A STUDY OF SILENT MINDS

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War Studies in Education

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PREFACE

THE English mind, in general, is characterized by a certain lack of initiative, originality, and creative self-expression. If it is remediable, it is the business of English education to suggest and apply the remedy. So far, as most observers would agree, this has not been achieved to any great extent ; and the following pages are no more than a contribution towards the solution of the double question—Can it be achieved ? and if so, by what methods ?

Every one tends to illustrate his opinions by examples drawn from his immediate environment. Such illustrations, therefore, as appear in this book, are taken from life on the Western front, where it was written. Naturally enough many of the conclusions drawn from them

are wide generalizations which admit of criticism and exception. Say what you will about the soldier's life, thought, and religion, this defect can hardly be avoided. If any statements appear especially unjust or untrue to the reader, he is asked to believe that the author is conscious of part, at least, of what might be said from the opposite point of view; and that in matters of such difficulty he has no wish to be dogmatic. Therefore he has tried, in every case, to draw the minimum conclusions from the evidence quoted, rather than the maximum.

For this reason the word "English" has been used throughout. What has been said may possibly—if true at all—be true of the whole of the British Isles; but for one who is unable to speak from experience of the British character and education other than it appears in England, such an extended generalization would be unjustified.

The book, however, contains other

generalizations admittedly open to criticism. For example, no attempt has been made to differentiate between various types or degrees of educational practice—elementary schools, secondary schools, and universities. They are all treated simply as manifestations of the same general tendencies. It is possible that this is unfair, and that criticisms justifiable in some cases are entirely unwarranted in others.

In the same way, there are obvious and grave omissions. Although a scheme of education is outlined in Chapter V, it is left as a bare suggestion only. To say to a teacher, "Interest your pupils in this or that," without taking into consideration the specific age, tastes, or home-environment of the children in question, is clearly to leave the matter in its most rudimentary stage. Again, nothing is said as to the variation of treatment required by girls and boys respectively,

in consequence of the difference in development and ability between them; nor as to the vexed question of vocational training and the age at which it should begin; nor as to games and open-air interests; nor as to self-expression by manual work and craftsmanship.

For these and similar omissions the conditions under which the book was written, and the consequent impossibility of reference to authorities, are mainly responsible. In general, however, it may be said that the type of pupil principally considered was of the upper working-class, and the period of school-life that of the late elementary and early secondary stages. To make such a scheme of education possible, continuation classes would therefore be a necessity; failing that, some such voluntary organization as the Workers' Educational Association.

In this connection it should be mentioned that the greater part of the book had been

completed before the provisions of the new Education Act had been made public.

The chapter on Religion is equally sketchy and incomplete for the same reason, and in the same respects, as the others. It is also written almost entirely from the point of view of the Church of England. To some extent this will mitigate any value it might have for members of other denominations; perhaps, however, its weakness in this direction may be compensated for by the increased definiteness of statement which the fact makes possible. In any case it is part of the theory of interdenominationalism that every one should make his contribution to the common store out of the particular experience of his own communion; and therefore the Student Christian Movement is making no sacrifice of principle in courteously undertaking the publication of the book.

K. E. K.

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CHAPTER I

SILENT MINDS

(I.)

THERE is a certain vacancy or idleness of mind which is pleasantly familiar to every one. The famous phrase of the village pensioner: "Sometimes I sits and thinks a bit; and then again I just sits," is as apt to describe it as any other, for it arises naturally from inaction and repose. That perhaps is why it is often to be experienced at the front; for active service is largely made up of dreary periods of inaction. A man may have to sit for hours in a roadside ditch, with bullets chipping the *pavé* just above; or in a dug-out rocking to the shell-storm outside; or in an open field at a

rain-swept railhead; waiting till the French engineers with their mob of oriental minions have persuaded the engine to take the lines again. At such times, it generally falls to him to find his own distraction or employment; and though for a while, after his surroundings cease to interest, he may be able to "sit and think a bit," he ends by passing long hours "just sitting," with an empty and idle mind.

All this is in the day's work, and therefore to be accepted as a part of the business of war. But when the soldier comes off duty, you might expect him to throw off his inertia and call his mind back to life again. A few, of course, will do so; but for the most the effort is too great. Take any typical billeting area behind the lines, after the day's work is done, and study the types to be met there. Except for a few odd sentries, a company or two at drill, and the motor drivers, transport men and grooms, whose work seems never done, every one is off duty. There is a football match, with-

out any large attendant crowd ; a hustling mob round the canteen ; a few energetic folk going off to bathe ; others washing their clothes or cleaning their kit ; but the vast majority are dotted about singly or in couples,—hundreds and hundreds of them,—doing nothing in particular, and doing it very well.

It is fair to conclude that almost all are suffering from the same idleness of mind that we have described. Here and there is a man reading or writing ; but for the most part they sit or stroll about quite purposelessly, and there is no sign that they are thinking or talking of anything much at all. Any slight novelty in their surroundings,—a shop window with picture post-cards, a heavy gun behind its tractor, a brace of puppies, a French hawker in his dog-drawn barrow, a ditched motor lorry, a scrap of an English newspaper—any of these will hold their attention for five, or ten, or twenty minutes. They will gaze steadily at the white burst of shrapnel four or five miles away, or at an

aeroplane homing at sunset, or at a squad of grenadiers practising their deadly job. But as for purpose or thought or concentration—of these there is little evidence.

To the ordinary observer, this aimlessness, or vacancy, must appear to be the leading characteristic of the soldier's mind. And because the soldier, when off duty, is no more than the Englishman at his simplest and most natural, it must follow that it is a leading characteristic of the English mind at any time. Yet it is not so prominent as to obscure all other characteristics; and therefore, if we are to take the soldier as the typical Englishman, and build up a theory of the English mind upon what we find in him, it is not inappropriate to analyze a little further, and attempt to enumerate such other features as seem uppermost in his character.

First of all, then, the soldier's mind seems to be made for friendship. You may

find jealousy between ambitious N.C.O's of equal rank; there is certainly no love lost between an injudicious sergeant and a surly or idle man—indeed the millennium to which half of the citizen-army looks forward, more eagerly even than it looks forward to ultimate reunion with its families at home, is a return to that good civilian life in which you can tell a man just what you think of him without fear of his having you on the mat for it. But so long as influences of this sort do not intervene, the soldier is kindly disposed towards all men—even towards the Boche—and wants nothing better than to treat them, and to be treated by them, as friends. Nothing is more touching than to watch the British Army, after the day's work or day's fighting is done, split up into little groups of two or three and permeate the landscape—each man strolling out with a mate or two, sharing with them his troubles and his pleasures—and, if he is in luck, his parcels from home as well. For in a primitive, rudimentary

way, the Army is a genuine city of friends.

But there is something missing in these friendships. It is not that they are shallow—they can be very strong and deep; nor that they are selfish—they give birth to unselfishness of the highest possible kinds. It can only be expressed by saying that they seem unprogressive or unproductive, rarely leading to any noticeable developments of character or of mind. Something is gravely wrong here; for friendship should be a powerful stimulus to human progress; yet in most of these cases it falls short of any great result. And this points back to the fact we noticed at the outset—that the minds upon which it has to work are for the most part empty; and provide it with little or no material upon which to build.

Yet "empty" is scarcely the right word; "passive" or "receptive" or "silent" suits the facts better. The soldier, as all observers agree, has in many respects a childlike nature, and his mind is like

a child's—taking in a great deal, but giving out very little. This is perhaps an essentially English trait; for even in features, manners, and build, the English soldiers seem years younger than those of other nations gathered on the Western front. They cannot be younger really; but somehow memory overlooks the maturer men and clings mostly to the lads, with the best of their lives yet to come, if they live.

Their talk is boyish, too—and here the older men are not so different from the lads—about "the officer," and football heroes at home (this after four years of war!) and girls and grievances; with hot arguments of the "he did,"—"he didn't," kind; or slow, uncouth expression of ideas felt rather than understood.

Because it is childlike, too, this mind is innocent. There is an infinity of foul talk; much schoolboy nastiness; gambling, drunkenness, and vice in varying degrees; but these are the accidents and not the essence of the soldier's character. The

proof of it is that he rarely goes in search of evil ; if he falls it is because evil presents itself. A further proof is the overwhelming testimony to his good behaviour to be found in almost every battalion, town, or village ;—so overwhelming that if an offence is committed, every effort is made to hush it up for the credit of the Army. A body of men so jealous of their own reputation cannot be guilty of any deep leaning towards vice ; and this jealousy is not instilled by authority alone, but springs up of itself even in places where its absence would not greatly surprise. In fact, while one could very easily exaggerate the moral lapses of the Army in France, one cannot possibly exaggerate its vast and triumphant record for sustained gentleness, good behaviour, and kindly intercourse with the French.

From his childlike nature the soldier draws as well a deep capacity for wonder. All the details of his surroundings interest him ; the language, religion, and habits

of the French; the hints of Boche character to be gleaned from captured trenches; rumours of future movements magnified a hundredfold; stories from the Base, or from home, or from other theatres of the war. Above all, two things specifically connected with religion always come to him with the surprise of a miracle: the often repeated phenomenon of the crucifix standing untouched among ruins; and the strange vagaries of Providence, or fate, by which others have been struck down whilst he so far has been spared. Half his conversation, half his revolving thoughts, it might be said, are centred round the strange truth that one is taken and another left.

Such matters interest him; he notices and "studies over" them; exchanging second-hand truisms or—more rarely—hinting at original conceptions for which he can find no coherent phrases; curious to know and understand them better; but unable, in most cases, through his racial passivity of mind, to find either

the means or the energy to pursue any real train of thought or inquiry about them.

There are writers who profess to know "what the soldier thinks" about this, that, and the other. They say that politics, religion, industry, will all be changed after the war, because "the soldier is beginning to think." That there will be changes, that they may be very radical indeed, no one can doubt; but it is not because any of us are thinking very much. Most of us are *feeling* things, and feeling them more deeply than ever before; and some are expressing their feelings in glib platitudes all the more dangerous because they do not really express what it is that is felt. But only a very few—so rare as to be the reverse of representative—are analyzing and appraising these feelings, and drawing out their logical conclusions. It is here that the real danger for the future lies—that we have to reckon with a vast body of sentimentalists, highly suspicious of logic, yet easily swayed by

emotion, without the stability which comes alone from self-reliant thought. What will be the end of it, no one can say; but at least it is time that the country took cognizance of the situation and of the dangers that it brings.

(II.)

For the silent mind is a danger; and it is a waste as well. It is a danger, because its inactivity leaves it a prey, not only to temptation, but also to prejudice and blind impulse. It is a waste, because its possibilities for good, be they small or great, lie dormant and untouched. Many things that have happened at the front during the last three years show how clearly both these facts are grasped by the authorities. The amazing increase in the number of chaplains; the official sanction extended to cinemas, concert parties and bands; the semi-official position of the Y.M.C.A. and similar bodies; the regular distribution of free literature; all these are developments of one great policy,

whose aim is to occupy, if not to stimulate, the soldier's mind.

A classification of these different agencies will shew that in the main they represent three separate yet allied ideals. Lowest among the three, yet of quite inestimable value, comes the ideal of amusement—in itself a powerful, but by no means omnipotent, safeguard against temptation. Far above, yet not altogether unconnected with it, comes that of instruction—instruction in discipline, cleanliness, camaraderie, and all the mysteries of modern war. By teaching a man every detail of the profession that for the moment has engulfed him, a real attempt is made to turn him into an efficient soldier. But we have only to examine the methods of modern Army education a little closely, to see that its originators have something more in view than mere instruction, however good and solid; and for that something more there is no other name than inspiration.

The difference between instruction and

inspiration seems to lie in this: that by instruction a man can learn how to handle the normal and expected; but only inspiration will enable him to deal with what is abnormal and unexpected, and especially with the most abnormal and unexpected of all things—his fellow men. Instruction can make good workmen, for it can tell them all they wish to know about their material and their tools. It can make good masters,—for a master is one who relies upon an authority and a system behind him to eliminate all that is abnormal, and then handles what is left. But above workmen, masters, authorities, and systems, stand those whose powers of mind and character have been so developed that they can be trusted to deal with the abnormal, wherever and however it presents itself. And it seems clear that education, of which the object—whether in the Army or outside—is to prepare men for the business of life, ought never to rest content with instruction alone, but should aim at inspiring too.

