sometimes a theory. Shelley, chafing at the Church of England, discovered the cure of all evils in universal atheism. Generous lads, irritated at the injustices of society, see nothing for it but the abolishment of everything and Kingdom Come of anarchy. Shelley was a young fool; so are these cock-sparrow revolutionaries. But it is better to be a fool than to be dead. It is better to emit a scream in the shape of a theory than to be entirely insensible to the jars and incongruities of life and take everything as it comes in a forlorn stupidity. Some people swallow the universe like a pill; they travel on through the world, like smiling images pushed from behind. For God's sake give me the young man who has brains enough to make a fool of himself! As for the others, the irony of facts shall take it out of their hands, and make fools of them in downright earnest, ere the farce be over. There shall be such a mopping and a mowing at the last day, and such blushing and confusion of countenance for all those who have been wise in their own esteem, and have not learnt the rough lessons that youth hands on to age. If we are indeed here to perfect and complete our own natures, and grow larger, stronger, and more sympathetic against some nobler career in the future, we had all best stir ourselves to the utmost while we have the time. To equip a dull, respectable person with wings would be but to make a parody of an angel.

In short, if youth is not quite right in its opinions, there is a strong probability that age is not much more

so. Undying hope is co-ruler of the human bosom with infallible credulity. A man finds he has been wrong at every preceding stage of his career, only to deduce the astonishing conclusion that he is at last entirely right. Mankind, after centuries of failure, are still upon the eve of a thoroughly constitutional millennium. Since we have explored the maze so long without result, it follows, for poor human reason, that we cannot have to explore much longer; close by must be the centre, with a champagne luncheon and a piece of ornamental water. How if there were no centre at all, but just one alley after another, and the whole world a labyrinth without end or issue?

I overheard the other day a scrap of conversation, which I take the liberty to reproduce. "What I advance is true," said one. "But not the whole truth," answered the other. "Sir," returned the first (and it seemed to me there was a smack of Dr. Johnson in the speech), "Sir, there is no such thing as the whole truth!" Indeed, there is nothing so evident in life as that there are two sides to a question. History is one long illustration. The forces of nature are engaged, day by day, in cudgelling it into our backward intelligences. We never pause for a moment's consideration, but we admit it as an axiom. An enthusiast sways humanity exactly by disregarding this great truth, and dinning it into our ears that this or that question has only one possible solution; and your enthusiast is a fine florid fellow, dominates things for a while and shakes the world out of a doze; but when once he is gone, an army of quiet and uninfluential people set to work to remind us of the other side and demolish the generous imposture. While Calvin is putting everybody exactly right in his *Institutes*, and hot-headed Knox is thundering in the pulpit, Montaigne is already looking at

the other side in his library in Perigord, and predicting that they will find as much to quarrel about in the Bible as they had found already in the church. Age may have one side, but assuredly youth has the other. There is nothing more certain than that both are right, except perhaps that both are wrong. Let them agree to differ; for who knows but what agreeing to differ may not be a form of agreement rather than a form of difference!

I suppose it is written that any one who sets up for a bit of a philosopher must contradict himself to his very face. For here have I fairly talked myself into thinking that we have the whole thing before us at last; that there is no answer to the mystery, except that there are as many as you please; that there is no centre to the maze because, like the famous sphere, its centre is everywhere; and that agreeing to differ with every ceremony of politeness is the only "one undisturbed song of pure consent" to which we are ever likely to lend our musical voices.

## XX

### THINKING FOR YOURSELF<sup>1</sup>

The president of Magdalen, when giving away the prizes at Magdalen College School the other day, said that, whereas our public schools teach boys to act for themselves, <sup>rather than</sup> they do not so well teach them to think for themselves. The distinction here is a very clear one, but it is often overlooked in England. We are apt to assume that a man who can act for himself in an emergency must be able also to think for himself; and yet that very man, who is never perturbed by a sudden danger, may in the quiet processes of his mind be constantly overawed by platitude. [It is the combination of boldness in thought and in action that makes a great man, and great men are rare because that combination is so rare. Without contemplative energy, energy in action has no cumulative power; it avails for each particular emergency, but for that alone. The man of action, who is nothing more, rises to the occasion when he has to do anything out of the common; but when he has done it he sinks back into commonplace, and his mind rests there contented as if there were nothing of importance in life except sudden action. We all know that men of original thought are often quite unfitted for action; indeed, the dreamy philosopher is a byword for his want of practical ability, and

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *The Times* (London), October 28, 1913, through the courtesy of the editors.

people wonder that a man who can think so vigorously should act so feebly. We are not aware that the man of action often fails just as much in thought, only because we admire him so much that we do not notice his defects.

We admire the man who thinks for himself very much less, but that is partly because we are apt not to recognize him when we meet him. There are many people who go about saying that they think for themselves, but this generally means that they think for other people. They will make rules for the conduct of the whole world; they will tell us of a number of things that we ought to do and which we should do if our natures were different; they have theories about every conceivable matter which is outside their own experience, but when it comes to learning from their own experience they are no better at it than the rest of us. And yet to think for yourself is to learn from your own experience; it is not to hold a number of views which are different from those of most men. The popular views on most subjects may be wrong, but to assume that is not to think for yourself; it is merely to accept a general theory because it is amusing, or because it annoys, or because it gives you a pleasant sense of superiority. Indeed, it is one of the disadvantages of thinking for yourself that you cannot accept opinions either because they are popular or unpopular. There is a delight in thinking for yourself, but you win it by a kind of asceticism in thought. You must refrain from embracing a theory because it is pretty; indeed, you must be as shy of theories as an eremite is of women, for only by that restraint will your mind get vigor enough to recognize a true theory, as a holy eremite could recognize an angel at first sight.

Thus it follows that to teach boys to think for them-

selves is something very different from teaching them to be clever. It is not even to teach them to question everything, for those who question everything are like jesting Pilate—they do not stay for an answer. We must all accept a great many common opinions on trust, especially when we are young. But though we may accept them so far as to act on them, it is important that we should distinguish between them and the opinions that are really our own, and education can teach us to make this distinction without turning us into cranks or prigs. Its common defect, if it is old-fashioned, is that it neglects opinions altogether, and, if it is new-fashioned, that it teaches them as if they were facts. Its proper function is to teach the right method of acquiring them, to make it clear that no one can have opinions of his own on every subject under the sun; but that it is the business of man, as a thinking creature, to draw conclusions from his own experience. It is only by doing this that we can be useful in thought as well as action and add to the world's stock of wisdom. And every one can add something of his own to that if he will be content to think for himself and about matters within his own experience, for no two men are the same either in themselves or in their circumstances; and life is a voyage of discovery for all, in spite, or rather because, of the accumulated knowledge of the past.

## XXI

### THE DISCOVERY OF THE FUTURE <sup>1</sup>

H. G. WELLS

It will lead into my subject most conveniently to contrast and separate two divergent types of mind, types which are to be distinguished chiefly by their attitude toward time, and more particularly by the relative importance they attach and the relative amount of thought they give to the future.

The first of these two types of mind, and it is, I think, the predominant type, the type of the majority of living people, is that which seems scarcely to think of the future at all, which regards it as a sort of blank non-existence upon which the advancing present will presently write events. The second type, which is, I think, a more modern and much less abundant type of mind, thinks constantly and by preference of things to come, and of present things mainly in relation to the results that must arise from them. The former type of mind, when one gets it in its purity, is retrospective in habit, and it interprets the things of the present, and gives value to this and denies it to that, entirely with relation to the past. The latter type of mind is constructive in habit, it interprets the things of the present and gives value to this or that, entirely in relation to things designed or foreseen.

<sup>1</sup> A discourse delivered at the Royal Institution. Reprinted through the courtesy of H. G. Wells and of B. W. Huebsch.



While from that former point of view our life is simply to reap the consequences of the past, from this our life is to prepare the future. The former type one might speak of as the legal or submissive type of mind, because the business, the practise, and the training of a lawyer dispose him toward it; he of all men must constantly refer to the law made, the right established, the precedent set, and consistently ignore or condemn the thing that is only seeking to establish itself. The latter type of mind I might for contrast call the legislative, creative, organizing, or masterful type, because it is perpetually attacking and altering the established order of things, perpetually falling away from respect for what the past has given us. It sees the world as one great workshop, and the present is no more than material for the future, for the thing that is yet destined to be. It is in the active mood of thought, while the former is in the passive; it is the mind of youth, it is the mind more manifest among the western nations, while the former is the mind of age, the mind of the oriental.

Things have been, says the legal mind, and so we are here. The creative mind says we are here because things have yet to be.

Now I do not wish to suggest that the great mass of people belong to either of these two types. Indeed, I speak of them as two distinct and distinguishable types mainly for convenience and in order to accentuate their distinction. There are probably very few people who brood constantly upon the past without any thought of the future at all, and there are probably scarcely any who live and think consistently in relation to the future. The great mass of people occupy an intermediate position between these extremes, they pass daily and hourly from the

passive mood to the active, they see this thing in relation to its associations and that thing in relation to its consequences, and they do not even suspect that they are using two distinct methods in their minds.

But for all that they are distinct methods, the method of reference to the past and the method of reference to the future, and their mingling in many of our minds no more abolishes their difference than the existence of piebald horses proves that white is black.

I believe that it is not sufficiently recognized just how different in their consequences these two methods are, and just where their difference and where the failure to appreciate their difference takes one. This present time is a period of quite extraordinary uncertainty and indecision upon endless questions—moral questions, æsthetic questions, religious and political questions—upon which we should all of us be happier to feel assured and settled; and a very large amount of this floating uncertainty about these important matters is due to the fact that with most of us these two insufficiently distinguished ways of looking at things are not only present together, but in actual conflict in our minds, in unsuspected conflict; we pass from one to the other heedlessly without any clear recognition of the fundamental difference in conclusions that exists between the two, and we do this with disastrous results to our confidence and to our consistency in dealing with all sorts of things.

But before pointing out how divergent these two types or habits of mind really are, it is necessary to meet a possible objection to what has been said. I may put that objection in this form: <sup>as in the case of moral questions</sup> Is not this distinction between a type of mind that thinks of the past and a type of mind that thinks of the future a sort of hair-splitting, almost

like distinguishing between people who have left hands and people who have right? Everybody believes that the present is entirely determined by the past, you say; but then everybody believes also that the present determines the future. Are we simply separating and contrasting two sides of everybody's opinion? To which one replies that we are not discussing what we know and believe about the relations of past, present, and future, or of the relation of cause and effect to each other in time. We all know the present depends for its causes on the past, and the future depends for its causes upon the present. But this discussion concerns the way in which we approach things upon this common ground of knowledge and belief. We may all know there is an east and a west, but if some of us always approach and look at things from the west, if some of us always approach and look at things from the east, and if others again wander about with a pretty disregard of direction, looking at things as chance determines, some of us will get to a westward conclusion of this journey, and some of us will get to an eastward conclusion, and some of us will get to no definite conclusion at all about all sorts of important matters. And yet those who are travelling east, and those who are travelling west, and those who are wandering haphazard, may be all upon the same ground of belief and statement and amid the same assembly of proven facts. Precisely the same thing, divergence of result, will happen if you always approach things from the point of view of their causes, or if you approach them always with a view to their probable effects. And in several very important groups of human affairs it is possible to show quite clearly just how widely apart the two methods, pursued each in its purity, take those who follow them.

I suppose that three hundred years ago all people who thought at all about moral questions, about questions of right and wrong, deduced their rules of conduct absolutely and unreservedly from the past, from some dogmatic injunction, some finally settled decree. The great mass of people do so to-day. It is written, they say. "Thou shalt not steal," for example—that is the sole, complete, sufficient reason why you should not steal, and even to-day there is a strong aversion to admit that there is any relation between the actual consequences of acts and the imperatives of right and wrong. Our lives are to reap the fruits of determinate things, and it is still a fundamental presumption of the established morality that one must do right though the heavens fall. But there are people coming into this world who would refuse to call it right if it brought the heavens about our heads, however authoritative its sources and sanctions, and this new disposition is, I believe, a growing one. I suppose in all ages people in a timid, hesitating, guilty way have tempered the austerity of a dogmatic moral code by small infractions to secure obviously kindly ends, but it was, I am told, the Jesuits who first deliberately sought to qualify the moral interpretation of acts by a consideration of their results. To-day there are few people who have not more or less clearly discovered the future as a more or less important factor in moral considerations. To-day there is a certain small proportion of people who frankly regard morality as a means to an end, as an overriding of immediate and personal considerations out of regard to something to be attained in the future, and who break away altogether from the idea of a code dogmatically established forever.