That something of this kind lies behind the Army system of to-day, could at least be shewn by abundant evidence. Indeed, it has been a commonplace with educationalists from the beginning. Amusement, instruction, and inspiration, are three means by which the silent mind can be safeguarded against the inroads of temptation; yet only the third can be relied upon to avoid the dangers and the waste that its inactivity involves.

And can even this be relied upon in all cases? Are there not many minds so passive that even the most inspiring forms of education must fail to give them life? Certainly with the Englishman of to-day, there has been a widespread failure somewhere. Most of us, soldiers and civilians alike, spend our leisure hours at least in ways which betray an almost total lack of inspiration. Either we have never been trained in the higher forms of mental activity, or else the power of constructive thought never dwelt in us from the beginning.

(III.)

It might, of course, be urged that, even if what has been said is true of the Army, the Army ought not to be taken as representative of English life. Granted that this inertia or aimlessness characterizes the soldier's mind, why not attribute it to the exactions of the life upon which he is engaged? It need not be due to any radical defect in the English mind, or even in the English system of education.

But how far does this position really square with the facts? From time to time, of course, you meet a mind that lives, some one with bright imagination and vivid argument, who can throw new light upon any subject that may arise, and make even the most commonplace matters enthralling and romantic. Combine with this a sure and unprejudiced insight, quick to detect the ring of insincerity in the most specious appeal, or the ring of sincerity in the most halting

one, and add, finally, a backing of sound knowledge sufficient at least to support an argument or to refute a mis-statement, and you have what may be called a living, creative mind; something stimulating and inspired: the mind of a pioneer.

But you know how rarely you meet such a mind from the very fact that you mark the occasions as red-letter days in your mental history. Imagination without knowledge; knowledge without inspiration; genius without discipline—these, though uncommon enough, are found occasionally; but the finished product seldom only. And what a shock to you he is when you do meet him! How he tacitly accuses your idle hours, your facile arguments, your half-digested conclusions! You go away from such a meeting resolved to renew studies you had abandoned, to jettison conventional opinions, to look at life and nature with more critical and more sympathetic eyes. Any one who has ever had this feeling—

and most of us have had it often—knows that living minds are rare, and that only at rare moments can he honestly class his own among them.

"Well," it may be said, "even if that be true, don't blame the English mind, blame the English system of education." It is widely agreed, I suppose, that the English system of education has in fact proved inadequate to its burden. At the moment the war began its breakdown was complete. What was called "classical" education was discredited, because the spirit of the age had turned against it; and even its partizans, educated on its own principles, were unable to produce convincing argument in its defence. What was called—by way of contrast—"modern" education, had broken down, because it was seen to head towards nothing but material prosperity, and to ignore all the finer and higher instincts of mankind. What was called elementary education had broken down even more signally than the other two. Employers of labour found that it

failed to equip children for any sort of career whatever. Parents regarded it, in its earlier stages, purely as a convenience, because it got the children out of the house; in its later stages, purely as a nuisance, because it prevented them from adding to the family income. Teachers, saddled with unwieldy classes and equipped on niggardly principles, sought merely to interest because it was hopeless to attempt even to instruct. Finally, what was called religious education had broken down; for it was patent to all that whether in Sunday school or public school, in Catechism or Confirmation class, what was achieved was as nothing compared with what was attempted; and, whatever else might be taught, only a choice few gained from it any real interest in religion.

The situation, however, had its hopeful side. Endless experiments were being made. Psychology was brought to bear even upon the most conservative Sunday schools; Greek was becoming optional even in the most conservative universities.

Education Committees teemed with new ideas. Inspectors were rapidly changing from inquisitors into friends. Summer Schools of Study, Workers' Educational Associations, Continuation Classes, and countless other organizations were springing up—even Bishops had their Educational Committees, and Missionary Societies called in experts to edit their publications. In secular things, "method" was to guide the way; in religion, the creed was to be restated "in terms of modern thought." In this welter of theory and experiment one thing stood out clearly: that the established system of education had failed, and that nothing was quite ready to take its place. It had amused, it had interested, it had instructed—often, too, it had simply bored—but except in rare cases it had never educated—never developed and fostered the thinking mind.

And we must blame the English character for the failure of English education. We have been too ready to accept exist-

ing institutions—the public schools, the universities, the creeds—without examination; just because they seemed to satisfy our fathers. We have not changed them with the changing times, but gone on blindly till we woke up at last and found that education had almost robbed us of the power to educate ourselves, and creeds of the power to believe in them. At least we found out the mistake in time; at least there was sufficient thought left to see the thoughtlessness in which we were living. But the discovery did not come a day too soon. English education was the product of English character; and if it was poor and scrappy it was because few English minds were sufficiently alert to insist upon its reform.

The relaxations of the typical Englishman before the war are evidence enough of this. In literature, the illustrated paper; in amusement, the picture palace; in drama, the revue—these three things, which least of all demand of the spectator

any mental concentration to contribute to his enjoyment, were steadily growing in favour with the majority, not only of the working class, but of the middle and upper classes as well. Optimists have always hoped to find educational value in the cinematograph; but a succession of pictures in which every emotion is expressed by exaggerated gestures and facial contortions, and underlined—so that there may be no mistake—by trans-atlantic letterpress flashed upon the screen, is the very reverse of educational. There is no attempt to enlist the mind in a reasoned effort to understand: the film makes things so simple that an idiot could not complain. A halfpenny press that conveyed its information by screaming placard and misleading headlines; a theatre which substitutes wild splashes of colour and inane bursts of humour for connected plot and reasoned delineation of character—these are not the literature or the amusements of a thinking people; but they were the literature

and amusements *par excellence* of England before the war.

Again, when you find a nation of which no small part—in whatever class—deliberately chooses the lower instead of the higher, when the higher can be had, it must surely be a nation of aimless minds. And that was the case with England. Amusement, instruction, and true education form, as we have seen, an ascending scale of interests with which the mind may be occupied. Surely amusements were varied and rich enough to satisfy even the least intelligent; yet how many of our people sank to gambling, drink, and passion—capable of the higher, with the higher in their grasp, they chose the lower. Many, again, of the artizan or professional type who might have made progress in their walk of life, were content to idle away their spare time in vapid relaxation—capable of receiving instruction they never got beyond amusement. As for those who might have made progress in real thought, but flinched from the

labour involved, and played with the ideas of others instead of earnestly pursuing their own,—their failure is the most tragic of all; but though tragic, it is not uncommon. The promise of a brilliant future is common enough at school and university; its attainment, in later life, is proportionately rare.

Pessimistic though this survey may appear, it yet receives confirmation from important authorities. Dr. Welton, for example, in his *Psychology of Education*, quotes from an article in the *Times* of November 10th, 1910: "We need to be on our guard against the swift and incessant reactions that more and more tend to waste and distract our energies. We cannot flatter ourselves that these reactions affect only the passions of the ignorant. They are just as violent and common among people of culture, and produce the same incessant change in our ideas and tastes as in our popular songs and catch-words. Indeed, as the ignorant mob turns year by year from

one mechanical joke to another, so the cultivated mob turns from one set of ideas and from one jargon to another. The contagion of the crowd works with equal power in both cases and with equal unreason. It is not spread by popular assemblies, but by books and newspapers; and the superior people who despise the mob are themselves a mob of readers and talkers at the mercy of mob reactions."

"Many people," continues Dr. Welton in comment, "live on from day to day, never thinking except about the immediate concerns of their families, their business, or their pleasure; never, that is to say, deliberately setting up before themselves an ideal of life; never asking themselves what is the value to them of those things in which they spend their energies so profusely." And then, alluding in particular to that idle and meaningless character of popular entertainments which we have already noticed, he adds: "Nor is there force in the contention that the

audiences have so exhausted their minds in thought that they are too tired for any but the lightest stimulation. Without want of charity it may be suggested that an equally tenable hypothesis is that their minds are numbed and atrophied from want of exercise in anything except the immediate demands of their material lives."

To contend that we might, by wise education, breed in England a race of philosophers or prophets would of course be absurd. Many minds are incapable of more than a very moderate degree of independent thought. But almost all are capable of far more than under the present system they achieve, and this is as true of the working-class as of any other. Given the proper stimulus, a man of this class can be inspired with as true an appreciation of high ideals as one of any other. Give him, in addition, adequate and appropriate channels of expression, and his appreciation will manifest itself as clearly and incisively in word or

action, as could be desired. At present the proper stimulus is rare; the means of expression rarer still. Where, however, they exist—as in the haphazard instances given in the next chapter—no one can be dissatisfied with the result.

CHAPTER II

INSPIRATION

(I.)

WHAT the soldier is capable of at his best, could be shewn by countless battle incidents, recorded and unrecorded. Nothing of the kind is quoted here; and that because the stimulus to self-expression in battle is of an abnormal kind, whilst we are more concerned to discover how far the average Englishman will respond to a normal stimulus, provided it be the right one. The incidents which follow, therefore, deal exclusively with soldiers off duty and at rest—that is to say, in the most normal conditions which their life allows.

The first dates from last summer—a hut near Arras, where a well-known British elocutionist, touring in France for the edification of the troops, was to give

selections from his repertoire : a battalion in rest had " furnished " (notice the non-committal Army phrase) the audience. Now elocution is not the brightest form of entertainment, and a " furnished " audience is sometimes a little difficult to arouse. The first selection began in complete and respectful silence—it was that chapter of *David Copperfield* in which old Peggotty learns of little Em'ly's flight. It was skilfully chosen and well rendered ; and with the last word of Peggotty's tragic outburst the reciter stopped—his selection ended there. Not a sound followed ; for what seemed a whole minute there was an absolute and paralyzing silence. At last the entertainer said nervously, " Perhaps you don't realise that that is the end of the selection ? " and then the storm of applause broke loose. What had happened was that he had underestimated the imaginative capacity of his audience. The story he told had captured their attention so utterly, that one and all had forgotten

the war, and themselves, and the civilian who was entertaining them, and everything else in the world except old Peggotty with his horror, grief and shame. They were so lost in the drama pictured for them, that the possibility of its ending suddenly—like the fragment from a book which in reality it was—never presented itself for a moment; they waited breathlessly for another outburst, or for some violent action to carry on the story.

Here is another picture, more or less akin to the first. The place was one of those rough-and-ready theatres in which soldiers nightly perform to soldiers behind the front. The performance had gone the usual way of such things—ragtime, a parody or two, sentimental songs, duets, comedians, Jewish and Scotch—a performance clean, bright, and amusing. Just before the end there was a moment's pause, and then the orchestra played the unmistakable introduction to the "Keys of Heaven"—("Sounds like a bloody hymn," said a cynical gunner

in the cheap seats behind). In less than five minutes the old folksong had been sung through, not as a mere duet, but as a miniature drama. The "girl" of the troupe—("Damned ugly, these French tarts," said the cynical gunner, and added that you needn't think he didn't know a girl when he saw one, and it was no good kidding him she was an adjectived bugler) —had shyly refused the advances of less worthy lovers, turning from them, as the curtain fell on the closing chords, to the one who offered her unreservedly the keys of his heart. It was perfectly simple and natural, without a touch of unreal sentiment; but words and air and acting together had an unforgettable effect upon the soldier audience, and their appreciation was shown not so much by tumultuous applause as by a certain sigh of pure content that ran from end to end of the long benches, in which even the caustic gunner joined.

This troupe, though far from being the most famous or most finished of the many

that exist in France, stands high among them by virtue of *bijou* music-romances such as this. The "Keys of Heaven" is their greatest success, and men go night after night to see and hear it again; but they have other triumphs of the same order to their credit. They have an excellent "Widdecombe Fair," with a grey mare that dies in the most approved fashion, and reappears in a realistic storm as a truly satisfying ghost. They have lifted the "Merryman and Maid" song and dance bodily out of Savoy opera; and when the "girl" (now resplendent as a gipsy dancer) sings the haunting minor phrases of the last verse, you might hear a pin drop. Round a medley of sea-ballads they have built a pretty romance of quay-side courtship; and they act the story of the "Floral Dance" with an old-fashioned grace and light-heartedness as rare as the melody itself.

To these two pictures of the soldier's recreation add two of his religion. Imagine a French village schoolroom on a Sunday

evening, the walls covered with maps and with those clever French placards which teach by picture and epigram the mysteries of citizenship, thrift, and family life. Fill it to the door with fifty or a hundred lads, fresh from battle, joining of their own free will by candlelight for a Sunday evening service. They are cramped in desks never built for their well-grown limbs; they cannot kneel to pray; many of them can hardly stand to sing without carrying their hymn-books into deep shadow; often they are wet and cold and dirty. The French are not slow to express their opinions of such things; and here is the judgment of the fat old *institutrice* who gave the chaplain permission to use the place, praising its *belle sonorité* the while. She stood at the door throughout, nominally to keep in check the crowd of whispering, inquisitive children; actually (for she certainly failed dismally in her ostensible purpose) to watch the scene herself. "Ah, Monsieur," she said, when thanked for her

courtesy, "it is I who thank you. What seriousness! what devotion! If only we others could learn to pray so fervently and to sing with so good heart!"

The next is a curious incident. A chaplain arrived at Battalion Headquarters one day for a Communion Service, to find that one of his most regular communicants was a prisoner in the guardroom—his offence, that of lying to a sergeant. Scarcely had the service begun, however, when the little liar put in an appearance, under escort of his best friend, a corporal of the same company. Questioned afterwards, the corporal said that he had seen no reason why Joe, though a prisoner, should not come to the Communion. He had gone to the sergeant of the guard and put this view of the case to him, offering his own services as escort. The sergeant apparently agreed, and so did Joe, in spite of the disgrace he had incurred; so prisoner and escort marched to the service together, received the Sacrament together, and together marched back to the guard-room.

Disconnected though these incidents appear, there is yet a common principle which seems to underlie them all. The letter which follows serves only as a further—and very touching—piece of evidence. The lads between whom it passed had been friends for several years; they last saw each other one 25th of September, when he who afterwards wrote it (it is dated in December) was wounded in Loos village, and passed back through the dressing station to his hospital in England. To all outward seeming they were ordinary careless, mischief-loving boys, who never went to church of their own free will, never rose from the ranks, and never showed the slightest signs of depth of thought or serious interests. But is that the conception of them conveyed by the letter itself?

"My dear Pal and Brother Johnny," it begins, "oh how glad I am to know that you have sent me a letter which has and always makes me happier. Dear Johnny, every one at home are inquiring

about you and they pray as much for your safety as what I do. Mrs. Green sent me a letter and I let her know how you had been so good to me. Dear Brother, Mrs. Williams also received your card, and I have let them all know how you kept with me even better than a brother. Oh, Johnny, I must let you know I am going on great, and I must let you know that I was out for a motor ride, but, Johnny, I was glad when I got back to hospital for everything I do or wherever I may be, I always wish you were by my side. Dear Brother, I hope you keep a place open for me so when I come to France I shall be with you. So, Brother, I hope you keep your loving smile, and I hope you are happy. Dear Brother, I am sending you five francs and get what you can with it, do not think about sending silkers,* for I know your heart is good enough. Dear Brother, we can easily get them when I come through. You say, don't forget to enjoy

* Silkers—silk postcards, the favourite souvenir bought by the soldier to send home to his friends.

yourself when you get your leave. Well, I shall try, but I don't think I could without you. But I am happier to what I was. So we shall make the best of it, and pray to the Lord He shall bring us together again. Dear Johnny, when I left you that night little did I think I was coming to England. Dear Brother, you have no idea how anxious they are about you at home, even Grannie" (here follows a long list of Aunts and Uncles) "they all ask about you. Also Father and Mother and all at home send their love to you. Dear Brother, cheer up as I am going on well. I have a good right to think about you as I know you will be getting some stick. Never mind, Johnny, with the help of God you shall succeed in the end. I will come to a finish by praying to the Lord, He shall comfort you and send you safely home, so no more for the present with heaps of brotherly love,

"from Tommy

"to his faithful Pal and Brother

"Johnny."

(II.)

These pictures, trivial though they appear in the middle of a great war, go far to counterbalance the depressing conclusions as to the English mind we drew a little while ago. They prove,—conclusively, it might be said, when it is considered that they could be backed by hundreds of the same type—that the soldier's mind, though habitually silent and passive, is capable of reaching out to and understanding the highest flights of romance, religion, and friendship; and finds itself as much at home there as on the lower planes of amusement or in the acquisition of material fact.

Consider the instances recorded, and see what high demands were made in them upon minds naturally unenterprising and passive, and how fully they responded. The first two are examples of what may be done by pure art. It is easy enough to move an audience to riotous laughter by rough-and-tumble farce, or to tears by

the pathos of *East Lynne*; but when a crowd, whose ideas of the theatre are limited to cheap low comedy and trashy melodrama—and that is literally the case with the classes from which most of our soldiers come—can be held spell-bound by pure story-telling—with or without the aid of gentle melodies and the simplest of dramatic representations—it argues not only high art in the performer, but also high possibilities in the audience. Take the third, and contrast the deep devotion shewn therein with the awkward shuffling and uneasy glances of lads of the same type on such occasions as they were seen in church before the war. The fourth is perhaps the most remarkable, for the two boys who figure in it were in no way distinguishable from hundreds of their comrades, and yet the simple directness of their reasoning, the publicity and self-assertion of their action, their utter indifference to the opinions of any one but themselves, once they had decided on the right course, are altogether out

of line with the shy, retiring, unexpressive character of the ordinary English lad. As for the fifth—how many would have imagined that a commonplace, illiterate boy, could be moved by the power of friendship to such rapturous and rhythmical self-expression ?

If, then, the ordinary English mind is capable of such high achievements, it should be possible by wise educational methods to lead it on to a point where movement on this high plane will be normal and not exceptional. For the incidents quoted are of course exceptions. But what is exceptional about them is not so much the character of the persons concerned, as the strength and purity of the stimulus to which they reacted. Only in rare cases will our minds climb such heights unaided or uninspired. They are, as we have seen, by nature silent and inactive. But they are certainly not inane, and therefore, given the proper stimulus, their silence can be changed to self-expression, their inertia to a living power

of thought, to an extent of which we have at present scarcely the vestige of an idea.

So far we have failed to find that stimulus, or at all events to put it into effective operation. Yet surely it is obvious that if the minds of our people are capable of so much, it is treason to leave them untenanted, a prey to any seven or seventy devils that may choose to enter in; and bitter waste, at the least, to divert them with shallow and feverish amusement, or degrade them into the merest commercial machines. Yet that, in the vast majority of cases, is all that English entertainment and English education have managed to do for them; and it is only because of their inherently innocent and childlike nature, which has not been altogether killed, that they have not come to utter shipwreck in every case. As to what religion has done—or failed to do—that must have a chapter to itself later on, but even at this point we can see that it has not got too much to pride itself upon.

As all right-minded and serious people saw, even before the war—and it is ten times more evident now—education, both secular and religious, must be put on a new basis to make the best of its pupils. To find that new basis you must find first of all an appeal to which the pupil will respond; and to find such an appeal you must discover some primary disposition of the mind which will inevitably grow and expand, provided it is given the right food and led in the right direction; some thought-centre or vital interest which will always react if the proper stimulus is applied. And here our five examples—and one or two others that can be added—will help us once again.

In every one of these five instances it is possible to see that the same interest was aroused, and aroused so vividly that it led to a self-expression as abnormal as it was beautiful. The interest that was touched was an interest in people. Not in human nature, that is, nor in psychology, but in people pure and simple. In

the first two cases they were the people of the story or the play—ordinary people in not too extraordinary circumstances—Peggotty in his agony, the little heroine in her maiden choice. People drawn naturally, too ; not with excess of emphasis or sentiment. In the last two cases it was an interest in one person in particular—his friend—that led each of the lads to act or write as powerfully as he did. The third example is more difficult to bring under this rule, and yet it can scarcely be explained in any other way.

It has often been remarked that the soldier in France manifests a devotion to his religion far in excess of that of the Englishman before the war. I can only see one main reason for it, though many minor influences contribute. At home the lad was just one 'among many elements in the parish, and being shy, and consequently furtive, he generally managed to elude the embarrassing attentions of the parson. If he stole into church—as he

not infrequently did—he could sit in an inconspicuous place. Mature men and women and devout bevies of girls occupied the more prominent pews, and bathed in the full tide of the clergy's ministrations, of which only a few fugitive eddies came as far as him. He was a little lost sheep creeping into the fold; and the fold was so full of the placid flock that the shepherd generally managed to overlook him. On the whole the lad rather preferred that it should be so, having a horror of publicity; but it cannot be said that the state of things was one which forwarded his spiritual development, or made him a strong son of God.

In France he finds a startling difference. God's eye seems focused upon him and his kind alone; he is the centre upon which every spiritual force visibly converges. If he doesn't go to church, there will be no family parties or girl-school crocodiles to throw a friendly cloak over his defection; if he doesn't listen to the sermon, there are no devout women or

complacent men to flatter the parson that his words have found a mark. There are chaplains at the front, and they must visit and talk to somebody; and if they don't visit and talk to the soldier boy, whom else can they visit and talk to? And so he comes to the staggering realization that, apparently, God and the chaplain are interested, and deeply interested, in him; and for the moment in him and his comrades alone. After the first shock of this discovery is over, the feeling it leaves is rather pleasant; and so the boy repays interest with kindly interest. If God is so keen about him as to send a chaplain specially to look after him, he on his part must do his bit by God. And so he goes to services, and tries to behave there like a little gentleman, for after all he is repaying a series of gentlemanly and courteous attentions; and he bears the burden of praise and prayer more gallantly and openly than he did at home, for there are no other shoulders now to bear it; and, truth to

tell, he does it very prettily, and comes to like it from the very first.

No other reasoning appears fully to account for the extraordinary beauty of voluntary services in the field. It may be entirely fanciful: at all events it covers the facts. If it is true, it gives another proof of the contention that an absorbing interest in other people is the one vital spark in the English soldier's mind; and if it is not true, there is plenty of evidence without it. Some of that further evidence follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE LOVE OF PEOPLE

(1.)

OUTSIDE his actual work and his relaxations there are just three great factors that fill up the soldier's life on service, and all three are people—his folk at home, "my mate," and "the officer." How much the thought of home fills his mind it would be difficult to say. Judged by his voluminous correspondence—despatches and arrivals both—by the photographs he invariably carries in his pay-book or wallet; by his unending anecdotes about "him" or "her"; it must be very near at almost every moment. And to those who remember the appalling similarity of the houses of the working classes—how every "room," every "kitchen,"

and every "back" is exactly like the one next door, even to the pictures on the walls—it is evident that "home" cannot mean the house or street or neighbourhood. It can only mean the people who live there; the people in "our house," —never "my house;" the house is not a possession in which you feel any personal joy, simply a meeting place for the family and their friends*;—the people next door and over the way; the lads you met at the street corner and the girls you took to the pictures; the men and women who gossiped with you over their Saturday night's shopping.

Of these the soldier's mind is full. He may be too shy to speak of anything else, but once this chord is touched a whole flood of anecdote and description pours out in reply. A tongue-tied lad will forget himself as he sketches in detail the life and character of his father, or of the elder brother who went to Canada.

* "My garden" is as common an expression as "my house" is rare; for the garden is a triumph of personal effort and love.

The younger man will describe with zest the " bother " between himself and his girl's mother ; the married man will paint a vivid picture of his wife's little failings, and the methods he has adopted to deal with them—(" And the first thing I did when I got home on pass was to give her a good hiding ; and after that we settled down as right as anything.") What impresses one most about these memory-sketches of " home " is the vivid sense of humour, the quick appreciation of salient points and vital incidents, the charitable recognition of human frailty, which pervade them. It is evident that here the mind has congenial and stimulating matter on which to work.