Most of us are not so definite as that, but most of us

are deeply tinged with the spirit of compromise between the past and the future; we profess an unbounded allegiance to the prescriptions of the past, and we practise a general observance of its injunctions, but we qualify to a vague, variable extent with considerations of expediency. We hold, for example, that we must respect our promises. But suppose we find unexpectedly that for one of us to keep a promise, which has been sealed and sworn in the most sacred fashion, must lead to the great suffering of some other human being—must lead, in fact, to practical evil? Would a man do right or wrong if he broke such a promise? The practical decision most modern people would make would be to break the promise. Most would say that they did evil to avoid a greater evil. But suppose it was not such very great suffering we were going to inflict, but only some suffering? And suppose it was a rather important promise? With most of us it would then come to be a matter of weighing the promise, the thing of the past, against this unexpected bad consequence, the thing of the future. And the smaller the overplus of evil consequences the more most of us would vacillate. But neither of the two types of mind we are contrasting would vacillate at all. The legal type of mind would obey the past unhesitatingly, the creative would unhesitatingly sacrifice it to the future. The legal mind would say, "they who break the law at any point break it altogether," while the creative mind would say, "let the dead past bury its dead."

It is convenient to take my illustration from the sphere of promises, but it is in the realm of sexual morality that the two methods are most acutely in conflict.

And I would like to suggest that until you have definitely determined either to obey the real or imaginary im-

peratives of the past; or to set yourself toward the demands of some ideal of the future, until you have made up your mind to adhere to one or other of these two types of mental action in these matters, you are not even within hope of a sustained consistency in the thought that underlies your acts, that in every issue of principle that comes upon you, you will be entirely at the mercy of the intellectual mood that happens to be ascendant at that particular moment in your mind.

( In the sphere of public affairs also these two ways of looking at things work out into equally divergent and incompatible consequences.) The legal mind insists upon treaties, constitutions, legitimacies, and charters; the legislative incessantly assails these. Whenever some period of stress sets in, some great conflict between institutions and the forces in things, there comes a sorting out of these two types of mind. ( The legal mind becomes glorified and transfigured in the form of hopeless loyalty, the creative mind inspires revolutions and reconstructions.) And particularly is this difference of attitude accentuated in the disputes that arise out of wars. In most modern wars there is no doubt quite traceable on one side or the other a distinct creative idea, a distinct regard for some future consequence; but the main dispute even in most modern wars and the sole dispute in most mediæval wars will be found to be a reference, not to the future, but to the past; to turn upon a question of fact and right. The wars of Plantagenet and Lancastrian England with France, for example, were based entirely upon a dummy claim, supported by obscure legal arguments, upon the crown of France. And the arguments that centred about the late war in South Africa ignored any ideal of a great united South African state almost entirely, and quibbled this

way and that about who began the fighting and what was or was not written in some obscure revision of a treaty a score of years ago. Yet beneath the legal issues the broad creative idea has been apparent in the public mind during this war. It will be found more or less definitely formulated beneath almost all the great wars of the past century, and a comparison of the wars of the nineteenth century with the wars of the Middle Ages will show, I think, that in this field also there has been a discovery of the future, an increasing disposition to shift the reference and values from things accomplished to things to come.

( Yet though foresight creeps into our politics and a reference to consequence into our morality, it is still the past that dominates our lives. But why? Why are we so bound to it? It is into the future we go; to-morrow is the eventful thing for us. ) There lies all that remains to be felt by us and our children and all those that are dear to us. Yet we marshal and order men into classes entirely with regard to the past; we draw shame and honor out of the past; against the rights of property, the vested interests, the agreements and establishments of the past the future has no rights. ( Literature is for the most part history or history at one remove, and what is culture but a mould of interpretation into which new things are thrust, a collection of standards, a sort of bed of King Og, to which all new expressions must be lopped or stretched? Our conveniences, like our thoughts, are all retrospective. We travel on roads so narrow that they suffocate our traffic; we live in uncomfortable, inconvenient, life-wasting houses out of a love of familiar shapes and familiar customs and a dread of strangeness; all our public affairs are cramped by local boundaries impossibly restricted and small. ) Our clothing, our habits of speech, our spelling,

our weights and measures, our coinage, our religious and political theories, all witness to the binding power of the past upon our minds. Yet we do not serve the past as the Chinese have done. There are degrees. We do not worship our ancestors or prescribe a rigid local costume; we dare to enlarge our stock of knowledge, and we qualify the classics with occasional adventures into original thought. Compared with the Chinese we are distinctly aware of the future. But compared with what we might be, the past is all our world.

94 The reason why the retrospective habit, the legal habit, is so dominant, and always has been so predominant, is of course a perfectly obvious one. We follow a fundamental human principle and take what we can get. { All people believe the past is certain, defined, and knowable, and only a few people believe that it is possible to know anything about the future. Man has acquired the habit of going to the past because it was the line of least resistance for his mind. While a certain variable portion of the past is serviceable matter for knowledge in the case of every one, the future is, to a mind without an imagination trained in scientific habits of thought, non-existent. All our minds are made of memories. In our memories each of us has something that without any special training whatever will go back into the past and grip firmly and convincingly all sorts of workable facts, sometimes more convincingly than firmly. But the imagination, unless it is strengthened by a very sound training in the laws of causation, wanders like a lost child in the blankness of things to come and returns empty.

12 Many people believe, therefore, that there can be no sort of certainty about the future. You can know no more about the future, I was recently assured by a friend,



than you can know which way a kitten will jump next. And to all who hold that view, who regard the future as a perpetual source of convulsive surprises, as an impenetrable, incurable, perpetual blankness, it is right and reasonable to derive such values as it is necessary to attach to things from the events that have certainly happened with regard to them. It is our ignorance of the future and our persuasion that that ignorance is absolutely incurable that alone gives the past its enormous predominance in our thoughts. But through the ages, the long unbroken succession of fortune-tellers—and they flourish still—witnesses to the perpetually smouldering feeling that after all there may be a better sort of knowledge, a more serviceable sort of knowledge than that we now possess.

On the whole, there is something sympathetic for the dupe of the fortune-teller in the spirit of modern science; it is one of the persuasions that come into one's mind, as one assimilates the broad conception of science, that the adequacy of causation is universal; that in absolute fact  $\hookleftarrow$ if not in that little bubble of relative fact which constitutes the individual life—in absolute fact the future is just as fixed and determinate, just as settled and inevitable, just as possible a matter of knowledge as the past. Our personal memory gives us an impression of the superior reality and trustworthiness of things in the past, as of things that have finally committed themselves and said their say, but the more clearly we master the leading conceptions of science the better we understand that this impression is one of the results of the peculiar conditions of our lives, and not an absolute truth. The man of science comes to believe at last that the events of the year A. D. 4000 are as fixed, settled, and unchangeable as the events of the year 1600. Only about the latter he has

some material for belief and about the former practically none.

And the question arises how far this absolute ignorance of the future is a fixed and necessary condition of human life, and how far some application of intellectual methods may not attenuate, even if it does not absolutely set aside, the veil between ourselves and things to come. [And I am venturing to suggest to you that along certain lines and with certain qualifications and limitations a working knowledge of things in the future is a possible and practicable thing. And in order to support this suggestion I would call your attention to certain facts about our knowledge of the past, and more particularly I would insist upon this, that about the past our range of absolute certainty is very limited indeed. About the past I would suggest we are inclined to overestimate our certainty, just as I think we are inclined to underestimate the certainties of the future. And such a knowledge of the past as we have is not all of the same sort or derived from the same sources.

Let us consider just what an educated man of to-day knows of the past. First of all he has the realest of all knowledge—the knowledge of his own personal experiences, his memory. Uneducated people believe their memories absolutely, and most educated people believe them with a few reservations. Some of us take up a critical attitude even toward our own memories; we know that they not only sometimes drop things out, but that sometimes a sort of dreaming or a strong suggestion will put things in. But for all that, memory remains vivid and real as no other knowledge can be, and to have seen and heard and felt is to be nearest to absolute conviction. Yet our memory of direct impressions is only the smallest part of

what we know. Outside that bright area comes knowledge of a different order—the knowledge brought to us by other people. Outside our immediate personal memory there comes this wider area of facts or quasi-facts told us by more or less trustworthy people, told us by word of mouth or by the written word of living and of dead writers. This is the past of report, rumor, tradition, and history—the second sort of knowledge of the past. The nearer knowledge of this sort is abundant and clear and detailed, remoter it becomes vaguer, still more remotely in time and space it dies down to brief, imperfect inscriptions and enigmatical traditions, and at last dies away, so far as the records and traditions of humanity go, into a doubt and darkness as blank, just as blank, as futurity.

And now let me remind you that this second zone of knowledge outside the bright area of what we have felt and witnessed and handled for ourselves—this zone of hearsay and history and tradition—completed the whole knowledge of the past that was accessible to Shakespeare, for example. To these limits man's knowledge of the past was absolutely confined, save for some inklings and guesses, save for some small, almost negligible beginnings, until the nineteenth century began. Besides the correct knowledge in this scheme of hearsay and history a man had a certain amount of legend and error that rounded off the picture in a very satisfactory and misleading way, according to Bishop Ussher, just exactly 4004 years B. C. And that was man's universal history—that was his all—until the scientific epoch began. And beyond those limits—? Well, I suppose the educated man of the sixteenth century was as certain of the non-existence of anything before the creation of the world as he was, and as most of us are still, of the practical non-existence of

the future, or at any rate he was as satisfied of the impossibility of knowledge in the one direction as in the other.

But modern science—that is to say, the relentless, systematic criticism of phenomena—has in the past hundred years absolutely destroyed the conception of a finitely distant beginning of things; has abolished such limits to the past as a dated creation set, and added an enormous vista to that limited sixteenth-century outlook. And what I would insist upon is that this further knowledge is a new kind of knowledge, obtained in a new kind of way. We know to-day, quite as confidently and in many respects more intimately than we know Sargon or Zenobia or Caractacus, the form and the habits of creatures that no living being has ever met, that no human eye has ever regarded, and the character of scenery that no man has ever seen or can ever possibly see; we picture to ourselves the labyrinthodon raising his clumsy head above the water of the carboniferous swamps in which he lived, and we figure the pterodactyls, those great bird lizards, flapping their way athwart the forests of the Mesozoic Age with exactly the same certainty as that with which we picture the rhinoceros or the vulture. I doubt no more about the facts in this farther picture than I do about those in the nearest. I believe in the megatherium which I have never seen as confidently as I believe in the hippopotamus that has engulfed buns from my hand. A vast amount of detail in that farther picture is now fixed and finite for all time. And a countless number of investigators are persistently and confidently enlarging, amplifying, correcting, and pushing further and further back the boundaries of this greater past—this prehuman past—that the scientific criticism of existing phenomena has

discovered and restored and brought for the first time into the world of human thought. We have become possessed of a new and once unsuspected history of the world—of which all the history that was known, for example, to Doctor Johnson is only the brief concluding chapter; and even that concluding chapter has been greatly enlarged and corrected by the exploring archæologists working strictly upon the lines of the new method—that is to say, the comparison and criticism of suggestive facts.

I want particularly to insist upon this, that all this outer past—this non-historical past—is the product of a new and keener habit of inquiry, and no sort of revelation. It is simply due to a new and more critical way of looking at things. Our knowledge of the geological past, clear and definite as it has become, is of a different and lower order than the knowledge of our memory, and yet of a quite practicable and trustworthy order—a knowledge good enough to go upon; and if one were to speak of the private memory as the personal past, of the next wider area of knowledge as the traditional or historical past, then one might call all that great and inspiring background of remoter geological time the inductive past.

And this great discovery of the inductive past was got by the discussion and rediscussion and effective criticism of a number of existing facts, odd-shaped lumps of stone, streaks and bandings in quarries and cliffs, anatomical and developmental detail that had always been about in the world, that had been lying at the feet of mankind so long as mankind had existed, but that no one had ever dreamed before could supply any information at all, much more reveal such astounding and enlightening vistas. Looked at in a new way, they became sources of dazzling and penetrating light. The remoter past lit up and became

a picture. Considered as effects, compared and criticised, they yielded a clairvoyant vision of the history of interminable years.