Conversely, the soldier is tremendously susceptible to the depressing influence of bad news from home. Time after time carelessness, ill-temper, and even drink, are the direct outcome of trouble in the family, which he can't get off his mind. The regularity with which such a " bother at home " may be found at the bottom of

all sorts of distressing or disturbing phenomena is one more illustration of the same theory whose truth we are investigating.

"Me and my mate" are always a fascinating couple, and rather pathetic too, for the spectacle they present is that of two minds aspiring together to reach a height which they know they cannot singly attain. They give to each other just the extra touch of resolution needed to convert desire into action—"I didn't like to come; but my mate, 'e says, 'Go on and tell 'im all about it'; and so I come."—"I'd like to stop, but my mate's waiting for me to go to the pictures with him." So "my mate" is at least always useful as an excuse; at his best each of two "mates" is a sort of guardian angel or confessor to the other, shaming him away from temptation, and inspiring him to actions and resolutions he would barely contemplate alone.

The bond between the two is a very deep and powerful one, as every student of boy-psychology admits;—so deep and

powerful that the lads are half afraid and half ashamed of it, and resort to harmless subterfuge to keep it hidden from others. In public they maintain a studied carelessness towards each other, representing their friendship as a casual association imposed upon them by circumstance;—at times they even revert to the stilted phrases of civilian life, and cover the traces of an absorbing love by alluding to each other as "Mr. So-and-so," or "This other gentleman." But beneath this simple disguise lies a wealth of feeling, of which the reader must know many examples. Its truest and most beautiful expression perhaps comes in some lines of Whitman—who himself drew no small part of his great experience of friendship from life in a citizen-army not unlike our own:—

"O tan-faced prairie boy!
"Before you came to camp came many a welcome gift,
"Praises and presents came, and nourishing food—till at last, among the recruits,
"You came, taciturn, with nothing to give—we but looked on each other,
"When lo! more than all the gifts of the world you gave me."

But, after all, interest in one's own people and one's friends is natural enough. On the other hand, the part which "the officer" plays in a soldier's life is very remarkable indeed, and can only be explained on the ground that his absorbing interest in people will lead the Englishman to quite abnormal forms of self-expression. The class from which most of our soldiers come has been schooled for years to regard its pastors and masters, from the foreman upwards, with suspicion and resentment, and to assert a sturdy independence of them by giving "lip" or giving notice whenever a favourable opportunity presents itself. Against that set the undoubted fact, that men of this same class, once in uniform, try their hardest not simply to obey their officers, but to worship them.

The German officer, we are told, is a master, if not a tyrant, to his men; the Frenchman is a good comrade; but the English soldier attempts to treat his officer —though he be the most commonplace of

subalterns—as a cross between a father and a demi-god. He is almost always referred to as "*the* officer"—a being apart from all other men, even from all other officers; though on occasion (as in letters home, or argument with men of another platoon) he becomes "*our* officer" —a sort of tribal oracle or god; only an audacious batman, swollen with the conceit of unique possession, dare ever say "*my* officer."

They study him with almost uncanny insight; they know all his moods—his peevishness in the early morning; his surliness at breakfast-time; his unbending yet benevolent sternness on parade or inspection; his geniality in the lazy moments after lunch; his tender care for them when the evening draws on. They know all about his mother, his business, his home and recreations; they know his faults far better than he does himself; and—if his character gives them the slightest opportunity—from interest they quickly pass to love, and from love

to admiration and loyal service. If you want to know how children can see through their father's foibles and yet worship him, listen to a platoon discussing its officer; if you want to know how a father can love with discernment and wise discipline, hear a subaltern talk about his men.

Countless other arguments could be adduced to make good the statement that an absorbing interest in people is the most vital feature in the soldier's mind. But they would not add anything new. So only a few sentences more upon this point. If the theory is true, it explains two very perplexing things—the soldier's uncanny kindness to prisoners, and his unexpectedly lenient attitude towards strikers at home. Because he is interested in Boches but doesn't understand them, he treats them neither as men nor as devils, but as curiosities; and gives them chocolate and cigarettes as children feed monkeys at the Zoo—to see what they will do. And because

he is interested in working men and *does* understand them, (he was one himself not so very long ago,) he knows that they strike neither from selfish nor from unpatriotic motives, but from a dim, untutored belief that their striking will help the country, by pointing to abuses that are secretly sapping its effectiveness. And that is why, though the half-penny papers rage furiously together, they will never teach him either to hate the Germans, or to spurn and disown the strikers.

(II.)

English life as a whole provides countless instances of this same characteristic. The representative names of English literature, for example, all illustrate it. Shakespeare, of course, stands alone; but a cardinal fact about his work is that though he was a master of plot, his plots are not his own. So long as they allowed his fancy full play around the characters with which he filled them, they might

be—as his own titles suggest—as you like it, or what you will. His originality gave itself up so wholly to the delineation of people that he could only spare passing attention for the plot.

The novelists, as a whole, present the same phenomenon ;—Dickens, Thackeray, Meredith, Jane Austen, Trollope, are remembered far more by their characters than by their narratives ; whilst the amazing vogue of the psychological or biographical novel of to-day shews how liberally their successors have applied the principle. Of Chaucer and Browning among the poets the same is certainly true ; and to most men the name of Milton recalls first and foremost vivid pictures of Lucifer and Samson. Addison added at least one unique picture to the gallery of English literature, Boswell another ; Carlyle, Lamb, and Stevenson—to name no more—are immortal by reason of their vivid self-revelation—the uncompromising honesty of the first, the gentleness of Elia, the romantic and whimsical insight of Stevenson—rather

than by the truth or value, high though they may be, of their ideas. And it was in tracing the vital relation between art and character that Ruskin's real greatness lay.

It might be objected that Wordsworth and Tennyson are still dear to the English reader, though characterization is far from standing high among their excellences. And yet unconsciously they both present one and the same great character study: for they reveal the English mind in its most narrow and insular mood. One cannot read even their greatest poems without realizing—before anything else almost—that here are two Englishmen who quite blindly and unreasoningly believe their own country, its scenery, life and people, to be the best in the world, with a depth of conviction that no argument could possibly shake. And so we read them still, not only for the beauty of their language, but because they flatter us by their unconscious acceptance of our deepest prejudice—the belief that there

is no one in the world like the Englishman, and no country so great, so beautiful, or so noble as his own.

Other names could be quoted in support of this statement that the Englishman's real interest is the study of character—Macaulay, for example, and Froude and Gibbon. Biography, again, Mr. George Mair tells us, is among the most characteristic kinds of English writing; representative names in this branch of literature will occur to every one. But there is one author in particular whose writings and method are of special importance for our purpose.

Scott was the master—almost, indeed, the inventor—of the historical romance; and the essence of this type of fiction is the principle that history is made by people; and so can only be understood by understanding the people who made it.

To give it the plasticity and artistic finish of fiction, the historical romance must usually have an unhistorical hero; but its real heroes are the men and

women who actually lived in the period described, solving its problems, and enduring or remedying its troubles. And the popularity of Scott's long line of successors —Ainsworth, Reade, Kingsley, Lytton, Yonge, Henty, Weyman; writers widely differing in ability, but closely agreeing in method;—is the surest argument that he discovered and perfected the most effective and interesting way of teaching history to the Englishman. Even at the front, where men are often too tired to read anything better than sentimental stories or detective novels of the least exacting kind, you will constantly find a dog's-eared copy of *Rienzi*, or *Westward Ho!* or *The Tower of London*, or *The Cloister and the Hearth*, passing from hand to hand, or hear its incidents retailed by those who have had the energy to read it to others who have not.

There is yet another matter in which this predominant interest may be clearly seen. English education, in the narrow sense, is generally admitted to be more

or less of a failure; but English training, as you find it for example in the universities and public schools, has in countless ways, and not least of all by the war, been vindicated as a success. A boy is thrown, without previous preparation, into the society of a large number of other boys, and expected from the first to study them and learn how to deal with them fairly and yet firmly. At football or cricket, in house or college life, he has to take his place and do his share, giving equal opportunities to the rest; yielding place to those with greater ability than himself, taking charge of those with less. He is expected to do this by instinct, and as far as possible without any authority behind him except his own tact and insight.

It is a discipline which appeals above all to the student of character; and because the English boy is by nature such a student, he responds to it amazingly; and when he finds that as he successfully solves each problem pre-

sented to him by his fellows, he is given greater responsibilities — which means simply a wider scope for the exercise of the same study—his zest for it naturally quickens; and in time he develops qualities of tact, sympathy and discretion that give him high powers of leadership. How congenial this training is to the British temperament, and of what striking results it is capable, the annals of the war, as of our whole Colonial history and Imperial Government, give ample proof.

CHAPTER IV

THE CITY OF FRIENDS

(I.)

HERE let us sum up the conclusions we have reached so far.

(I.) The English mind has one great weakness—it is by nature placid, inactive, and, so far as real thought goes, unenterprising.

(II.) Yet it is capable, under the right stimulus, of high developments of idealism, decision and devotion.

(III.) To produce these developments, or, in other words, to guide and inspire the mind to the best forms of self-expression, is the business of education.

(IV.) In going about its business, education will secure the best results by appealing to the one strong point in the

English mind—its overwhelming interest in character.

"Education," as was indicated on an earlier page, is a word that can be used in a wide or a narrow sense. In the wide sense, it covers every sort of training—mental, physical, moral—that can be given to the pupil. In the narrower sense, it is used to express the particular training by which powers of thought, imagination, memory, criticism, inference, are nourished and supplied with stimulating matter upon which to work.

To isolate the mind and its training from the whole personality, to treat it as an independent and self-contained existence, is of course to violate a fundamental principle of all true psychology. There is no variation of personality which is not directly reflected in the mind; there is no activity of the mind which does not, in some slight degree at least, affect the entire character.

Nevertheless, the failure of our English education has been greatest on the

intellectual side. Failure here, of course, has reacted upon the personality as a whole, and checked the realization of its fullest possibilities. For the lack of a true philosophy of life, as Mr. Clutton-Brock has shewn, the German character has been given over to the pursuit of untrue ideals; for the lack of any philosophy at all the English nature gropes blindly through life with no formed ideal to guide it. And so, while we must bear in mind that education concerns the whole nature and not the mind alone, we must recognise that the place where reform is most urgently needed is in the intellectual sphere, in so far as, for the purpose of investigation, it can be considered separately from the whole personality of which it is a part.

The purpose of intellectual training must be, first of all, to implant in the mind true ideals, and to confirm them there by such weight of evidence and reflection as the individual is capable of making his own (for men cannot walk

by blind faith alone) ; and therewith to draw out such powers of self-expression as will help him to pursue his ideals. By such means he will be fitted, as far as his intellect is concerned, to take his share in the business of life ; and if his other powers (really inseparable from those of the mind), are developed at the same time and along the same lines, he will be enabled to take up that place in society to which his abilities, as well as his opportunities, beckon him.

Every theory of education, therefore, must be based upon a philosophy of life ; and a man's ideals of education will be coloured by his opinions as to the purpose and aim of life. It would be easy at this point to lose oneself in abstract speculation ; but we can keep contact with the facts of life, and at the same time come fairly close to a conclusion, by considering whether the general agreement of human opinion has ruled out any objects or purposes as *not* being the true objects and purposes of life.

In spite of much indeterminate evidence, we may conclude that it has done so. The considered and final opinion of mankind—as distinct from its unthinking practice—would absolutely rule out self-seeking as the end of life. That a man should live for himself and his own desires alone, is a theory that neither logic nor common sense would attempt to make good. It is true, of course, that when those desires are fleshly—desires of money, comfort, the satisfaction of the appetites—multitudes do live for them and apparently for them alone. But though this be their practice, they invariably either apologize for it as a failing, or defend it as a necessity; they never glorify it as a rigid adherence to duty. "A man's got to look after himself in this world," they say, implying that self-seeking is a degrading necessity forced upon us by cruel circumstance; or "I daresay I *do* think about myself too much,"—admitting the pursuit of a wrong ideal, but excusing it as an amiable weakness. Not even the most materialistic

community has suggested that the better attainment of such desires should be made the sole purpose of a school curriculum.

But there is a form of self-seeking which, from time to time, has come near to being accepted as a universal goal. Under the guise of what is called a "liberal" ideal, the satisfaction of the more intellectual or spiritual desires is put forward as the sole aim of life. Self-development, self-realization, saving your own soul, are all variants of this theory; and in one or other of these forms it has often had no little vogue. Yet mankind as a whole has pronounced against it—not very clearly indeed as regards education, but fully and finally in the sphere of religion.

That a man should aim at saving his own soul, and at that alone, is unhesitatingly rejected by all except the smallest handful of zealots as a creed at once immoral and untrue. It is curious that a like devotion, say, to the selfish pursuit of "culture" or of knowledge has never been branded quite so definitely. But there

is a reason for this. It lies in the fact that the scholar or dilettante or scientist, however selfish he may actually be, is always of potential value to society. The pursuit of salvation, in the popular idea, can confer no benefits upon others; the pursuit of knowledge or of beauty may do so, even though he who adopts it as his goal has no intention of sharing his achievements with others. And this suggests a factor in the true ideal we are in search of—that no life is worth living unless in some degree it is of service to other people.

The popular ideal of life, therefore, enshrines a belief that it must be of use to others. But it is quite definite, again, in rejecting self-sacrifice as a final goal. "The greatest possible good to the greatest possible number," is a theory repugnant to all ordinary sentiment; and no community in cold blood would assent to the doctrine that it is expedient that one man should die for the people—unless of course he had done something

in itself worthy of death. The rights of minorities—the privileges of individuals—are unassailable, and to violate them is a crime against society. A minority or individual may, if they think it their duty, abrogate their own rights and sacrifice themselves unduly in the service of others; but it is not expected of them,—it may not be asked of them,—it is no part of the normal ideal of life.

At first sight this statement appears to be at variance with the most fundamental doctrine of Christianity. Really it is not so. Indeed, here again the religious consciousness seems rather to support our contention. We believe that Christ suffered for us—but only in the sense that His death gave us the power to sacrifice ourselves for others, to be crucified with Him, to fill up for ourselves His sufferings, to take up our cross and follow Him. No thinking man accepts the crude theory of vicarious suffering by which mere faith in His death for us is supposed to assure us of eternal

happiness, and to exempt us from all moral duty whatever. In other words, the view of life dominant in the human mind demands service and sacrifice of all alike, but rejects any theory on which one man's sacrifice—even though He be the Son of Man—should lessen the sacrifice expected of the others. We are to bear one another's burdens, according to St. Paul; but in the same breath the Apostle adds that each man shall bear his own burden.

So the normal ideal of life strikes a balance between self-seeking and self-sacrifice. It rejects a selfishness which disregards others entirely; but it also rejects a sacrifice which disregards self entirely. Such a sacrifice may perhaps be demanded by abnormal circumstances; and if it is demanded, and freely given in answer, no human praise is adequate to reward its heroism. But the general conception of life is also that, given a universal acceptance of this ideal, such abnormal circumstances could not arise;

and that no man has the right, by his own service, to deprive others of their share in the common service of all.

On this point—that self-sacrifice in itself is not the fullest ideal of life—everyday experience accords with popular sentiment. We all know the man who is for ever sacrificing himself in an irritating and unnecessary manner—giving up the best chair, rendering superfluous services, making himself ridiculous in a thousand different ways, in the pursuit of an exaggerated ideal of humility. Sacrifice, it is true, is the only condition of real service; but to be serviceable it need not be servile. Equally well known is the person—generally a fond father or mother—whose sacrifice is as a rule ill-judged and mischievous, and engenders in its recipients not a like spirit of devotion, but a selfishness which is ready to take everything and to give nothing. Self-sacrifice—if pursued as a man's one aim—will almost certainly degenerate into one or other of these forms; and that is why the general con-

sciousness of mankind rejects it as the final purpose of life.*

The true ideal—a society in which no member should be called upon to jeopardise his interests above the rest—is hinted at in a verse of Whitman's, which deserves to be better known than it is :—

" I dreamed in a dream I saw a city invincible to the attack of the whole of the rest of the earth ;
" I dreamed that it was the new City of Friends ;
" Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust love, and it led the rest ;
" It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that city,
" And in all their looks and words."

For the City of Friends demands of its citizens a "*robust* love," just as the Primrose Dame in *A Lodge in the Wilderness*

* The following fragment of dialogue in *Ethics of the Dust* (Lecture VI.) is apposite :—

Violet : " Might we look at that piece of broken quartz again, with the weak little film across it ? It seems such a strange, lovely thing, like the self-sacrifice of a human being."

Lecturer : " The self-sacrifice of a human being is not a lovely thing, Violet. It is often a necessary and noble thing ; but no form nor degree of suicide can be ever lovely."

V : (*after a pause*). " But when one sacrifices oneself for others ? "

L : " Why not rather others for you ? "

V : " Oh, but I couldn't bear that."

L : " Then why should they bear it ? . . . Self-sacrifice, which is sought after and triumphed in, is usually foolish, and calamitous in its issue. . . . The constant duty of every man to his fellows, is to ascertain his own powers and special gifts, and to strengthen them for the help of others.

demands of the statesman, "what Hilda Wangel calls 'a robust conscience.'" The word *robust* in each case is of the highest importance. Apply it to love, and it means a love which, while willing and ready to sacrifice itself, is also anxious to evoke the sacrifices of others; a love whose eagerness to give never makes it too proud to receive; a love which though it glories in ministering finds also a glory in being ministered to. And this, so far from being un-Christian, is supremely Christian; for even the Son of Man, though He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, never rejected the ministry of others, whether of ignorant fishermen, or of penitent Magdalens, or of angels themselves from heaven.

(11.)

There are thus three possible ideals in life. A man may try to get the best for himself—but this, though often pure, harmless, and laborious, is at most only a refined selfishness. Or he may try to give the

best of himself, but in so doing he may deprive others of their opportunities of doing equal service. The third is the highest—that we should aim at getting the best out of ourselves and out of others as well, and because it is the highest it covers all that is good in the other two.

Every man has a talent, rudimentary perhaps, but no less real, for influencing others to their mutual good; and his true business in life is to exercise that talent effectively within the most appropriate sphere. Where the talent is small—as with many it is—the sphere will be no wider than the immediate family circle; where it is great, it may be as broad as the civilized world itself. For most of us the limits lie between these two extremes; we are the centre of a certain circle of interests—family, social, civic, commercial—which offer us an opportunity of developing our own best powers with those of our fellows, if we choose to do so. Narrow or wide, such a circle exists for each of us; and the

function of education is to help a man to recognize its limits, to inspire him to work within their compass as ardently as he can for the common good, and to equip him as fully as possible for the venture.

To realize this ideal without influencing every human faculty would be impossible. But because, under our present system, it is the mind that has suffered most, it is to the training of the mind that attention should first be directed. True education, then, in its narrower sense of training for the mind, should teach us about the society in which we live and the people who compose it—their needs, their weaknesses, their difficulties, their temptations. It should teach us how to help them, in a spirit not of personal self-negation, but of robust love. Incidentally also it should teach us our own limitations, so that we may be able to discriminate between those whom we can wisely help and those whom we cannot. Above all, it should teach us these things in such a way that we may *desire* to take our appropriate place

in the development of society, for it is idle to set before a man an ideal, and to equip him for its pursuit, unless you give him an enthusiasm for it too.

(III.)

The present waste of life in battle is rivalled, if not excelled, by the waste of intellectual powers that has been going on for many years in England; the silent minds of citizens are as great a tragedy—if not a greater one—than the broken bodies of soldiers. Indeed it is possible that the second tragedy would never have happened, had it not been for the completeness of the first.

To "strengthen self-respect and develop strength of purpose," to "increase knowledge pertinent to life and cultivate critical thought," to "broaden the social outlook and deepen charity" these,—in Dr. Welton's words,—are the ideals of education. There is no bar to their realization in any grade of society, nor—since their possibilities are unlimited, and range from the

infinitely little to the infinitely great—in any individual mind. What has modern society—school and college, parents, Church and State, all in one great league to educate the pupil wisely—achieved in these directions ?

In the first place, they taught him without doubt a few of the elementary duties of citizenship. He learnt to keep himself clean, to pay his way, to avoid becoming a nuisance to society, to keep his hands from picking and stealing. On the other hand, in most cases, he did not learn habits of diligence or industry ; he was neither warned nor armed against self-indulgence except perhaps in its crudest forms ; little was told him about his future responsibilities as a husband and a father. Of the higher duties of citizenship, ,or any share he might possibly assume in the administration or improvement of society at large, there was little if any mention.

At the same time, the training which is so vital a part of public school and

university life, and which is being introduced and developed, with the necessary adaptations, in elementary schools, training colleges, and the modern universities, has had an influence of inestimable value for our purpose. It develops, as we have already seen, every power of leadership in the growing boy, giving him unselfishness, sympathy, insight and tact. But—and this qualification is important —though it teaches him to lead and influence others, it does not, as a rule, teach him to *assume* leadership unless he is directly called upon to do so. Give him a position and a responsibility and he will carry it out well and intelligently ; but do not expect him to undertake it unless persuaded from without, or to see and seize opportunities of setting an example or leading a reform on his own initiative. He prefers to remain a private citizen, even when conscious of an aptitude for public life.

The fault here is definitely one of teaching, not of training. Training has

given him the qualities necessary for influencing others; but the call to exercise them has been withheld. It is incredible that every year in peace-time we should have allowed lads who had already shewn such qualities to disappear by the thousand into the obscurities of commercial life, rarely if ever to emerge. Yet this was the case, and the cause of it was that almost universally education—even the best that was offered—failed to direct the developing minds of pupils to the countless spheres in which they were needed as pioneers, propagandists, or workers. Undoubtedly this was the object of the traditional education of the "liberal" type, of which the standard was set by the universities and imitated in various degrees by every school and college in the country, elementary or secondary; but its failure has been signal. Even where its environment was favourable, where teachers grasped its purpose and pupils had been prepared, more or less, by home influence or careful training, to receive

it, only a few of them were genuinely inspired; the rest took away either a languid and dilettante interest in politics, art and literature, or more often nothing at all. But where teachers only apprehended its meaning imperfectly, and pupils received no contributory inspiration from home—as in the elementary schools—its failure has been disastrous. Consider again the letter quoted on page 49. It is the work of a boy who passed no doubt through quite an up-to-date Council school; but his phrases do not betray that he learnt anything whatever there except reading and writing. The very artlessness which gives it half its charm is an indictment against the system on which he was taught; it does not even contain the hackneyed platitudes of the semi-educated.

This failure of the liberal type of education—a failure perhaps relative only at the universities and public schools, but almost total everywhere else—had resulted before the war in widespread dissatis-

faction and distrust. The working classes not only opposed most bitterly any proposal to raise the age-limit of compulsory school-attendance, but even took their lads away at the earliest possible opportunity to "put them to a trade," because, as they said with reason, "they're learning nothing at the school." The professional and leisured classes insisted on the inclusion of a "modern" education in every curriculum, with the avowed purpose of fitting their children for a commercial life. Had the liberal education done what it set out to do, neither the dissatisfaction nor the demand would ever have arisen; for it would have been obvious to all that the power of dealing with men which it quickened and developed was the best preparation in the world for a commercial or for any other career.

The balance between the liberal and the "modern" education has not as yet been struck; and it is to be hoped that the period of unrest and educational

experiment will continue for a while. For whatever may be urged against liberal education, it did at least aim at implanting ideals; whilst "modern" education is heading straight for materialism; and, if victorious, will do no more than turn English boys into commercial machines. And what the result of that would be, those who have personal knowledge of the German character to-day can tell us best.

CHAPTER V

EDUCATION

(1.)

WE must look round then for a type of liberal education which, both in its elementary and higher forms, will do what the traditional education aimed at but failed to achieve. It is to inspire its pupils to take their appropriate place in the development of society; and to do this it must set certain objects clearly before them.