And now, if it has been possible for men by picking out a number of suggestive and significant looking things in the present, by comparing them, criticising them, and discussing them, with a perpetual insistence upon "Why?" without any guiding tradition, and indeed in the teeth of established beliefs, to construct this amazing search-light of inference into the remoter past, is it really, after all, such an extravagant and hopeless thing to suggest that, by seeking for operating causes instead of for fossils, and by criticising them as persistently and thoroughly as the geological record has been criticised, it may be possible to throw a search-light of inference forward instead of backward, and to attain to a knowledge of coming things as clear, as universally convincing, and infinitely more important to mankind than the clear vision of the past that geology has opened to us during the nineteenth century?

Let us grant that anything to correspond with the memory, anything having the same relation to the future that memory has to the past, is out of the question. We cannot imagine, of course, that we can ever know any personal future to correspond with our personal past, or any traditional future to correspond with our traditional past; but the possibility of an inductive future to correspond with that great inductive past of geology and archæology is an altogether different thing.

I must confess that I believe quite firmly that an inductive knowledge of a great number of things in the future is becoming a human possibility. I believe that the time is drawing near when it will be possible to sug-

gest a systematic exploration of the future. And you must not judge the practicability of this enterprise by the failures of the past. So far nothing has been attempted, so far no first-class mind has ever focussed itself upon these issues; but suppose the laws of social and political development, for example, were given as many brains, were given as much attention, criticism, and discussion as we have given to the laws of chemical combination during the last fifty years, what might we not expect?

To the popular mind of to-day there is something very difficult in such a suggestion, soberly made. But here, in this institution (the Royal Institution of London) which has watched for a whole century over the splendid adolescence of science, and where the spirit of science is surely understood, you will know that as a matter of fact prophecy has always been inseparably associated with the idea of scientific research.

The popular idea of scientific investigation is a vehement, aimless collection of little facts, collected as a bowerbird collects shells and pebbles, in methodical little rows, and out of this process, in some manner unknown to the popular mind, certain conjuring tricks—the celebrated “wonders of science”—in a sort of accidental way emerge. The popular conception of all discovery is accident. But you will know that the essential thing in the scientific process is not the collection of facts, but the analysis of facts. Facts are the raw material and not the substance of science. It is analysis that has given us all ordered knowledge, and you know that the aim and the test and the justification of the scientific process is not a marketable conjuring trick, but prophecy. Until a scientific theory yields confident forecasts you know it is unsound and tentative; it is mere theorizing, as evanescent as art

talk or the phantoms politicians talk about. The splendid body of gravitational astronomy, for example, establishes itself upon the certain forecast of stellar movements, and you would absolutely refuse to believe its amazing assertions if it were not for these same unerring forecasts. The whole body of medical science aims, and claims the ability, to diagnose. Meteorology constantly and persistently aims at prophecy, and it will never stand in a place of honor until it can certainly foretell. The chemist forecasts elements before he meets them—it is very properly his boast—and the splendid manner in which the mind of Clerk Maxwell reached in front of all experiments and foretold those things that Marconi has materialized is familiar to us all.

All applied mathematics resolves into computation to foretell things which otherwise can only be determined by trial. Even in so unscientific a science as economics there have been forecasts. And if I am right in saying that science aims at prophecy, and if the specialist in each science is in fact doing his best now to prophesy within the limits of his field, what is there to stand in the way of our building up this growing body of forecast into an ordered picture of the future that will be just as certain, just as strictly science, and perhaps just as detailed as the picture that has been built up within the last hundred years of the geological past? Well, so far and until we bring the prophecy down to the affairs of man and his children, it is just as possible to carry induction forward as back; it is just as simple and sure to work out the changing orbit of the earth in the future until the tidal drag hauls one unchanging face at last toward the sun as it is to work back to its blazing and molten past. Until man comes in, the inductive future is as real and convinc-



ing as the inductive past. But inorganic forces are the smaller part and the minor interest in this concern. Directly man becomes a factor the nature of the problem changes, and our whole present interest centres on the question whether man is, indeed, individually and collectively incalculable, a new element which entirely alters the nature of our inquiry and stamps it at once as vain and hopeless, or whether his presence complicates, but does not alter, the essential nature of the induction. How far may we hope to get trustworthy inductions about the future of man?

Well, I think, on the whole, we are inclined to under-rate our chance of certainties in the future, just as I think we are inclined to be too credulous about the historical past. The vividness of our personal memories, which are the very essence of reality to us, throws a glamour of conviction over tradition and past inductions. But the personal future must in the very nature of things be hidden from us so long as time endures, and this black ignorance at our very feet—this black shadow that corresponds to the brightness of our memories behind us—throws a glamour of uncertainty and unreality over all the future. We are continually surprising ourselves by our own will or want of will; the individualities about us are continually producing the unexpected, and it is very natural to reason that as we can never be precisely sure before the time comes what we are going to do and feel, and if we can never count with absolute certainty upon the acts and happenings even of our most intimate friends, how much the more impossible is it to anticipate the behavior in any direction of states and communities.

In reply to which I would advance the suggestion that an increase in the number of human beings considered

may positively simplify the case instead of complicating it; that as the individuals increase in number they begin to average out. Let me illustrate this point by a comparison. Angular pit-sand has grains of the most varied shapes. Examined microscopically, you will find all sorts of angles and outlines and variations. Before you look you can say of no particular grain what its outline will be. And if you shoot a load of such sand from a cart you cannot foretell with any certainty where any particular grain will be in the heap that you make; but you can tell—you can tell pretty definitely—the form of the heap as a whole. And further, if you pass that sand through a series of shoots and finally drop it some distance to the ground, you will be able to foretell that grains of a certain sort of form and size will for the most part be found in one part of the heap and grains of another sort of form and size will be found in another part of the heap. In such a case, you see, the thing as a whole may be simpler than its component parts, and this I submit is also the case in many human affairs. So that because the individual future eludes us completely that is no reason why we should not aspire to, and discover and use, safe and serviceable generalizations upon countless important issues in the human destiny.

But there is a very grave and important-looking difference between a load of sand and a multitude of human beings, and this I must face and examine. Our thoughts and wills and emotions are contagious. An exceptional sort of sand grain, a sand grain that was exceptionally big and heavy, for example, exerts no influence worth considering upon any other of the sand grains in the load. They will fall and roll and heap themselves just the same whether that exceptional grain is with them or not; but

an exceptional man comes into the world, a Cæsar or a Napoleon or a Peter the Hermit, and he appears to persuade and convince and compel and take entire possession of the sand heap—I mean the community—and to twist and alter its destinies to an almost unlimited extent. And if this is indeed the case, it reduces our project of an inductive knowledge of the future to very small limits. To hope to foretell the birth and coming of men of exceptional force and genius is to hope incredibly, and if, indeed, such exceptional men do as much as they seem to do in warping the path of humanity, our utmost prophetic limit in human affairs is a conditional sort of prophecy. If people do so and so, we can say, then such and such results will follow, and we must admit that that is our limit.

But everybody does not believe in the importance of the leading man. There are those who will say that the whole world is different by reason of Napoleon. There are those who will say that the world of to-day would be very much as it is now if Napoleon had never been born. Other men would have arisen to make Napoleon's conquests and codify the law, redistribute the worn-out boundaries of Europe, and achieve all those changes which we so readily ascribe to Napoleon's will alone. There are those who believe entirely in the individual man and those who believe entirely in the forces behind the individual man, and for my own part I must confess myself a rather extreme case of the latter kind. I must confess I believe that if by some juggling with space and time Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, Edward IV, William the Conqueror, Lord Rosebery, and Robert Burns had all been changed at birth it would not have produced any serious dislocation of the course of destiny. I believe that these great men of ours are no more than images and symbols and instruments

taken, as it were, haphazard by the incessant and consistent forces behind them; they are the pen-nibs Fate has used for her writing, the diamonds upon the drill that pierces through the rock. And the more one inclines to this trust in forces the more one will believe in the possibility of a reasoned inductive view of the future that will serve us in politics, in morals, in social contrivances, and in a thousand spacious ways. And even those who take the most extreme and personal and melodramatic view of the ways of human destiny, who see life as a tissue of fairy godmother births and accidental meetings and promises and jealousies, will, I suppose, admit there comes a limit to these things—that at last personality dies away and the greater forces come to their own. The great man, however great he be, cannot set back the whole scheme of things; what he does in right and reason will remain, and what he does against the greater creative forces will perish. We cannot foresee him; let us grant that. His personal difference, the splendor of his effect, his dramatic arrangement of events will be his own—in other words, we cannot estimate for accidents and accelerations and delays; but if only we throw our web of generalization wide enough, if only we spin our rope of induction strong enough, the final result of the great man, his ultimate surviving consequences, will come within our net.

Such, then, is the sort of knowledge of the future that I believe is attainable and worth attaining. I believe that the deliberate direction of historical study and of economic and social study toward the future and an increasing reference, a deliberate and courageous reference, to the future in moral and religious discussion, would be enormously stimulating and enormously profitable to our

intellectual life. I have done my best to suggest to you that such an enterprise is now a serious and practicable undertaking. But at the risk of repetition I would call your attention to the essential difference that must always hold between our attainable knowledge of the future and our existing knowledge of the past. The portion of the past that is brightest and most real to each of us is the individual past—the personal memory. The portion of the future that must remain darkest and least accessible is the individual future. Scientific prophecy will not be fortune-telling, whatever else it may be. Those excellent people who cast horoscopes, those illegal fashionable palm-reading ladies who abound so much to-day, in whom nobody is so foolish as to believe, and to whom everybody is foolish enough to go, need fear no competition from the scientific prophets. The knowledge of the future we may hope to gain will be general and not individual; it will be no sort of knowledge that will either hamper us in the exercise of our individual free will or relieve us of our personal responsibility.

And now, how far is it possible at the present time to speculate on the particular outline the future will assume when it is investigated in this way?

It is interesting, before we answer that question, to take into account the speculations of a certain sect and culture of people who already, before the middle of last century, had set their faces toward the future as the justifying explanation of the present. These were the positivists, whose position is still most eloquently maintained and displayed by Mr. Frederic Harrison, in spite of the great expansion of the human outlook that has occurred since Comte.

If you read Mr. Harrison, and if you are also, as I pre-

sume your presence here indicates, saturated with that new wine of more spacious knowledge that has been given the world during the last fifty years, you will have been greatly impressed by the peculiar limitations of the positivist conception of the future. So far as I can gather, Comte was, for all practical purposes, totally ignorant of that remoter past outside the past that is known to us by history; or if he was not totally ignorant of its existence, he was, and conscientiously remained, ignorant of its relevancy to the history of humanity. In the narrow and limited past he recognized men had always been like the men of to-day; in the future he could not imagine that they would be anything more than men like the men of to-day. He perceived, as we all perceive, that the old social order was breaking up, and after a richly suggestive and incomplete analysis of the forces that were breaking it up he set himself to plan a new static social order to replace it. If you will read Comte, or, what is much easier and pleasanter, if you will read Mr. Frederic Harrison, you will find this conception constantly apparent—that there was once a stable condition of society with humanity, so to speak, sitting down in an orderly and respectable manner; that humanity has been stirred up and is on the move, and that finally it will sit down again on a higher plane, and for good and all, cultured and happy, in the reorganized positivist state. And since he could see nothing beyond man in the future, there, in that millennial fashion, Comte had to end. Since he could imagine nothing higher than man, he had to assert that humanity, and particularly the future of humanity, was the highest of all conceivable things.

All that was perfectly comprehensible in a thinker of the first half of the nineteenth century. But we of the early twentieth, and particularly that growing majority

of us who have been born since the *Origin of Species* was written, have no excuse for any such limited vision. Our imaginations have been trained upon a past in which the past that Comte knew is scarcely more than the concluding moment. We perceive that man, and all the world of men, is no more than the present phase of a development so great and splendid that beside this vision epics jingle like nursery-rhymes, and all the exploits of humanity shrivel to the proportion of castles in the sand. We look back through countless millions of years and see the will to live struggling out of the intertidal slime, struggling from shape to shape and from power to power, crawling and then walking confidently upon the land, struggling generation after generation to master the air, creeping down into the darkness of the deep; we see it turn upon itself in rage and hunger and reshape itself anew; we watch it draw nearer and more akin to us, expanding, elaborating itself, pursuing its relentless, inconceivable purpose, until at last it reaches us and its being beats through our brains and arteries, throbs and thunders in our battleships, roars through our cities, sings in our music, and flowers in our art. And when, from that retrospect, we turn again toward the future, surely any thought of finality, any millennial settlement of cultured persons, has vanished from our minds.