(1.) It must teach them the great need that exists for honest men to consider the problems of modern life without prejudice, and to work for their solution—for it is only by solving these problems that we shall get the best out of others and ourselves.

(II.) It must inspire them to take every opportunity of leading in this thought and work; either by embracing public life, in as wide a form as is compatible with their profession and abilities; or by influencing public opinion in the immediate circle of their fellow-workers, friends and family; or at the lowest by a discriminating and conscientious use of the franchise.

(III.) It must help them to understand that the smaller of two issues can only be decided by reference to the greater; that the civic problem will only be solved by those who appreciate the national; and the national only by those who are alive to the international.

(IV.) It must develop their natural interest in human nature into a scientific study, so that they are secure against specious and self-seeking impostors.

(V.) Finally, it must warn them against the insidious dangers of words and phrases; and teach them to discern the true bearing of an argument from its apparent meaning.

This is a heavy programme; but nothing lighter seems adequate to the requirements of a truly liberal education. It involves the study of institutions—the state, the law, the nation, commerce, economics; of psychology; and of logic. Few subjects present more difficulties than these three to both pupil and teacher; few can more easily degenerate into dry terminology and barren detail. It would appear a virtual impossibility to present them as features of an interesting and inspiring curriculum. But it has to be done if we are to have education in the real sense at all, and the way to do it is to bring each of these subjects into relation with the fundamental interest in people which characterizes the English mind.

Take for example the first—the study of institutions. Institutions and people together make history; and therefore you will only interest your pupils in institutions by teaching them history. This, of course, has long been a part of

every curriculum, but too often it has been a history which ignored institutions almost entirely, probably as being "too advanced," and people almost entirely, probably as being irrelevant. Our school history, up till a few years ago, concentrated exclusively upon the sequence of events. It is true, of course, that the pupil must have a background of sheer fact on which to build; but it cannot be too much insisted that "dates" and the "succession of kings" are essentially unimportant—unless the personality of the monarch was marked enough to react upon the institutions of his day.

In this matter the example of the Old Testament historians is luminous. They give dates and successions in plenty; but unless a man is of importance for their purpose they dismiss him with the briefest of mentions. "In such and such a year," they say, "began so-and-so to reign; and he reigned so many years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,"—and that's all you

need know about *him*. "The rest of his acts,"—if you are really curious about them—"are they not written in the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?" "This," they seem to say, "is a history and not a chronicle; a philosophy, not an encyclopædia. We are dealing with great institutions—the people of God, the Temple, the Covenant, the Messianic preparation—and only those who worked for or against these institutions, who forwarded or harmed their prospects, shall find a place in our pages. If you want to know about the others, you know where to go and look them up."

The result of this method was, that they produced a people passionately interested in its own institutions; unduly conservative, perhaps, but highly educated and deeply concerned in everything that genuinely affected the national welfare—a race of patriots in a very real sense. It is the true historical method. Once you have given your pupil his background of events, select for his study the insti-

tutions and the problems with which his own life will bring him most into contact —problems of government and popular control, of industry and commerce, of the treatment of the idle, the criminal, the sick, the destitute. Trace the development of these problems and institutions through the centuries up to the present day, weaving your story round vivid pictures of the men and women by whose characters they were influenced, or by whose actions they were modified. Shew how time and experience rejected solutions that at first seemed successful, and revealed flaws that at first were undetected; and how new personalities arose to patch up the old systems or inaugurate the new. Such a method will breed an appreciation of the complex society in which we live, and a genuine desire to lend a hand in its development or administration.

It may be answered that we have already tried to do this, but that it has failed to interest our people. Well, have we really tried? Every civilized country

has its national heroes—Germany has Barbarossa and Frederick; France has Joan of Arc and Napoleon; America, Washington and Lincoln—but who are the national heroes of England? At best we can only quote Saint George, King Arthur, and Robin Hood as having more than a passing hold upon the popular fancy—an alien saint, a mythical king, a legendary outlaw.* And this is not for any want of great characters in our story; we can boast as many noble names as any other nation. Nor is it for any want of interest; the historical novel has as great a vogue in England as anywhere else. It is because the method of the historical novel has never been scientifically applied to the teaching of history in schools, with a view to arousing in the scholar a true appreciation of our national problems, by giving him a living interest in our national heroes.

One word more upon this point.

* Here in particular it must be borne in mind that we are speaking of England only. Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are far richer in national heroes.

Although by this method we could probably raise up a generation of Englishmen as interested in the problems of society as their fathers were indifferent, we must guard against allowing that interest to become parochial. The less can only be understood in relation to the greater; and they must learn that civic questions must be referred to national ones and national to international for their proper solution. Therefore a study of foreign history and of international relationships —conducted on the same method—must form part of their education; and with it must be treated the influences of geography and climate upon national institutions. This will give geography, too, a vital place in the curriculum, and raise it into something higher than a dull catalogue of rivers, mountains and towns.

The second of our three great subjects is psychology. By this, we do not mean so much the study of abnormal conditions, but a practical classification of normal habits of mind and types of character,

and of the methods by which they can severally be brought under control. And here, though again a certain background of experimental psychology is desirable, the main work will be done by introducing the student to the greatest creations of fiction. In this case too it may be said that the attempt has been made already—and indeed who does not remember writing "characters" of Brutus or Jacques or Macbeth at school? The failure here,—for certainly it failed, in most cases, to inspire any permanent interest in great literature or in the study of human nature—was due to the extraordinarily limited scope of our reading at school. How can I sum up even one man's character until I have half a hundred at least with which to compare him? Yet that is what we were asked to do at school. Widen your scholar's reading till he has most of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Dickens, and Thackeray loosely in his mind, and then ask him to draw pictures of outstanding types, illustrated from the

books he has read, and exemplified further by historical characters and instances drawn from the men and women around him. By giving him such a basis for character study, far wider than used to be the custom, there is little doubt that you will give him also zest for its continual exercise.

Lastly, we said, our scholars must have a knowledge of logic—that is to say, of the meaning of words and the validity of arguments. Nowhere has education failed more entirely than in this; nothing could be more slipshod than the use of abstract terms in common English speech, in political or religious controversy, or in newspaper comment. Half our dissensions, many of our keenest disputes, are based almost entirely upon a flat misunderstanding of terms; half our most cherished prejudices we support by arguments that seem to us conclusive, though they would not convince a clever child. The vast majority of people are intellectually at the mercy of clap-trap

oratory and specious appeals for the want of the most elementary knowledge of logic. To a large extent the stagnation of our political and religious thought is due to this cause—that some of us will accept almost any argument, however futile; and the remainder—with a distrust as blind as their neighbour's trustfulness—dare accept no argument at all, however valid. And in each case the cause at the bottom is an ignorance of logic.

Much of what has been suggested above as the true method of teaching history and psychology has been experimented with in various ways, and some of the experiments have met with success. But few successful experiments have been made in teaching logic. The essay is a sound method, but it is slow and cumbrous, and ignores, again, our characteristic interest in people. Here, too, we might take a leaf out of the classics, and try to teach logic and the meaning of words, as Plato did, by dialogue. Instead of

making school debates an optional amusement for the precocious out of school hours, make them a regular and essential part of the curriculum. You will give the boy, at once, an audience whom he has to convince and an interlocutor whom he has to counter; and if you have a wise chairman who does not hesitate to point out fallacies or appeals to prejudice whenever they occur, your classroom may perhaps be noisy, but at least it will be interesting; and most of those present will learn something.

(II.)

In all this there is one great pitfall which must be most carefully avoided. A pupil should be confronted with the problems of life—problems of institutions, problems of character, problems of language; interested in them; stimulated and equipped for their solution. But the teacher should avoid the temptation of presenting him with ready-made solutions —*for a ready-made solution is no solution*

at all. However much you believe in a certain goal, never represent it as more than your own belief. Our business is to inspire thought, not to propagate formulæ; to make pioneers of an undiscovered country, not tourists of a known one.

Shew the boy, if you will, what solutions time has proved to be wrong; teach him to recognize untrue or unfruitful lines of thought, and to avoid them; but do not try to do more than put him upon the right path and start him fairly on his journey. The leaders in modern society, whether their followers are many or few, whether their importance is great or little—must be like the Old Testament pilgrims who asked the way to Zion with their faces thitherward. They knew they had the right direction; they were resolved to go forward; but as for the distance of the goal or the details of the path, these had to be found by inquiry and experiment on the way.

The neglect of this principle is one great cause of educational failure. Teachers,

either through over-confidence in their own theories, or else through pure lack of interest in speculation, or even through fear of too great liberty of thought on the part of their pupils, have encouraged a glib knowledge of fact more than a diligent habit of inquiry. Examinations have become the test of a retentive memory rather than of an alert mind. How much this has been the case, and what evil effects it has had, is convincingly shewn by Mr. Clutton Brock in his book called *The Ultimate Belief;* and the warning that he repeats and enforces there, that education should aim at giving children the liberty of the spirit, and not the bondage of known fact, is of crucial importance. Once let the content of education be presented as a mere bundle of *choses jugées,* and it must lose all its interest and inspiration. Shortlived and doctrinaire opinions will be propagated—if anything is propagated at all—in the place of a love of progressive truth; and parents will be justified in taking the boy away from

school and putting him to a useful trade.

What place will Latin and Greek, French and German, Mathematics and Science, have in such a programme? Language study, of course, is of inestimable value in each of the three main subjects; and the more a boy can learn about foreign customs, foreign people and foreign ideas, in their own language, the better he will understand his own. How many languages he is taught, and which, and how much of each, depends upon his ability, his future career, and a variety of other matters which do not affect the main issue. Mathematics and Science are useful for his career as well, and in accordance with his future requirements he must learn more or less of them; but of greater value is the discipline of concentrated and connected thought and the intolerance of partial or *a priori* solutions for which they call. But in each case it must be borne in mind that the purpose of education is not to give the scholar a cash

value when he goes out into the world, but to equip him for his real work of getting the best out of himself and other people. If he knows how to do this he will rise in any career he embraces, however limited his technical equipment may be at first.

(111.)

We have travelled a long way from France and the British soldier in the last forty pages; and it might well be asked whether, for example, the lads who make up our army could have been educated on the lines we have been discussing.* No one who knows them can doubt at all that they are capable of it, and that it would have made them better citizens, even though they had given to it no more than the years which they did actually spend in the Council school. And there is one other universal feature in their lives which suggests a further possibility.

Wherever they may be—in action, in the trenches, in rest, on the march, in

* The Appendix, page 152, gives an outline of some experiments in this direction.

hospital,—there is one paramount thing next to their friendships and their food and tobacco, which they all seem to need ; and that is music. A mouth-organ, gramaphone, band, concert-party, piano —any one of these stirs them to song, or at least finds ready listeners. There are few tangible results, perhaps, of their love of music, but that it is one of the most potent factors in their lives no one can deny. We need not waste time by considering instances ; the facts are too well known. But why, if music can play so large a part in the Englishman's life, should it have been left so entirely to chance in his education ?

Many children, of course, are taught to play the piano or the violin ; and some acquire the art without teachers ; but that is not the way of music for all. Much could be done for the English character by teaching systematically not the execution, but the appreciation, of good music in our schools. There is one branch of music which is pre-eminently

English—that of choral singing; and this receives attention; but the individual is not taught to appreciate, understand, or enjoy good music. And yet, without much expenditure of time, a great deal could be achieved in this direction; enough at all events to give the lad an independent interest in what might become a lifelong influence and inspiration.

For nothing resembles more closely the character of educated men—men, that is, who have learnt to understand and to handle other men for the best ends—than good music. In good music there seems to be a fusion of four things: melody, rhythm, harmony and tone. The melody of a passage gives it purpose; the rhythm gives it balance; harmony enriches and extends it; tone gives it depth and colour and feeling. If each of these four is *good*, and if they are well combined, you have good music. Translate this into terms of human character. If a man has a high and well-defined purpose; if his outlook is balanced, so that his own

enthusiasms do not carry him away; if he is neither narrow in method nor barren in thought, but has enrichment and grace in his character; if finally, all that he does and says is coloured by sympathy and feeling—surely he is the educated man of our dreams? And, therefore, if his mind is already acquiring by other means these four characteristics and learning to fuse them properly—by a liberal education, and by the characteristic English school and university training—nothing will help it more to assume its final poise than good music.

Two things are quite clear in the soldier's attitude towards music: first, that he loves it almost passionately; secondly (and this is not a rare experience) that a discerning bandmaster can by wise selection of programmes actually teach his recurring audiences to *prefer* good music to bad. If this can be done at the front, it can be done in schools at home; and if it can be done in schools, we might well give close attention to it, because of the real influence for good

it would most certainly have upon the scholars.

The same must be true of the other arts in their turn; for the four characteristics of good music—purpose, balance, richness, and feeling—are the characteristics of all good art as well. Therefore good art in all its branches appeals at once to the normal mind, though the latter may take years to understand it. The soldier's theatre, with its tiny musical romances, mentioned in an earlier chapter, is an illustration of this fact in the sphere of the drama. In each of those romances, and especially in the "Keys of Heaven," the same four points were evident. Each had its tiny plot, with a quiet but rhythmical progress; each was enriched in a restrained but artistic fashion by costume, music, and the touch of humour; each, above all, was true to life in its sentiment and tone. And each of them received, on performance, an appreciation manifestly more intense and more grateful than was evinced even by the riotous

applause which greeted more "popular" performances.

More permanent good would be done by abandoning the attempt to teach children of indifferent ability to draw, paint, and play the piano, and spending the time thus saved in teaching them to appreciate and understand good art in its various branches. If they can learn to produce it, too, so much the better; but only few can be producers, and almost all can appreciate.

(IV.)

To all this there is an obvious objection. It may be said that to press music, colour and literature into the service of education would be to defeat the purpose of true art and degrade its character; because it would introduce standards of appreciation—and consequently of production—of a moral or utilitarian order, and thus degrade the Beautiful into a means to an end. Children, the objector might add, should be taught to love Beauty—

just as they should be taught to love Truth and Goodness—for its own sake and for that alone; if they are taught to love them for any other purpose—even though it be a very high one, such as the enrichment of character—they will fail to find them at all, and attain at best to the worship of a spurious imitation. This criticism is important, because it appears at first sight to be based upon a fundamental principle of education, of which as convincing a statement as any can be found in a book already quoted —*The Ultimate Belief.*

As there stated, the principle is this. There is in each of us a "life of the Spirit," manifesting itself in three desires: the desire for the Good, the desire for the True, and the desire for the Beautiful. The aim of education is to develop this life of the Spirit to its highest point, by setting children on the path which leads to the realization of those desires. And this path can only be trodden by scholars who learn to desire each of these three

things *for its own sake*. The desires of the Spirit are ends in themselves, and if their pursuit is made subsidiary to some other purpose, it will certainly issue in failure; it may even issue in disaster.

We need not repeat the very clear and cogent arguments by which the author establishes this theory; but there are two things that ought to be said about it. One is that, unless very carefully guarded, it would certainly tend to make education a matter of pure selfishness—each individual trying to acquire "culture" without reference to the needs of others. The second is that none of these desires can ever be realized by anyone—individual or community—except through mutual encouragement and exchange of achievement. Both these points are, of course, safeguarded in *The Ultimate Belief*. "We are all concerned with each other's spiritual activities," the author says in his conclusion. "The aim of civilization is not to give a few the leisure to exercise their intellectual and æsthetic activities, while

the many are drudges, even if their drudgery saves them from actual want . . . . All men are equal in that they have an equal right to spiritual activities; and the proper aim of society is to secure this equality, not merely to secure property to those who have it."

Emphasize these points—and they need continual emphasis—and there is no further opposition between the two views. Establish the fact that Truth, Beauty, and Goodness are not personal but communal possessions, and you assert that those things alone are most true and beautiful and good which can be most widely shared, and that in teaching children to follow them you must shew them only the paths which they can travel with the greatest company of friends, leading and being led in turn. Therefore you will judge of a method of education —whether in music, art, literature, logic, or whatsoever else—according as it develops corporate progress—that is, gives the scholar both the desire and the power

to share the results of his studies with others.

If Art makes artists of men—artists not in the sense of being able to play or paint, but in that of leading others in a common love of the beautiful—then it is good art ; if it makes æsthetes only, it is bad. If Logic makes teachers of them, capable of inspiring others in the search for truth, then it is good logic ; if it makes pedants only, it is bad. If History makes them statesmen, directing the affairs of family, town, or nation with wisdom and sympathy, it is true history ; if it begets faddists or antiquarians alone, it is false. And so with every branch of knowledge—it is to be judged by its fruits. No matter what degree of formal perfection a man may attain in its pursuit, his time will have been wasted—both for himself and for others—unless he has also acquired a desire to impart it. It will have been wasted for others, because they are excluded from their legitimate share in his harvest ; it will

have been wasted for himself, because he can never even approach the true goal of his labours without the fellowship and support of companions. We may set this down without any fear of contradiction—that no spiritual activity, however great its triumphs may appear, is on the road to ultimate success, unless it is adding all the time to the corporate wealth and friendship of a City of Friends.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGION

(I.)

PEOPLE commonly draw a sort of distinction between two kinds of education, one of which they call "secular" and the other "religious." In practice, this distinction is of some superficial use. There are many outstanding difficulties connected with the problem of denominational teaching in schools for which it appears to provide a solution. But the solution, though facile, seems to have satisfied few, whilst the distinction itself is fundamentally untrue; and if carried to its logical conclusion would have fatal results—for an irreligious education is as terrible a thing as an illiterate religion.

The idea that underlies it, if there

is any formed idea at all, must be that there are two separate sets of facts about the universe—or perhaps one set of facts and one set of theories—of which secular education imparts the former, and religious education the latter. Even if this were the case it would not in itself justify the sub-division. The imparting of facts and theories is only incidental to education; its true purpose is to train and inspire people for the business of life. And though there were ten thousand different facts and theories that a man could acquire, he would still only have one life to live; and everything which helps him to live that life most truly must be an integral part of his education, not to be separated from any of the other parts without impairing the value of the whole. So that if religion has any real importance for life at all, it must be concerned —and vitally concerned—in education.

Furthermore, to those who believe in God, all inspiration is divine in origin. And, therefore, the more a man can be

brought into relation with God, the more of inspiration he will receive. But the bridge between man and God—the sum total, indeed, of all the bridges between men and God—is that to which mankind has given the name of Religion. If the word has any real meaning at all, it must cover, not simply the main channel, but every channel, by which men receive inspiration. Hence an education which takes no account of religion is deliberately cutting itself off from every true source of inspiration; whilst an education which makes much of religion will go far towards reaching its goal.

But, above all, religion is essential because it is the only agency in the world that is effective against selfishness. There are cases, of course, of men who without any apparent religious stimulus, in the accepted sense, have devoted themselves to an unselfish service of society. But the instances are few, and almost negligible when compared with the untold numbers who have taken the same course

under the tutelage of Christianity. Selfishness is in the end the root of every temptation; and therefore the simplest way of stating this whole matter about religion and education, is to say that education offers no valid safeguard against temptation, whilst religion does. And because the true citizen must be proof against temptation, he cannot be found unless religion has played the leading part in his education.

"But," it may well be said, "this is simply a verbal quibble. There may be such a religion as you describe, embracing all the different channels of inspiration by which God gives His Spirit to men, and conferring a power strong enough to ward off every sin; but it is certainly not the religion of traditional Christianity. *That* has not only ignored and traduced many of the most powerful influences for good; it has even failed to shew itself great among those influences. It has failed to inspire; it has failed to conquer temptation; it has failed to make good

citizens. That is why we turn to what we call secular education as the hope of the future—because the so-called religious education of the past was neither religious nor educational. Leave it for those to whom it may appeal; we propose to build up, in its despite, a universal education which shall be adequate to the needs of all."

We will not waste time arguing this point; though without doubt traditional Christianity might justly claim far greater triumphs than its detractors allow. Let us be fashionable and admit that, relatively at all events, it has failed to do much towards inspiring the minds of men. We may be conceding too much; but at least we are not flying in the face of facts. Christianity in England has had a very fair field. There are few to whom it has not been presented. Yet in many cases the presentation has altogether failed to appeal; and in others—more disastrous still,—those who accepted the promises and tested the power of what

was taught, were grievously disappointed with the result and fell away—and one man who falls away after making the trial of faith is more damning evidence than a thousand who never made the venture.

As a consequence of this the vast majority of men decline to admit that such virtue as they may possess is due in any way to religion, and deny its claim to be the universal and unique source of goodness. The most they will say for it is that it may be a pleasant enough occupation for people who like that sort of thing; but they will continue to assert that we are all bound for the same place, and that it doesn't matter what a man believes, so long as he leads a decent sort of life.

Grant, then, for the moment, that Christianity has failed—but if it had succeeded, could any success have been more triumphant? What other creed, actual or imaginable, could offer more than traditional Christianity? It offered an example of leadership that still trans-

cends all others ; a power of action more infinite than any other force has ever claimed to be ; a call to service so urgent that all other calls have borrowed its phrases to point their own appeals. The example it offered was that of Christ, with all His sacrifice and joy ; the power, His Spirit given through the Sacraments in the Church ; and the call to service, the Gospel that He preached. These three together form the most tremendous offer ever made to men. If the offer could have been translated into fact—if the inspiration, and the power, and the call could have been given, and not merely held out, to all—our ideal of education would have been achieved, for all would have become citizens, each according to his ability, in a true City of Friends.

Therefore, though we may be tempted to say that Christianity has failed, we dare not be in a hurry to jettison it for good, for we have nothing so great to offer in its place. If we can shew that

the cause of its failure lies not in itself, but in its presentation, then we can hope to find also some other manner of presenting it less fallible and vain. This is what many people are trying to do. Starting alike with an assumption of its failure, they are groping towards various explanations of the tragedy.

Some say that Christianity has not been presented logically enough—that what is wanted is more dogmatic teaching. Others, that it has not been brought into line with modern knowledge—that it needs to be restated in terms of modern thought. It may be doubted whether either of these suggestions is the true one. More dogmatic teaching, though a good thing in itself, would not solve the problem. In the Army, for example, it is not by any means the soldiers who have been most dogmatically taught who seem to benefit most fully by their religion. Nor is a restatement in modern terms what is needed—though this too would be of value in itself. Religion is greater than

intellectualism; and the religious man, whether one of the intellectuals or not, has rarely any final difficulty in harmonizing the various beliefs he holds about the phenomena of life—though some of those beliefs may be very modern, and others very ancient.

We may suggest an alternative explanation of this alleged failure of Christianity. It may not be the true one, but perhaps it may help us to find the true one. Is it not possible that we have failed in this matter, for the same reason as we failed in other branches of education—in that we did not appeal, first and foremost, to the English interest in people?

(II.)

Apply this suggestion to the three cardinal subjects of religious education: the Gospel, the Church, and Christ. The Gospel, put into its simplest phrase, is just the plain statement that the Son of Man came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. Now the

average Christian to-day takes little trouble in seeking and saving that which is lost. The reason our Lord came into the world for this purpose was that He was, and is, interested in those who are lost. And the reason why the average Christian does not follow Him in this matter is that he is *not* interested in those who are lost. The Church should have given him the call to seek for them; but however much it tried, it generally failed; and it failed because it did not impart to him his Master's motive. It did not interest him in what was lost.

How greatly the Church has failed in this matter by neglecting to arouse the necessary interest, is shown by its signal success in the cases where it has contrived to impart it. Take the ordinary boy to the school mission; take the ordinary undergraduate to the college settlement; inveigle the ordinary business man into a circle for the study of missionary problems; and you will not often have to complain of his lack of zeal for the Gospel

thereafter. He may not confess it in the theological terms familiar to the orthodox, but he will confess it by his life. He will begin to live for others; and that is very much more important. The first step is the difficult one—to induce a normal person to associate himself, even as a spectator, with an abnormal institution. The rest is easy and almost automatic; for the institution is one specially designed to bring other people and their needs to his notice—and whether they be the denizens of an East End slum, or of a heathen country, they will almost certainly interest him, just because they are people; and interest will give him call to help them.