This fact that man is not final is the great unmanageable, disturbing fact that arises upon us in the scientific discovery of the future, and to my mind, at any rate, the question what is to come after man is the most persistently fascinating and the most insoluble question in the whole world.

Of course we have no answer. Such imaginations as we have refuse to rise to the task.

But for the nearer future, while man is still man, there

are a few general statements that seem to grow more certain. It seems to be pretty generally believed to-day that our dense populations are in the opening phase of a process of diffusion and aeration. It seems pretty inevitable also that at least the mass of white population in the world will be forced some way up the scale of education and personal efficiency in the next two or three decades. It is not difficult to collect reasons for supposing—and such reasons have been collected—that in the near future, in a couple of hundred years, as one rash optimist has written, or in a thousand or so, humanity will be definitely and conscientiously organizing itself as a great world state—a great world state that will purge from itself much that is mean, much that is bestial, and much that makes for individual dulness and dreariness, grayness and wretchedness in the world of to-day; and although we know that there is nothing final in that world state, although we see it only as something to be reached and passed, although we are sure there will be no such sitting down to restore and perfect a culture as the positivists foretell, yet few people can persuade themselves to see anything beyond that except in the vaguest and most general terms. That world state of more vivid, beautiful, and eventful people is, so to speak, on the brow of the hill, and we cannot see over, though some of us can imagine great uplands beyond, and something, something that glitters elusively, taking first one form and then another, through the haze. We can see no detail, we can see nothing definable, and it is simply, I know, the sanguine necessity of our minds that makes us believe those uplands of the future are still more gracious and splendid than we can either hope or imagine. But of things that can be demonstrated we have none.



Yet I suppose most of us entertain certain necessary persuasions, without which a moral life in this world is neither a reasonable nor a possible thing. All this paper is built finally upon certain negative beliefs that are incapable of scientific establishment. Our lives and powers are limited, our scope in space and time is limited, and it is not unreasonable that for fundamental beliefs we must go outside the sphere of reason and set our feet upon faith. Implicit in all such speculations as this is a very definite and quite arbitrary belief, and that belief is that neither humanity nor in truth any individual human being is living its life in vain. And it is entirely by an act of faith that we must rule out of our forecasts certain possibilities, certain things that one may consider improbable and against the chances, but that no one upon scientific grounds can call impossible.

One must admit that it is impossible to show why certain things should not utterly destroy and end the entire human race and story, why night should not presently come down and make all our dreams and efforts vain. It is conceivable, for example, that some great unexpected mass of matter should presently rush upon us out of space, whirl sun and planets aside like dead leaves before the breeze, and collide with and utterly destroy every spark of life upon this earth. So far as positive human knowledge goes, this is a conceivably possible thing. There is nothing in science to show why such a thing should not be. It is conceivable, too, that some pestilence may presently appear, some new disease, that will destroy, not ten or fifteen or twenty per cent of the earth's inhabitants as pestilences have done in the past, but one hundred per cent; and so end our race. No one, speaking from scientific grounds alone, can say:

“That cannot be.” And no one can dispute that some great disease of the atmosphere, some trailing cometary poison, some great emanation of vapor from the interior of the earth, such as Mr. Shiel has made a brilliant use of in his *Purple Cloud*, is consistent with every demonstrated fact in the world. There may arise new animals to prey upon us by land and sea, and there may come some drug or a wrecking madness into the minds of men. And, finally, there is the reasonable certainty that this sun of ours must radiate itself toward extinction; that, at least, must happen; it will grow cooler and cooler, and its planets will rotate ever more sluggishly until some day this earth of ours, tideless and slow-moving, will be dead and frozen, and all that has lived upon it will be frozen out and done with. There surely man must end. That of all such nightmares is the most insistently convincing.

And yet one doesn't believe it.

At least I do not. And I do not believe in these things because I have come to believe in certain other things—in the coherency and purpose in the world and in the greatness of human destiny. Worlds may freeze and suns may perish, but there stirs something within us now that can never die again.

Do not misunderstand me when I speak of the greatness of human destiny.

If I may speak quite openly to you, I will confess that, considered as a final product, I do not think very much of myself or (saving your presence) my fellow creatures. I do not think I could possibly join in the worship of humanity with any gravity or sincerity. Think of it! Think of the positive facts. There are surely moods for all of us when one can feel Swift's amazement that such

a being should deal in pride. There are moods when one can join in the laughter of Democritus; and they would come oftener were not the spectacle of human littleness so abundantly shot with pain. But it is not only with pain that the world is shot—it is shot with promise. Small as our vanity and carnality make us, there has been a day of still smaller things. It is the long ascent of the past that gives the lie to our despair. We know now that all the blood and passion of our life were represented in the Carboniferous time by something—something, perhaps, cold-blooded and with a clammy skin, that lurked between air and water, and fled before the giant amphibia of those days.

For all the folly, blindness, and pain of our lives, we have come some way from that. And the distance we have travelled gives us some earnest of the way we have yet to go.

Why should things cease at man? Why should not this rising curve rise yet more steeply and swiftly? There are many things to suggest that we are now in a phase of rapid and unprecedented development. The conditions under which men live are changing with an ever-increasing rapidity, and, so far as our knowledge goes, no sort of creatures have ever lived under changing conditions without undergoing the profoundest changes themselves. In the past century there was more change in the conditions of human life than there had been in the previous thousand years. A hundred years ago inventors and investigators were rare, scattered men, and now invention and inquiry are the work of an unorganized army. This century will see changes that will dwarf those of the nineteenth century, as those of the nineteenth dwarf those of the eighteenth. One can see no sign anywhere that this

rush of change will be over presently, that the positivist dream of a social reconstruction and of a new static culture phase will ever be realized. Human society never has been quite static, and it will presently cease to attempt to be static. Everything seems pointing to the belief that we are entering upon a progress that will go on, with an ever-widening and ever more confident stride, forever. The reorganization of society that is going on now beneath the traditional appearance of things is a kinetic reorganization. We are getting into marching order. We have struck our camp forever and we are out upon the roads.

We are in the beginning of the greatest change that humanity has ever undergone. There is no shock, no epoch-making incident—but then there is no shock at a cloudy daybreak. At no point can we say: "Here it commences, now; last minute was night and this is morning." But insensibly we are in the day. If we care to look, we can foresee growing knowledge, growing order, and presently a deliberate improvement of the blood and character of the race. And what we can see and imagine gives us a measure and gives us faith for what surpasses the imagination.

It is possible to believe that all the past is but the beginning of a beginning, and that all that is and has been is but the twilight of the dawn. It is possible to believe that all that the human mind has ever accomplished is but the dream before the awakening. We cannot see, there is no need for us to see, what this world will be like when the day has fully come. We are creatures of the twilight. But it is out of our race and lineage that minds will spring, that will reach back to us in our littleness to know us better than we know ourselves, and that will

reach forward fearlessly to comprehend this future that defeats our eyes.

All this world is heavy with the promise of greater things, and a day will come, one day in the unending succession of days, when beings, beings who are now latent in our thoughts and hidden in our loins, shall stand upon this earth as one stands upon a footstool, and shall laugh and reach out their hands amid the stars.

## XXII

### THE GREAT ANALYSIS<sup>1</sup>

#### I

What is wrong with the world is its vastness. That is what hinders us from reducing the chaos of human affairs to a rational order. In relation to the solar system the earth is small; in relation to the universe, infinitesimal; but in relation to the mind of man it is bewilderingly huge and complicated. No human intellect has hitherto been able to conceive in any detail a rational world-order, for no human intellect has had the power of grasping a thousandth part of the factors in the problem. There have been Utopias in plenty, both in literature and in political experiment: but a Utopia is precisely a world-order in which the data of the problem are ignored.

The purpose of the present essay is to inquire whether the human mind must forever remain inadequate to the effort required to bring cosmos out of chaos—whether the time has not come (or is not approaching) when a world-order may be projected on the basis of a competent knowledge or forecast of all the factors. I suggest that a new instrument of precision lies ready to our hands, needing only an organizing genius, with a selected staff of assistants, to make effective use of it on a sufficiently com-

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *The Great Analysis, a Plea for a Rational World Order*, published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

prehensive scale. It is no recondite or unfamiliar instrument: we employ it very frequently, in every-day affairs. But it is somewhat difficult to handle, even on a small scale; and to apply it to the problem of world-order is a task, no doubt, for a giant brain. My humble design, in the meantime, is to give, mayhap, a little twist in the right direction to one or other of the giant intellects which are possibly, and even probably, ripening around us.

What do we mean when we speak of world-order? The actual thing is so unrecorded in history, so remote from practical experience, that many people find it hard to grasp even the bare concept. I propose, then, to illustrate the concept on a greatly reduced and simplified scale.

## II

Most of us have heard of Sir George Darwin's speculation that the moon consists of matter which, at some indefinitely remote period, flew off at a tangent from the earth, leaving a gap now occupied by the Pacific Ocean. Well, let us suppose that, one fine day, the county of York were in like manner to break loose from its moorings and drift away into space, until it reached a point at which the balance of forces, rounding it as on a turning-lathe, set it rotating, a second satellite, between the moon and the earth. Let us suppose that its climatic conditions remained practically unaltered, and that it took its minerals along with it, and a due allowance of sea. Let us suppose, moreover, that the disruption from the earth produced no instant or startling change in the mental constitution of its inhabitants. We may also assume, what would probably be the fact, that the population, at the moment of severance, was fairly representative of

the English people as a whole—of its virtues and vices, its ideals and prejudices, its talents and its limitations. And one thing more we must postulate—namely, that the libraries and laboratories of the errant region contained all that was necessary to place its people fully abreast of modern science, research, and speculation.

Yorkshire,<sup>1</sup> then, with its three and a half million inhabitants—its peers and merchant princes, its squirearchy and its clergy, its soldiers, its sailors, its fishermen, its villa residents, living on their dividends, its shopkeepers and its artisans, its workers in factories and foundries and mines, its unskilled laborers, its ploughmen and shepherds, the tramps on its country roads, and the grimy social sediment of its slums—this fragment of what we call European civilization would (by hypothesis) be swinging through space, a self-contained planeticle, cut off from all communication with the rest of the universe. In process of time, indeed, it might learn to exchange signals with its parent earth; but we assume that any transit of material objects, animate or inanimate, between our globe and its new satellite is forever out of the question.

What would ensue? As this is not a Utopian romance, I make no attempt to prophesy in detail. There would be a period, no doubt, of great confusion and suffering. Most of the luxuries of the rich, many of the necessities or quasi-necessaries of the poor, would be suddenly cut off. There could be no replenishing of whatever stock happened to be in hand of wine, tobacco, rubber, petrol,

<sup>1</sup>One of the smaller among the United States would equally well serve the purpose of this illustration. We might take the State of Massachusetts, for example—larger in area than Yorkshire, somewhat smaller in population. The main difference would lie in the fact that the population of Massachusetts would not be so homogeneous as that of Yorkshire, so that certain race problems might have to be encountered.



tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar,<sup>1</sup> oranges, lemons, bananas. Manufacturers would be cut off from almost all their markets. Famine could be avoided, if at all, only by the most drastic measures. Possibly the organizing talents of the county (let us continue to call it so) might get together, take command, as born leaders, of the police and military forces, seize all food-supplies, and dole out siege-rations, until the food-producing resources of the territory could be developed in proportion to the new claims upon them. Possibly, on the other hand, the organizers might convince themselves that the county was essentially overpopulated, in relation to its inherent resources (even under intensive cultivation), and might decide that to fight against the ultimately inevitable famine would only be to prolong the agony, widen the area of suffering, and postpone the eventual reorganization of life.<sup>2</sup> In one way or another at any rate—whether by the elimination of the unfittest, or by the prompt and skilful utilization of natural resources, or, more probably, by both processes—some sort of balance would sooner or later be established between food and population; and, the transitional state of siege being over, Yorkshiremen might calmly and at leisure set about the reconstruction of their polity. How would it proceed?

### III

Evidently a resolute effort would be made to set up anew the hierarchy of British society—the great landowner, the capitalist, the small landholder, the dividend-drawer (*rentier*, in French), the tradesman, the artisan,

<sup>1</sup> Until beet-culture could be established on a large enough scale.

<sup>2</sup> I make no attempt at a definite estimate of the food resources of Yorkshire, for the details of the period of transition are wholly inessential to my argument.

the operative, the peasant. But this providential gradation, and the assumptions on which it rests, would have received a rude shock in the days of the disruption. Perhaps, if the "governing classes" had been wise in their generation, they might, instantly on the occurrence of the catastrophe, have organized a highly bribed army, and deliberately set about the protection of their privileges, at whatever cost of famine and slaughter the circumstances might entail. Had this endeavor succeeded, the resultant polity would have been a military oligarchy, ruling over a practically enslaved proletariat. But it is very doubtful whether, in these days of sentimental humanitarianism, the privileged classes would have stood together with sufficient unanimity to make the attempt successful, or would have found among the non-privileged classes a sufficient number of mercenaries who could be bribed to do their dirty work. It is much more probable that whatever authorities came into power on the morrow of the disruption would act nominally, and (according to their lights) sincerely, in the interests of the whole community, and would be pretty loyally supported in so doing by the privileged classes. This is the state of things I have assumed above; and, this granted, it would be extremely difficult for society to settle down, after the period of stress was over, into its old pyramidal structure, with the territorial duke at its apex, and the hind and the casual laborer at its base.

Think of all the forces that would oppose themselves to a restoration of "the classes and the masses," and of the old concepts of the rights of property on which rests the scheme of social subordination!

The great principle that "a man can do what he likes with his own," suspended during the months or years of

what may be called provisional (and provisioning) government, could never again resume its full authority. Landowners would have had to submit their land to the uses of the community, not cultivating it, or withholding it from cultivation, as they pleased, but employing it so as to produce, in due proportions, the greatest amount of the necessaries of life. The provisional ministry of agriculture would have ordained that so much land should lie in pasture for the due supply of meat, milk, leather, and wool, so much land should be devoted to cereals, so much to root-crops, so much to fibres (hemp and flax) in order to repair, so far as possible, the disappearance of cotton and silk—and none at all, that could be made productive, to non-productive uses. During the period of stress, the products of this communal agriculture would pass into the communal stores, thence to be distributed on whatever principle the government might determine—no doubt a confessedly temporary and provisional principle. But when the time of stress was past, can it be supposed that the landlord would simply resume his right of demanding a tribute for the mere access to certain portions of his land, in order that he might, at his leisure, devote certain other portions to unproductive, and partly destructive, purposes of sport and recreation? Assuredly it is not to be supposed. Remember that the masks and disguises that hide the realities of territorial privilege would now be stripped off. Men driven off the land could not emigrate, for there would be no place to emigrate to. They could not herd into the cities, to scratch a precarious subsistence as parasites of the bloated host of machines; for mechanical industry, now ministering, with restricted raw material, to the definite demands of a county, instead of the indefinite demand of the world,

would very soon shrink to such proportions as to make the amount of labor required accurately measurable and fairly stable. The margins and safety-valves, in short, which in some degree relax the pressure of "the landed interest" upon the body politic, would then have disappeared, and the real meaning of private property in land would, so to speak, be visible to the naked eye.

Consider, too, that the influences which now conspire with and bolster up "the landed interest" would then have lost much, if not all, of their power. Capital, almost swept out of existence in the catastrophe, could not possibly recover a tithe of its volume or its prestige. Cut off from his world-wide market, the manufacturer would be unable to amass huge wealth, to adopt a princely style of living as natural and proper to his class, and to claim the lion's share of the product of labor as the just reward of his grandfather's or great-grandfather's "abstinence from consumption," and of his own business insight and organizing capacity. No longer hoping himself to take his place among the "landed" aristocracy, he would view the claims of that aristocracy with a dispassionately critical eye. No longer able to pretend, either to himself or to society, that the management of his business demanded Napoleonic genius, he would be the more readily content with a reasonable reward for such capacity and energy as it did actually require. No longer subject to the temptations of unlimited display and luxury, he would be the less likely to grudge labor the opportunity of a decent human existence.

Again, let us remember that the great dividend-drawing class, that bulwark of Things-As-They-Are, would practically have ceased to exist. This is the class which, by dint of small abstinences and pettifogging parsimonies, has

earned the right to exploit indefinitely the labor of the world. It is the giant expansion of enterprise—the weaving all over the earth of a network of railways, steamship lines, telegraph cables, and so forth—which has enabled this class, in initially rich and thrifty countries, to grow so enormously. But the villadom of Yorkshire would now be cut off from its sources of supply. Its Fortunatus's purse would be snatched from its grasp; and within the county, now isled in space, there would be no room for such a rapid expansion of enterprise as would provide profitable investment for new savings, even supposing saving to be possible. This whole class, therefore, would find itself willy-nilly transferred from the camp of Capital into that of Labor, and its influence, if it came to a question either of voting or of fighting, would go against the re-establishment of a monopoly in land. Further, the mention of fighting reminds us that privilege would no longer be protected by a standing army. We have put aside as highly improbable the hypothesis that the privileged few would have the presence of mind to intrench themselves from the outset behind a force of lavishly bribed mercenaries; and if once they let slip that opportunity—if once they admitted the idea of organization with a single view to the general weal—they could find no plausible excuse for the maintenance or revival of the military profession. The armies of to-day are maintained primarily and ostensibly to guard against foreign aggression; but their equally real though not commonly avowed function is to support the police in enforcing the rights of property. In our insulated county, far from the madding crowd of jealous nations and hostile races, there would be no possibility of foreign aggression, and consequently no excuse for maintaining an army or navy. We need not specu-

late as to how far the removal of these burdens would go toward the restoration of economic prosperity; for that is not the present point. The point is that the privileged classes could scarcely come to the county government, organized for the general welfare, and say: "Your measures are threatening our privileges: we demand that you shall withdraw from productive employment so-and-so many thousand men, who shall protect us, by aid of blood and iron if necessary, against your encroachments upon our ancestral rights." Such a demand would be too paradoxical for consideration. Moreover, foreign aggression, as a factor in the problem of state, being once for all cancelled, the common plea for an endowed aristocracy, that it gives its best blood for the defense of the country, would thereby fall to the ground. All those partly real, but mainly fallacious, arguments for Things-As-They-Are, drawn from the unstable and threatening aspect of international relations, would lose whatever force they possess. The disruption would have cleaned the slate of these, as of so many other, prejudices, sophisms, hypocrisies, illusions.

A clean slate! That is what the organizing intelligence of the county would start from in its work of reconstruction. I am conscious that in the foregoing speculations I have now and then suffered my own prejudices to anticipate, by implication, the reconstructive work. I have spoken as if the slate would not be clean, but inscribed with certain foregone ideas and principles. This has been, I believe, inevitable; but it has in some degree obscured the true purport of my argument. Let me, then, repeat and insist that I do not set up for a sociological prophet, and do not take my stand on the plausibility of any detail in my forecast. What I have sought to do is simply

(for purposes that will presently appear) to stimulate the reader's imagination of a segregated community, limited in size, provided with all the mental resources, and most of the material equipment, of modern science, and uprooted, by a great convulsion, not only from its geographical environments, but from all sorts of prejudices, traditions, and habitual forms of thought. I beg the reader to conceive such a community recovering from its first bewilderment and disarray, and settling down, on the assumption, as nearly as possible, of the "clean slate," to the reordering of its polity. What might we reasonably expect to be the process of that reordering?

#### IV

We need not pause to speculate upon the composition of the Organizing Body, or the method of its appointment. It would either be a very small Committee, or (more probably, perhaps) a Dictator with certain councillors or assessors. At any rate, we assume that some group of men (and women?) capable, not merely of voting "ay" or "no" on a cut-and-dried proposition, but of sustained and accurate collective thinking, is intrusted with the task of planning the new order of things, with a view to what we may vaguely describe for the present as the Common Weal.

What would be the determining feature of their position, as compared with that of any of the Constituent Assemblies of history, whether in Philadelphia, in Paris, or elsewhere? Surely this: that they would be confronted with a task of *manageable magnitude*. They would have an entire and perfect globule to deal with, instead of a segment of a globe. From the polity of this globule, many

of the most perplexing factors of globe-politics would (by hypothesis) be eliminated. There would be no disparities of race or color; no (real or imaginary) superiority of one complexion over another; no tribal antipathies to be reckoned with; no "backward" peoples to be brought into line. There would be no differences of languages to impede understanding, and create misunderstanding, between parish and parish, between Riding and Riding. There would be no ancestral feuds; no historical jealousies of any importance, between one region and another. There would be no artificial barriers between region and region, making it seem that the gain of one must be the other's loss, and that the only way to enrich yourself is to impoverish your neighbor. As there would be no possibility of aggression from without, there would be no burden of armaments, and no military caste whose prospects of honor and advancement lay in the fomenting of bellicose feeling. There would be no great differences of climate, begetting such differences of temperament and character as could not possibly be reduced to a common measure. There would be differences of religion, no doubt, but none so aggressive as to imperil the great principle of "live and let live."

The problem, in short, would be neither interracial, nor international, nor military, nor religious: it would be simply social and economic. Which means that, fundamentally, it would be a problem of economics alone, but of economics viewed, not as the science of wealth, but as the science of well-being.

Now it would not be overwhelmingly difficult—it would demand no superhuman brain—to co-ordinate in one survey all the elements of the situation. The material elements would be pretty easily summed up. There would



be a territory of so many thousand acres, divisible into various grades of fertility, and suited in such-and-such proportions for the cultivation of such-and-such products. The actual fertility could be increased by known methods of intensive cultivation to such-and-such a degree in such-and-such a time: further improvements in agriculture and stock-breeding might be vaguely anticipated but must not, for the moment, be counted on. The ascertained mineral resources of the county would be sufficient for so-and-so many years at such-and-such a rate of consumption. Specialists would have to be consulted as to the likelihood that further stores awaited discovery, or that science would provide substitutes for coal before the known veins were exhausted; and policy would have to be guided by what seemed "the better opinion" on these points. An almost complete census could be taken, in fact, of the potentialities of the county, in regard both to those forms of wealth which reproduce themselves and to those which do not; and the further problem would be to regulate their production and distribution in accordance with the best interests of the community.

But this would leave the crux of the problem untouched: What are the best interests of the community? What is meant by the phrase used vaguely and provisionally above: the Common Weal? Here the Constituent Body would have to embark on a psychological inquiry, and that in two branches: First, what would be fundamentally and ultimately the highest good of the community? Second, what instalment of that highest good was practicably possible, and could be rendered acceptable, to the existing generation?

The inquirers would doubtless be met on the threshold by the plausible phrase, "the greatest good of the greatest

number," and would fall to analyzing it. Should they take it as meaning that the ideal of statecraft should be to foster, upon a given territory, "the greatest quantity of human life that it could be made to support in fair material comfort"? Or should it rather be held to imply "the greatest quantity of human life compatible with the highest physical and spiritual development of the individual"?

On the former assumption, their course would at first, at any rate, be comparatively clear. The problem would simply be to utilize to the utmost the food-and-warmth-producing potentialities of the county, making the most of every cultivable rood, sacrificing nothing to beauty, and no more to recreation than was absolutely necessary in the interests of health. Agriculture and manufactures would be so organized that every able-bodied person, by a short day of labor, could support himself or herself, with a certain number of youthful and aged dependants, on something like the present scale of middle-class decency and comfort. Education would be strictly utilitarian; and while science would be treated with some liberality, art would decline to the level of the cinematograph, the colored supplement, and the novelette. Existing treasures of painting and sculpture would be gathered in Museums (such, perhaps, as Castle Howard or Wentworth Woodhouse), but they would probably be little frequented. A smug, unidea'd prosperity, in a world as nearly as possible divested of hope and fear and ambition, would be the goal of statecraft. When once the routine of life was established, the chief difficulty would be to maintain the just balance between population and subsistence; for the people of such a lubberland would probably show a constant tendency to breed beyond the margin fixed by the established standard of comfort.

If, on the other hand, the Organizing Body adopted the second interpretation of "the greatest good of the greatest number," and sought their ideal in intensity of human experience rather than mere quantity of human life, their task would be very much more complex and difficult. It would be one, not of more scientific adjustment of means to ends, but rather of artistic social construction, always based, of course, on scientific recognition of material and psychological facts. It would be manifest from the outset that no dead level of equality should be aimed at. No man should have the right to claim tribute from another for access to his fair share in the reproductive powers of nature, or should be enabled to make a "corner" of private ownership in mineral wealth. But equal economic opportunity does not imply equality of social service, or of reward. There would be a clearly marked gradation in the dignity and worth of human employments, proportioned to the rarity of the endowment, and the arduousness of the preparation, demanded for them. It would be difficult, no doubt, to measure the worth to the community of artistic products: there would always be lively discussions and heart-burnings on the subject, to diversify life: but some workable method would assuredly suggest itself when the need arose. At any rate, life-supporting space would be freely sacrificed to life-ennobling space: visible beauty and adequate elbow-room would take high rank among the necessities of existence; and the reward of exceptional service to the commonweal would be found, not in the means to indulge in ostentatious and senseless luxury, but in the right to lead a life of exceptional spaciousness and dignity, among exceptionally beautiful surroundings. There would always, or at any rate for many generations, be a majority of mediocrity in the state—a populace content with com-

mon employment, and its common reward in the shape of ordinary comfort and pastime. Whether there would ever come a levelling-up, which would bring all to some sort of equality on the heights, is a subject for remote speculation; but there would be no need for a levelling-down, which should bring all to a flat stagnation in the depths. There would be room for ambition, room for achievement, room for renown. Men do not in their hearts believe in, or desire, equality. They love to look up and admire: so much so that, in the absence of what is fine and noble, they will admire what is tawdry and base. They do not desire to live like mites in a cheese. When once they can all live like human beings, they will be not only content, but happy, that the master-spirits among them should move in loftier regions, like the demi-gods of old.

And in such a polity as this, where elbow-room was recognized as one of the indispensable conditions of the seemliness of life, the population question would probably give no trouble. How far eugenics would be a matter of state regulation, and how far it would be left to the growth of enlightened sentiment, I do not attempt to conjecture.

## V

Again I have suffered my own prejudices and preconceptions to peep through rather obtrusively. But again I beg the reader to remember that they are not the essential stuff of my argument. My forecast of the probable trend of thought in the Organizing Body may be extremely shallow and unconvincing. That does not matter. My purpose was not to persuade the reader—how could I?—that the Organizers would arrive at such-and-such results,

but simply to indicate, in broad outline, the topics of their deliberations. What I am endeavoring to show is that, in an absolutely isolated community of the size of Yorkshire, it would be possible, not only to think out in detail the problems of the commonweal, but to place the solutions convincingly before the intelligence of the people, so that all should take conscious and understanding part in whatever experiments of social organization were decided upon. The organization should, of course, be confessedly experimental. It would be absurd to suggest that any human intellect or intellects could think out a system perfect in all its parts, that could be made to function smoothly from the very outset, like a well-oiled machine. Such a system, indeed, would be manifestly imperfect if it purported to be rigid and to possess no elasticity. There would be room for a thousand afterthoughts and readjustments. No one can absolutely foresee how the human character will react to untried conditions. But it would be well within the power of the Organizers to foresee and prepare for all probable eventualities, and even to adjust matters so that the readjustment necessitated by an unforeseen eventuality might be effected without throwing the system, as a whole, out of gear. "Politics" would thus mean rational experimenting in the light instead of wrangling over the next leap in the dark. The conditions of any given experiment would be clearly defined, its results accurately measured and appraised. Where there was no conflict of class interests, and no suspicion that one party or group was trying to overreach another, experiments could be carried out with a single eye to the commonweal, and a dissenting minority could register its protest without turbulence, claiming to have the issue tried over again, under certain conditions, and

after a certain time. The state would be a measurable, manageable entity, like a joint-stock company governed by an energetic, clear-headed, far-sighted Board of Directors. The principle of what is known in America as Scientific Management would be recognized in all departments—the principle that, while there are many wrong, wasteful, rule-of-thumb ways of doing a thing, there is only one economical, elegant, right way, and it is always worth while, by patient experiment, to ascertain and master that process. The whole community would be consciously knit together in a league for the commonweal; and though debates would arise as to the true nature of the commonweal in this case and in that, the ever-present sense of solidarity of interest would divest them of acrimony, malice, and destructive passion.

In this globule and microcosm, in short, the human intellect would be able to grasp, master, control, and mould all the manifold constituents of human environment, character, and destiny. Man's mind would view in man's terrestrial lot a great and complex, but not an utterly overwhelming, problem. The intellect would approach its task with the confidence of a sculptor who sees before him a mighty mass of clay, yet not so huge as to appall and paralyze his energies. Already he divines in the vague the form, the symmetry, to be evolved from it; and, as he settles to his toil, his nerves thrill with the joy of plastic energy. He knows the immutable laws of his material; and, under those laws, he knows that he can impress on this rude and formless mass the contours and proportions of organic life and beauty.

[The essay now returns from the illustration-in-little to the world, from the imaginary globule with its manageable problem to the real globe with its unmanageable problem. But recognizing "that it is only a difference of

scale, not any difference of essence, that distinguishes the real from the imaginary problem," the thinker perceives that the imaginary problem forms a most practical analysis of some of the real troubles of the world, troubles which neither partisan statesmanship, nor political wars, nor racial supremacy will ever settle. Has not the time come for inaugurating other methods?]

What is wrong with the world is its vastness. But is there no hope that we may ever reach out and grapple with this immensity? Has not the time come, or is it not at hand, for a Great Analysis and co-ordination of the factors of the world-problem? Is it inconceivable that some encyclopædic brain (with lesser intelligences working under its inspiration and control) should one day disentangle and master all the welter of terrestrial resources and potentialities, as we have supposed the Organizing Body to master and manipulate the resources and potentialities of our insulated Yorkshire?

I do not for a moment mean to imply that the establishment of an ordered world-state would immediately or very quickly follow the Great Analysis, and the theoretic forecast of a world-order. No amount of taking-thought will make the planet other than unwieldy and hard to manipulate. Even with modern methods of diffusion, thought-waves spread but slowly, and action lags still farther behind. I am far from suggesting that the most titanic intellect could, in a decade or a generation, remake world-polity, as Mutsuhito has remade the polity of Japan. The effect of the Great Analysis would not be revolutionary. But it would enable statesmen and nations to look far ahead, instead of groping along in the tangle of affairs. It would teach them to think in terms of centuries, instead of, at most, in terms of one or two decades. At present the world is like a motor-car without headlights, feeling its way by night along a road beset with snags and

sloughs. The Great Analysis would throw a mighty beam far into the future, enabling progress to forge ahead with a new speed, a new purposefulness, and a new security from quagmires, blind alleys, and precipices.

[NOTE.—The author, though writing two or three years before the great European war, sees very clearly that among the factors, eliminated in the case of a planetary Yorkshire, which enormously complicate the affairs of the real world—climate, race, religion, nationality, commercial rivalry, and war—war is by far the most important. The following section, on the relation of the Great Analysis to war, contains a brief but fundamental philosophy to which no makeshift settlements and treaties should blind us.]

## VI

There remain three factors in the world-problem which were absent from our illustration-in-little, but are enormously potent in the planetary scale. They are Nationality, Commercial Rivalry, and War.

They not only may, but must, be considered together: for the one includes the other, like a nest of Chinese boxes. Out of Nationality springs Commercial Rivalry, and out of Commercial Rivalry, War. For Commercial Rivalry it might be better, perhaps, to substitute a more general term—say, Economic Interest. Thus corrected, the above statement is almost literally exact. Nationality is the great bar to a consolidation of Economic Interests, and scarcely any motive is nowadays strong enough to lead to war, unless Economic Interest (real or imaginary) comes in to reinforce it.

What, then, in this all-important domain, would be the work of the Great Analysis? The answer is ludicrously obvious: to analyze the idea of Nationality, the idea of Economic Interest. Such analyses, it may be said, already exist in plenty, and lead to the most conflicting re-



sults. Yes: but which of them has been undertaken on the basis of exact measurements, under the rubrics provided by a complete world-survey, and with sufficient mental detachment from the very objects to be analyzed—Nationality and Economic Interest? In our illustrative Yorkshire, the great advantage of the Organizing Body lay in the fact that the disruption had uprooted all sorts of prejudices, traditions, and habitual forms of thought, or, in other words, had cleaned the mental slate of the community. The very first step toward the Great Analysis would be for those engaged in it to undertake, in their own persons, a similar cleaning of the mental slate. This could not be effected without prayer and fasting—without an intense and heroic effort. But cooperation and mutual criticism would help, each investigator taking the beam out of his brother's eye, and having the mote, in turn, removed from his own. Let it not be objected that such an extirpation of prejudice would mean the ignoring of one of the decisive factors in the problem. A man may cast aside his own prejudice without forgetting or underrating its continued hold upon his neighbor's mind. And, the object of the whole endeavor being to place the human intelligence at a point of view from which it should see planetary affairs in a wider and juster perspective, how should our analysts hope to lead others to that point of view, without having first attained it themselves?

Can it be doubted that there is ample room, not to say urgent necessity, for what Nietzsche would have called a revaluing of political and economic values, and a re-education of our principalities and powers (individual or collective) in the light of that "tariff-revision"? Who has hitherto applied, in any systematic and comprehen-

sive way, the one true standard of appraisal: to wit, human worth and well-being? We have constantly forgotten the end in our clinging to temporary and makeshift means, which we have come almost to deify, as ordinances handed down from heaven. Many of us even deny and deride the end, while we are prepared to vindicate with fury our vested interest in the means, as they take shape in this or that institution which has long survived any utility it may ever have possessed.

What is the general characteristic of the political thought which shapes what are called the practical politics of the world, at any rate in the international domain? Is it not an amazing short-sightedness, amounting in most cases to absolute inability to look more than a few years ahead? The great statesman is not he who gazes far into the future, but who sees clearly and estimates at their effective (as distinct from their ideal) worth the conflicting forces of the present. It is scarcely too much to say that the future, in any large sense of the word, does not exist for the political mind. The future at which the most far-sighted aims is only a slightly reformed present ("re-formed," sometimes, in a retrograde sense) which is to be, as Euclid says, produced to infinity. Mankind is always to be animated by the same stupidities and cupidities, the same traditions and superstitions. The idea that the future must be something immeasurably vaster, and may be something immeasurably wiser, than this groping, elbowing, snarling present of ours, has never dawned upon the political mind; much less the idea of fixing the view on a saner, nobler, not too distant future, and going forth to meet it. The typical diplomatist-politician lives from hand to mouth, on a set of ideas so old that it is high time they went to the public analyst,

who should report as to whether they are still fit for human food.

These remarks apply mainly to international politics; of national politics it is possible, in some cases, to draw a less gloomy picture. Even a small measure of social justice or expediency may possibly be only an instalment of a larger scheme, present to the statesman's mind, but not yet ripe for disclosure. Perhaps it is not altogether too optimistic to imagine that the larger scheme may in some cases be based on a philosophic realization of the one thing needful—the enhancement of the worth of human life. But in international politics who can trace the faintest glimmer of any such conception? Statesmen may, perhaps, think a few years or a few decades ahead; but their schemes are inspired by sheer national egoism and ambition, expressing itself in high-sounding ready-made phrases, the true import of which they have never sought to penetrate. To call this egoism “national” is, indeed, to flatter it. In nine cases out of ten it is essentially class-egoism or party-egoism, which has given no real thought—though it may pay perfunctory and hypocritical lip-homage—to the good of the nation as a whole. It is appalling to picture the condition of the minds—the fifteen or twenty brains, under as many helmets or shakos or ministerial cocked-hats—in which the immediate destinies of Europe are at this moment shaping themselves. Some of these men, no doubt, are thoroughly well-meaning, and sincerely bent on doing as little harm as possible. But is there one to whom we can look with the faintest gleam of hope for a world-shaping, world-redeeming thought? Is there one who has shown any sense of the new conditions of planetary life, the vast new issues opening out before the human race? Is there

one whom we can believe to have thought out, sincerely and competently, the meaning of the phrases on which his foreign policy is based? Is there one from whom we could with any confidence expect an original and enlightened view of his own country's interests, let alone any wider outlook? Is there one, to sum up, who has given proof of a mental caliber at all commensurate with his power and his responsibility? If such an one there be, he is certainly not among the active, aggressive "makers of history," but among the comparatively passive groups whose part it is to look on and try to prevent the worst sort of mischief.

We must not, however, be too hard on our purblind principalities and powers. It is not their fault that they have been born into a world too vast and complex for their rational apprehension. It is just here that the Great Analysis must come to the rescue; and the very point of my argument is that it must be a huge co-operative effort, even if it be organized by one supreme intelligence. It would be fantastic to look for that intelligence among the Crowned Heads of Europe.

## VII

Perhaps the best order for investigation to pursue would be to start with the innermost of the Chinese boxes, and work back from an analysis of the economics of war, to the larger subject of economic interest in general, and the still larger subject of nationality and the price we pay for it. Who gains by war? Putting aside altogether its horrors and agonies—assuming, for the sake of argument, that it is carried on by insentient puppets, like a game of chess—is the profit of even a successful war sufficiently large and sufficiently distributed to make it worth the

expense and toil of previous preparation, and the still greater expense and toil of guarding and securing whatever advantage has been gained? I am far from taking it for granted that the answer to this question would necessarily be a sweeping negative; but it would surely appear that, in these days of fabulously expensive armament and apparatus, and ever more intricate financial interrelations, the possible advantages of war to any class of any community were becoming increasingly dubious. The Franco-German War is commonly cited as one from which the victor reaped huge and conspicuous gains. The Franco-German War, be it noted, took place nearly half a century ago; but, even so, I should very much like to see a searching analysis of its vaunted profits. It is true that the conditions were exceptionally favorable to profit-making. The war was short, the collapse of the enemy complete, the territorial acquisition large, the indemnity enormous. But was the territorial acquisition a true gain to any human being? Is it fair to attribute the industrial growth and expansion of Germany wholly, or in any determining measure, to the influence of the war? How many times over has the indemnity been absorbed by the direct and indirect expense involved in guarding the spoils? And is the account yet closed? Even if the balance stands to-day somewhat to the credit side, may there not be huge sums of compound interest to be paid in the future for those months of inebriating triumph? As one walks the streets of Berlin, and sees at every corner some bronze colossus sending up its silent shout of "Victory!" to the inscrutable heavens, one wonders how the German "philolog" of to-day expounds to his students the myth of Nemesis.

And these doubts and hesitations, be it noted, merely concern the question of gross profits as recorded in col-

umns of statistics. The Great Analysis would be a futility indeed if it took statistics at their face value, and did not translate them into terms of human well-being. The results of the investigation would probably be still more dubious when the distribution of the profits came to be considered, and their influence upon the actual worth of human life. I am not assuming (as some people do) that the dreamy, idealistic, provincial, ante-bellum German was a happier or a better man than the hustling, aggressive, cosmopolitan German of to-day. The idealist, in so far as he existed at all, was probably doomed to go under in the mere march of human affairs, war or no war. What I do suggest is that investigation might possibly show that, for the mass of the German people, the stress and strain of life had increased out of all proportion to any increase in its interest, pleasure, or comfort—in short, in either its spiritual or its animal satisfactions. It would not improbably be found that the French milliards, in so far as they reached the pockets of the German people at all, went to swell the tide of luxury and vulgar ostentation, not to relieve the burdens, or dignify the lives, of the masses. They may have helped to make of Berlin a flaunting, swaggering, champagne-bibbing European capital, in place of the unpretentious *Residenz* of old; but have they enhanced the general worth of life for the bulk of the German nation? The efficiency which one so often admires, not without envy, in Germany, is no product of the war: rather, the war was a product of the efficiency. As for the rapid growth of population, we must think twice before we accept that as a proof of general well-being. It is often the most miserable household that is the most prolific.

I would be understood as suggesting the heads of a

possible analysis, not forestalling its results. It is quite probable that in this particular instance—an exceptionally favorable one for the believers in the benefits of war—a good case could be made out for an ultimate balance of profit. Still more probably might it be demonstrated that, with an unscrupulous mock-Napoleon seated on the throne of France, war was, for Germany, the less of two evils. This argument may sometimes be advanced with speciousness, and possibly with justice, while the world-will remains at sixes and sevens, and the world-conscience, though perhaps moving in the womb of time, is certainly as yet unborn. But that only brings home to us the urgent necessity for a systematic effort to harmonize the distracted will by proposing to it a largely conceived, rational design, and at the same time to expedite the birth of a collective conscience. It is a monstrous and intolerable thought that civilization may at any moment be hurled half-way back to barbarism by some scheming adventurer, some superstitious madman, or simply a pompous, well-meaning busybody. There is a great deal of common sense in the world, if only it could be organized to the rational end. But while we are wholly in doubt as to whither we are going, it is no wonder if we quarrel as to how we are to get there, and are never secure against the baneful influence of crazes, hallucinations, sophistries, catchwords, and that tribal vanity which, under the name of patriotism, works far more insidious mischief than personal conceit.

### VIII

One thing, however, I do venture to prophesy—namely, that the study of all international problems, with that of war at their head, will be found to lead back to the one

great problem—neither national nor international, but fundamental—of the distribution of wealth. I am even tempted to lay down an axiom, to this effect: “When the profits of war (if any) are distributed with a reasonable approach to justice, no one will any longer want to make war.” In other words, the profits of war—and that term, of course, includes “armed peace,” with its ever-recurring games of bluff in pursuit of some economic advantage—the profits of war go to widen the gap between the “haves” and “have nots.” They may give room for an increase in the numbers of the proletariat; they do not better its condition.

We are back, then, at our starting-point. We find, after reviewing the main factors of complication, that the fundamental problem of the Great Analysis is precisely that which confronted the Organizers of our hypothetical Yorkshire—the establishment of a reasonable equilibrium between the resources of the planet and the drafts upon them, between Commodities and Consumption, or, in the most general terms, between Nature and Human Life. It is evident, if we only think of it, that such an equilibrium can and must be established, unless the history of the world is to be one long series of oscillations between nascent order and devouring chaos. Hitherto, as above indicated, the necessary data for the equation have been unattainable. We simply did not know the world we lived in. Now that we possess, or are in a fair way of attaining, an adequate knowledge of the data, we cannot too soon set about working out the equation—in the first place on paper. The sooner we see our way (however roughly outlined) to a rational world-order, the more chance is there of preventing a catastrophic swing of the pendulum.



## XXIII

### THE UNITY OF HUMAN NATURE<sup>1</sup>

JOHN JAY CHAPMAN

If one could stand on the edge of the moon and look down through a couple of thousand years on human politics, it would be apparent that everything that happened on the earth was directly dependent on everything else that happened there. Whether the Italian peasant shall eat salt with his bread depends upon Bismarck. Whether the prison system of Russia shall be improved depends upon the ministry of Great Britain. If Lord Beaconsfield is in power, there is no leisure in Russia for domestic reform. The lash is everywhere lifted in a security furnished by the concurrence of all the influences upon the globe that favor coercion. In like manner, the good things that happen are each the product of all extant conditions. Constitutional government in England qualifies the whole of western Europe. Our slaves were not set free without the assistance of every liberal mind in Europe; and the thoughts which we think in our closet affect the fate of the Boer in South Africa. That Tolstoi is to-day living unmolested upon his farm instead of serving in a Siberian mine, that Dreyfus is alive and not dead,

<sup>1</sup> An address delivered before the graduating class at Hobart College in 1900. Reprinted from *Learning and Other Essays*, through the courtesy of John Jay Chapman and of Messrs. Moffat, Yard and Company.

is due directly to the people in this audience and to others like them scattered over Europe and America.

The effect of enlightenment on tyranny is not merely to make the tyrant afraid to be cruel; it makes him not want to be cruel. It makes him see what cruelty is. And reciprocally the effect of cruelty on enlightenment is to make that enlightenment grow dim. It prevents men from seeing what cruelty is.

The Czar of Russia cannot get rid of your influence, nor you of his. Every ukase he signs makes allowance for you, and, on the other hand, the whole philosophy of your life is tinged by him. You believe that the abuses under the Russian Government are inscrutably different from and worse than our own; whereas both sets of atrocities are identical in principle, and are more alike in fact, in taste and smell and substance, than your prejudice is willing to admit. The existence of Russia narrows America's philosophy, and misconduct by a European power may be seen reflected in the moral tone of your clergyman on the following day. More Americans have abandoned their faith in free government since England began to play the tyrant in South Africa than there were colonists in the country in 1776.

Europe is all one family, and speaks, one might say, the same language. The life that has been transplanted to North America during the last three centuries is European life. From your position on the moon you would not be able to understand what the supposed differences were between European and American things, that the Americans make so much fuss over. You would say: "I see only one people, splashed over different continents. The problems they talk about, the houses they live in, the clothes they wear, seem much alike. Their educa-

tion and catchwords are identical. They are the children of the Classics, of Christianity, and of the Revival of Learning. They are homogeneous, and they are growing more homogeneous."

The subtle influences that modern nations exert over one another illustrate the unity of life on the globe. But if we turn to ancient history we find in its bare outlines staggering proof of the interdependence of nations. The Greeks were wiped out. They could not escape their contemporaries any more than we can escape the existence of the Malays. Israel could not escape Assyria, nor Assyria Persia, nor Persia Macedonia, nor Macedonia Rome, nor Rome the Goths. Life is not a boarding-school where a bad boy can be dismissed for the benefit of the rest. He remains. He must be dealt with. He is as much here as we are ourselves. The whole of Europe and Asia and South America and every Malay and every Chinaman, Hindoo, Tartar, and Tagal—of such is our civilization.

Let us for the moment put aside every dictate of religion and political philosophy. Let us discard all prejudice and all love. Let us regard nothing except facts. Does not the coldest conclusion of science announce the fact that the world is peopled, and that every individual of that population has an influence as certain and far more discoverable than the influence of the weight of his body upon the solar system?

A Chinaman lands in San Francisco. The Constitution of the United States begins to rock and tremble. What shall we do with him? The deepest minds of the past must be ransacked to the bottom to find an answer. Every one of seventy million Americans must pass through a throe of thought that leaves him a modified man. The

same thing is true when the American lands in China. These creatures have thus begun to think of each other. It is unimaginable that they should not hereafter incessantly and never-endingly continue to think of each other. And out of their thoughts grows the destiny of mankind.

We have an inherited and stupid notion that the East does not change. If Japan goes through a transformation scene under our eyes, we still hold to our prejudice as to the immutability of the Chinese. If our own people and the European nations seem to be meeting and surging and reappearing in unaccustomed rôles every ten years, till modern history looks like a fancy ball, we still go on muttering some old ignorant shibboleth about East and West, Magna Charta, the Indian Mutiny, and Mahomet. The chances are that England will be dead-letter, and Russia progressive, before we have done talking. Of a truth, when we consider the rapidity of visible change and the amplitude of time—for there is plenty of time—we need not despair of progress.

The true starting-point for the world's progress will never be reached by any nation as a whole. It exists and has been reached in the past as it will in the future by individuals scattered here and there in every nation. It is reached by those minds which insist on seeing conditions as they are, and which cannot confine their thoughts to their own kitchen, or to their own creed, or to their own nation. You will think I have in mind poets and philosophers, for these men take humanity as their subject, and deal in the general stuff of human nature. But the narrow spirit in which they often do this cuts down their influence to parish limits. I mean rather those men who in private life act out their thoughts and feelings as to the unity of human life; those same thoughts which

the poets and philosophers have expressed in their plays, their sayings, and their visions. There have always been men who in their daily life have fulfilled those intimations and instincts which, if reduced to a statement, receive the names of poetry and religion. These men are the cart-horses of progress; they devote their lives to doing things which can only be justified or explained by the highest philosophy. They proceed as if all men were their brothers. These practical philanthropists go plodding on through each century and leave the bones of their character mingled with the soil of their civilization.

See how large the labors of such men look when seen in historic perspective. They have changed the world's public opinion. They have moulded the world's institutions into forms expressive of their will. I ask your attention to one of their achievements. We have one province of conduct in which the visions of the poets have been reduced to practise—yes, erected into a department of government—through the labors of the philanthropists. They have established the hospital and the reformatory; and these visible bastions of philosophy hold now a more unchallenged place in our civilization than the Sermon on the Mount on which they comment.

The truth which the philanthropists of all ages have felt is that the human family was a unit; and this truth, being as deep as human nature, can be expressed in every philosophy—even in the inverted utilitarianism now in vogue. The problem of how to treat insane people and criminals has been solved to this extent, that every one agrees that nothing must be done to them which injures the survivors. That is the reason we do not kill them. It is unpleasant to have them about, and this unpleasantness can be cured only by our devotion to them. We

must either help the wretched or we ourselves become degenerate. They have thus become a positive means of civilizing the modern world; for the instinct of self-preservation has led men to deal with this problem in the only practical way.

Put a Chinaman into your hospital and he will be cared for. You may lie awake at night drawing up reasons for doing something different with this disgusting Chinaman—who, somehow, is in the world and is thrown into your care, your hospital, your thought—but the machinery of your own being is so constructed that if you take any other course with him than that which you take with your own people, your institution will instantly lose its meaning; you would not have the face to beg money for its continuance in the following year. The logic of this, which, if you like, is the logic of self-protection under the illusion of self-sacrifice, is the logic which is at the bottom of all human progress. I dislike to express this idea in its meanest form; but I know there are some professors of political economy here, and I wish to be understood. The utility of hospitals is not to cure the sick. It is to teach mercy. The veneration for hospitals is not accorded to them because they cure the sick, but because they stand for love and responsibility.

The appeal of physical suffering makes the strongest attack on our common humanity. Even zealots and sectaries are touched. The practise and custom of this kind of mercy have therefore become established, while other kinds of mercy which require more imagination are still in their infancy. But at the bottom of every fight for principle you will find the same sentiment of mercy. If you take a slate and pencil and follow out the precise reasons and consequences of the thing, you will always

find that a practical and effective love for mankind is working out a practical self-sacrifice. The average man cannot do the sum, he does not follow the reasoning, but he knows the answer. The deed strikes into his soul with a mathematical impact, and he responds like a tuning-fork when its note is struck.

Every one knows that self-sacrifice is a virtue. The child takes his nourishment from the tale of heroism as naturally as he takes milk. He feels that the deed was done for his sake. He adopts it: it is his own. The nations have always stolen their myths from one another, and claimed each other's heroes. It has required all the world's heroes to make the world's ears sensitive to new statements, illustrations, and applications of the logic of progress. Yet their work has been so well done that all of us respond to the old truths in however new a form. Not France alone but all modern society owes a debt of gratitude to Zola for his rescue of Dreyfus. The whole world would have been degraded and set back, the whole world made less decent and habitable, but for those few Frenchmen who took their stand against corruption.

Now the future of civil society upon the earth depends upon the application to international politics of this familiar idea, which we see prefigured in our mythology and monumentalized in our hospitals—the principle that what is done for one is done for all. When you say a thing is "right," you appeal to mankind. What you mean is that every one is at stake. Your attack upon wrong amounts to saying that some one has been left out in the calculation. Both at home and abroad you are always pleading for mercy, and the plea gains such a wide response that some tyranny begins to totter, and its engines are turned upon you to get you to stop. This outcry against you is

the measure of your effectiveness. If you imitate Zola and attack some nuisance in this town to-morrow, you will bring on every symptom and have every experience of the Dreyfus affair. The cost is the same, for cold looks are worse than imprisonment. The emancipation of the reformer is the same, for if a man can resist the influences of his townsmen, if he can cut free from the tyranny of neighborhood gossip, the world has no terrors for him; there is no second inquisition. The public influence is the same, for every citizen of that town can thereafter look a town officer in the face with more self-respect. But not to townsmen, nor to neighboring towns, nor to Parisians is this force confined. It goes out in all directions, continuously. The man is in communication with the world. This impulse of communication with all men is at the bottom of every ambition. The injustice, cruelty, oppression in the world are all different forms of the same non-conductor, that prevents utterances, that stops messages, that strikes dumb the speaker and deafens the listener. You will find that it makes no difference whether the non-conductor be a selfish oligarchy, a military autocracy, or a commercial ring. The voice of humanity is stifled by corruption: and corruption is only an evil because it stifles men.

Try to raise a voice that shall be heard from here to Albany and watch what it is that comes forward to shut off the sound. It is not a German sergeant, nor a Russian officer of the precinct. It is a note from a friend of your father's offering you a place in his office. This is your warning from the secret police. Why, if any of you young gentlemen have a mind to make himself heard a mile off, you must make a bonfire of your reputations and a close enemy of most men who wish you well.



And what will you get in return? Well, if I must, for the benefit of the economist, charge you with some selfish gain, I will say that you get the satisfaction of having been heard, and that this is the whole possible scope of human ambition.

When I was asked to make this address I wondered what I had to say to you boys who are graduating. And I think I have one thing to say. If you wish to be useful, never take a course that will silence you. Refuse to learn anything that you cannot proclaim. Refuse to accept anything that implies collusion, whether it be a clerkship or a curacy, a legal fee or a post in a university. Retain the power of speech, no matter what other power you lose. If you can, take this course, and in so far as you take it you will bless this country. In so far as you depart from this course you become dampers, mutes, and hooded executioners. As for your own private character, it will be preserved by such a course. Crime you cannot commit, for crime gags you. Collusion with any abuse gags you. As a practical matter a mere failure to speak out upon occasions where no opinion is asked or expected of you, and when the utterance of an uncalled-for suspicion is odious, will often hold you to a concurrence in palpable iniquity. It will bind and gag you and lay you dumb and in shackles like the veriest serf in Russia. I give you this one rule of conduct. Do what you will, but speak out always. Be shunned, be hated, be ridiculed, be scared, be in doubt, but don't be gagged.

The choice of Hercules was made when Hercules was a lad. It cannot be made late in life. It will perhaps come for each one of you within the next eighteen months. I have seen ten years of young men who rush out into the world with their messages, and when they find how

deaf the world is they think they must save their strength and wait. They believe that after a while they will be able to get up on some little eminence from which they can make themselves heard. "In a few years," reasons one of them, "I shall have gained a standing, and then I will use my power for good." Next year comes and with it a strange discovery. The man has lost his horizon of thought. His ambition has evaporated; he has nothing to say. The great occasion that was to have let him loose on society was some little occasion that nobody saw, some moment in which he decided to obtain a standing. The great battle of a lifetime has been fought and lost over a silent scruple. But for this, the man might, within a few years, have spoken to the nation with the voice of an archangel. What was he waiting for? Did he think that the laws of nature were to be changed for him? Did he think that a "notice of trial" would be served on him? Or that some spirit would stand at his elbow and say: "Now's your time"? The time of trial is always. Now is the appointed time. And the compensation for beginning at once is that your voice carries at once. You do not need a standing. It would not help you. Within less time than you can see it, you will have been heard. The air is filled with sounding-boards and the echoes are flying. It is ten to one that you have but to lift your voice to be heard in California, and that from where you stand. A bold plunge will teach you that the visions of the unity of human nature which the poets have sung were not the fictions of their imagination, but a record of what they saw. Deal with the world, and you will discover their reality. Speak to the world, and you will hear their echo.

Social and business prominence look like advantages,

and so they are if you want money. But if you want moral influence you may bless God you have not got them. They are the payment with which the world subsidizes men to keep quiet, and there is no subtlety or cunning by which you can get them without paying in silence. This is the great law of humanity, that has existed since history began, and will last while man lasts—evil, selfishness, and silence are one thing.

The world is learning, largely through American experience, that freedom in the form of government is no guarantee against abuse, tyranny, cruelty, and greed. The old sufferings, the old passions, are in full blast among us. What, then, are the advantages of self-government? The chief advantage is that self-government enables a man in his youth, in his own town, within the radius of his first public interests, to fight the important battle of his life while his powers are at their strongest, and the powers of oppression are at their weakest. If a man acquires the power of speech here, if he says what he means now, if he makes his point and dominates his surroundings at once, his voice will, as a matter of fact, be heard instantly in a very wide radius. And so he walks up into a new sphere and begins to accomplish greater things. He does this through the very force of his insistence on the importance of small things. The reason for his graduation is not far to seek. A man cannot reach the hearts of his townsmen without using the whole apparatus of the world of thought. He cannot tell or act the truth in his own town without enlisting every power for truth, and setting in vibration the cords that knit that town into the world's history. He is forced to find and strike the same note which he would use on some great occasion when speaking for all mankind. A man who has won a town-fight is

a veteran, and our country to-day is full of these young men. To-morrow their force will show in national politics, and in that moment the fate of the Malay, the food of the Russian prisoner, the civilization of South Africa, and the future of Japan will be seen to have been in issue. These world problems are now being settled in the contest over the town-pump in a western village. I think it likely that the next thirty years will reveal the recuperative power of American institutions. One of you young men may easily become a reform President, and be carried into office and held in office by the force of that private opinion which is now being sown broadcast throughout the country by just such men as yourselves. You will concede the utility of such a President. Yet it would not be the man but the masses behind him that did his work.

Democracy thus lets character loose upon society and shows us that in the realm of natural law there is nothing either small or great: and this is the chief value of democracy. In America the young man meets the struggle between good and evil in the easiest form in which it was ever laid before men. The cruelties of interest and of custom have with us no artificial assistance from caste, creed, race prejudice. Our frame of government is drawn in close accordance with the laws of nature. By our documents we are dedicated to mankind; and hence it is that we can so easily feel the pulse of the world and lay our hand on the living organism of humanity.

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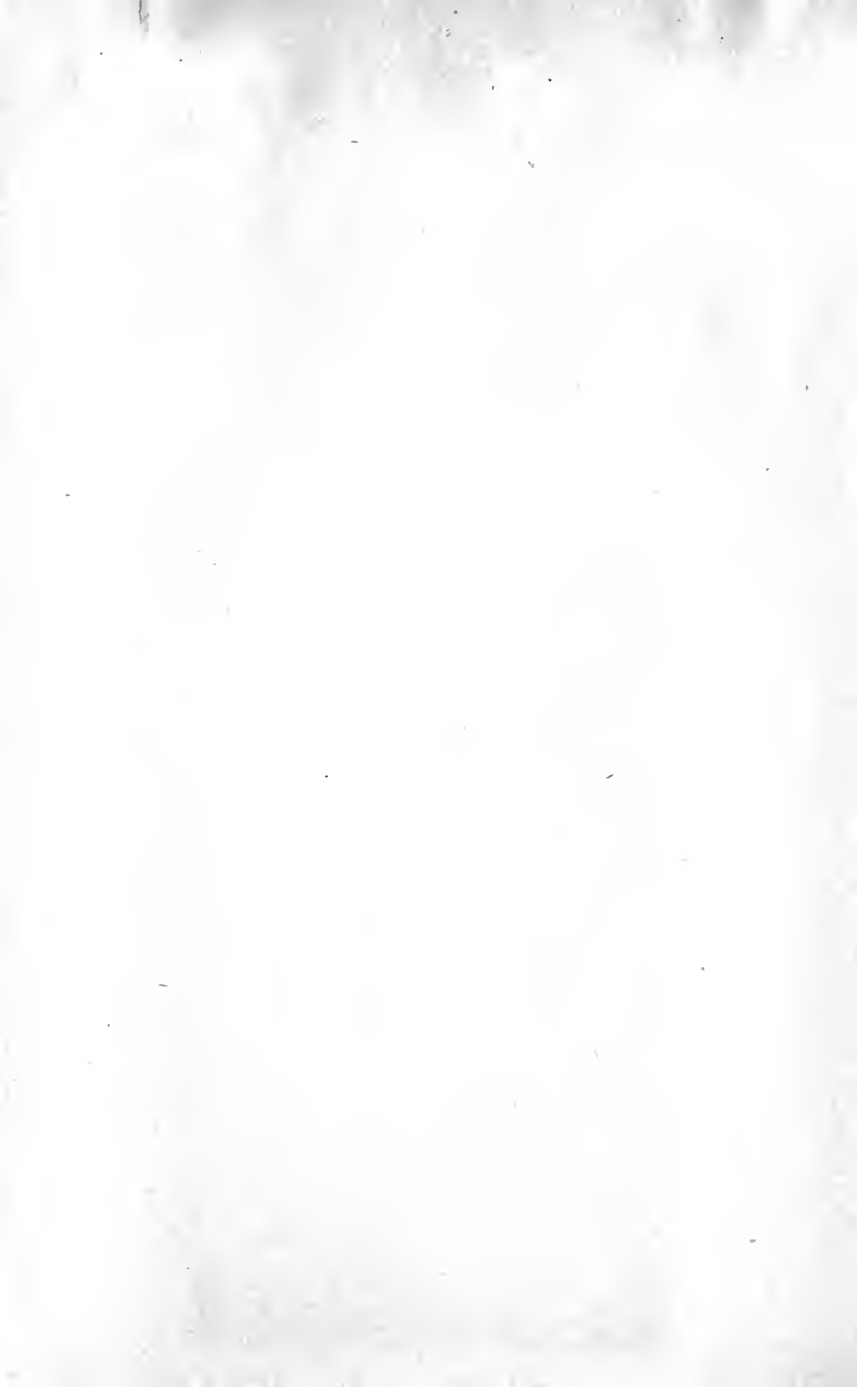
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