So much at least is abundantly borne out by the facts. But school and college missions, study circles and the like, are very few and far between when viewed against the vast background of English churchgoers; and that is why so few normal churchgoers have felt any missionary call at all. Still, here at least

we need no new departure ; the machinery is actually in existence ; all it requires is an almost indefinite multiplication and extension, and the thing can be done.

The Church, in its simplest phrase, is the Communion of Saints. When a man joins the Church he is supposed to join that Communion. But we scarcely ever tell him so ; or if we do tell him we do little to make it vivid to him. What saints in particular, living or departed, does the average Christian rejoice in having communion with ? Beyond a hazy idea of his own dead loved ones, that somehow or other he is nearer to them because he goes to church than he would be if he didn't, the phrase means little to him. And when he joined the Church at Confirmation, was he told, first and foremost, that he was joining a delightful society of saintly folk ? Or that he must believe the Creeds, know the Catechism, keep the Commandments, and be regular at Early Services ?

The latter, far more than the former,

was the teaching most of us experienced when we were prepared for Confirmation. And—with the exception of the Early Service—what an appalling prospect! And even at the Early Service we were taught to ignore the other people, to "go to church silently, and come away silently, and not to look at the other communicants"; to think of it as an individual *commercium* between ourselves and God, in which the others, though undergoing the same precious experience, had no personal share. No wonder it all appalled our shy, sensitive, sentimental lads! No wonder they refused to be confirmed because they "wouldn't be able to live up to it!" No wonder earnest souls ask for a restatement of Christianity or for more dogmatic teaching! But what is wanted is neither dogma nor restatement, but a complete change of emphasis.

Call the Church the Communion of Saints—a delightful society of saintly folk, pure and bright and gay and loving—and let that conception sink into the child's

mind, without bothering him about creeds too much, or commandments or services, and then see whether he is reluctant to join it. Shy he may be still, but not reluctant. Tell him of the saints of history, of those of our own times, of those yet living upon earth; dwell, not upon their austerities but, as Saint Paul did, upon their joys, and offer him membership of their community. Once again you will appeal to his interest in people, and once again the appeal will not fail.

This is the reason why a lad at the front is usually far more eager to be confirmed than he was at home. He sees the chaplain—a man often gay himself, whose mission at all events seems to be to make the lives of others brighter—and around him a body of communicants, (one or two of them perhaps his own friends,) whose lives, in enough cases to make them at least a little conspicuous, are brighter and more buoyant than those of others around him; and though he knows nothing of dogma he feels that he

would like to belong to such a society; and so he makes the venture and plucks up courage enough to tell the chaplain he would like to "go through Confirmation." A wise chaplain generally admits him with little more preparation than this; confident that his small group of communicants will welcome the newcomer and make him at home, giving him, in their own words and ways, such further instruction as he needs. And the end justifies the means, for there are fewer lapsed communicants among those who are confirmed in France than we have ever known before, in spite of the vastly increased difficulties of Communion.*

In preparing candidates for Confirmation, therefore, it would be better to lay much stress upon the joyousness of the Society which they are to enter, and comparatively little upon its rules and teachings and theological validity. And this is such a heresy in a scientific age—so totally at variance with the widespread demand

* See Note on p. 150.

for more dogmatic teaching — that we must stop for a moment to vindicate it. Dogma, of course, is vitally important. It would be a good thing if the ordinary Churchman had a great deal more of it. But it is love and not dogma that will hold him to his Church; and if he fails to find love there, though he may still retain his membership, he will miss half the value of his religion. Let him look for love first and find it; let the older members shew interest in him, and inspire his interest in return, and he will absorb almost by instinct such dogma as he needs.

There is, of course, a wide gulf between love and patronage. Many congregations, and many of the clergy, in attempting to express the former, achieve only the latter; and the result is an artificial breeziness as odious as the chilling aloofness of the average congregation. Superficial sentimentality is another perversion of the truly Christian attitude every bit as mistaken as patronage. True love steers a course between these two extremes. It

is neither effusive nor complacent; to recall again the pregnant word applied to it by Whitman, it is *robust*. Manly and yet reticent, interested but not inquisitive, it respects the privacy of the individual whilst inviting his confidence, friendship, and co-operation.

There are congregations and parishes which welcome the stranger with an attitude of this character. They come near to realizing our ideal of a City of Friends. No new member is allowed to be lonely; he is made at home at once; he feels that he has joined a visible Communion of Saints, not merely—as is so often the case—a collection of churchgoers who happen, from circumstances of residence, to receive the Sacrament at the same altar as himself.

The practice of many wise chaplains in France, as has already been hinted, approximates to this. One in particular—by no means a shallow or careless thinker—though he went far towards understanding the thoughts of immature and

silent boys, never ventured to give them more than a minimum of instruction. "I can't explain things to them," he said; "I don't understand them and they don't understand me—but they *do* understand each other,"—and therefore he handed each candidate over to one of his own communicants—preferably, if it could be done, the lad's own mate—and left them to hammer it out for themselves. Once he had assured himself of a lad's sincerity and given him the simplest possible instruction—"Go to Joe," he would say (if Joe was the chosen sponsor's name), "he'll tell you the rest better than I can." And you would see Joe and his catechumen sitting in a dug-out or on a fire step, fluttering a prayer-book between them; and what they talked about or how they settled the affair no one ever knew, but the result was clear. No lad confirmed under these conditions ever fell away; for Joe's love and interest, and the love and interest of the other communicants, kept him faithful; they

taught him such things as he needed to know in their own strange language; they led his steps, in friendly fashion, along the path of Christian progress.

And the second result was this, that all the communicants of that unit grew eager to be sponsors; and one after another brought forward fresh candidates for Confirmation, or undertook the care of those who had no friends already in the circle. Their love and interest were aroused, and they grew quite naturally to be missionaries to those outside the Church, and pastors to newcomers within.

(III.)

You could scarcely receive people into the Church at home in this fashion unless it bore a greater resemblance than it generally does to that delightful society of saintly folk which is the Communion of Saints. Saintly in a sense the devout communicant may be, but delightful he often is not; and until he and his fellow-saints become delightful

the Church is not much of a place for lost souls to enter. They must often feel more lost inside, even, than without. They had hoped to find the saints interesting, whereas they find them dull; and so they lose interest themselves, and many of them drift away.

That is the real reason, perhaps, why we call so much for dogma and for activities nowadays. The love of Church-people is not strong enough to hold the newcomer, nor are they interesting enough to draw his love and interest. We cannot hope to hold him by these means; and they are the only sure means of holding him; but failing them there are other cords that perhaps will not break at once. Definite Church teaching is one; Societies, and Guilds, and Parish Councils, are another; and on these we tend to rely because we cannot see how to stimulate mutual love. They are bad substitutes at best. The Church must be a City of Friends if she is to hold her children; turn her into a Polytechnic

or a Catechism Class, and though you retain a certain following, you will certainly fail to make many of them active leaders of others.

Much of this could be remedied no doubt by reminding Christians more of the Communion to which they belong; and of the rare beauty of the saints—living and departed—who are members of it too. Something could be done by recalling to them their obligation to receive the new communicant with the kindness and the hospitality that older guests should always shew to newcomers. But the root of the matter lies deeper. The reason why many churchgoers, though saintly perhaps, are not delightful, and consequently do not interest the newcomer, is, I am afraid, that they are not very interested in our Lord Himself.

This is a dreadful thing to say, and yet an illustration may shew that it is perhaps no more dreadful than the truth. Consider the case of a man who has adopted some study or activity, not

as a mere hobby but as a serious interest. He will read all the available literature, buy every new book, search every source of information for further light upon his subject. He may not often speak about his studies—sometimes not for weeks together, unless he is questioned—but (and here is the important point) whenever he does allude to them, it is always to say something new about them.

In such a spirit, for example, Izaak Walton wrote his *Compleat Angler*. A mere enthusiast would have produced a technical handbook, valuable no doubt to other fishermen, but of little appeal to the general public. Walton's interest was something far deeper and more passionate than that. Perhaps he meant to do no more than vindicate his pastime and advise its votaries; but his subject carried him away because he loved it. And so from every source he drew fresh material—from the Bible, the classics, the poets of his own day—and welded the whole into a book of infinite novelty

and charm. What might have been merely a manual for experts, became a classic for all time and every reader. Thousands who have never handled rod and line love to turn its pages, and learn that fishing is the greatest of all pastimes because God Almighty is recorded to have spoken to a Fish but never to a Beast; or that it is eminently suited to Christian men, because there is a River in Judæa which runs all the Week, but stands still on Sundays; or that Bishop Nowell, who composed our "good, plain, unperplext Catechism," attributed his own transcendent virtues to the twin pursuits of "Temperance and Angling."

That is the real test of interest—not that you should always be talking about your subject; but that you should constantly be getting and shedding new light upon it, if only from the candle-rays of your own modest intelligence. And judged by this test the average Christian shews little interest in his Master.

Consider, for example, the sermons that

you hear. How many of them, when they speak about Christ, ever say anything new about Him? And—even if new to you—how often is what they say original? This may be called a hard test; but is it really so hard? The subject is not one that has been exhausted; it never can be exhausted; its riches are unsearchable—how often do you meet anybody who is adding to his own treasury of thought or devotion by diligent and loving search among those riches?

There never has been any one so full of interest as Christ: for He is the Pattern Man. All men are interesting, each in his own manner and degree; the Pattern of them all must combine in Himself the interest of them all. And it needs no scholar to discover new things about Him; the most illiterate can do it, provided he is interested. The Gospels form a text-book ample enough for the wisest scholar, yet simple enough for the youngest. The great miracles, the hard sayings, are full of undiscovered beauties; and

yet it is only rarely that even in brilliant sermons any are brought to light. There is, to take one example only, the Parable of the Unjust Steward—a deep and difficult saying, if ever there was one. It seems a favourite subject for sermons to judge by the frequency with which it recurs; yet preacher after preacher repeats the same old unsatisfactory explanation, without any apparent attempt to see whether, perhaps, the truth does not lie yet deeper down.

The same sad and curious defect characterizes our public worship. With only two marked exceptions—three suffrages in the Litany and the meditation on the Seven Last Words, which has come to be usual on Good Friday—none of our Church Services focus attention upon the character of Christ as revealed in His earthly life, or appear to draw their inspiration from that source. This may be at least one real cause of the constant criticism to which they are subjected. Certain it is that many modern innovations—legitimate

and otherwise—in the Church of England aim either at a greater insistence upon the human character of our Lord—as in many popular manuals of devotion, and the Jesus-worship of some liberal theologians; or at a more limited and localized conception of His Divine Presence. Whether these innovations are wise or not, their tendency is clear—they are all of them attempts to interest the Christian a little more in his Lord.

To be frank, therefore, we must admit that only a few of us are really interested in the person of Christ; and that one terrible conclusion gives ample reason why we ourselves fail to interest the earnest mind seeking after truth. For here is another fact of which there is ample evidence. He who is interested in Christ can scarcely fail to become both saintly and interesting himself, and therefore delightful—a worthy member of the Communion of Saints. A short biography of Schweitzer, given by Baron von Hügel in the introduction to one of his books,

illustrates this. It tells how the young theologian, dissatisfied with all he had ever read in comment upon the life of our Lord, set himself earnestly to solve the puzzle, and produced *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, a book which in its very style reveals a delightful and unsophisticated mind. How, as he continued his studies, though he never was able to confess the divinity of Christ, he felt himself impelled to a life of higher sacrifice, and so with the imperfect light he had went out to teach the heathen, and died as a missionary abroad. That has happened in our own time ; but the past contains an example far more outstanding.

There never was a Christian more saintly, interesting, or delightful, than Francis of Assisi ; and history records that he alone of Christ's disciples received the *Stigmata*. Many scientists admit that the fact is not impossible, though they attribute it to self-suggestion ; but that explanation proves the main issue none the less. For if it was self-suggestion,

it was from meditation upon the life and passion of our Lord that it came; from a great and overwhelming interest in Him. And is it coincidence alone that the saint who above all others showed his interest in Christ should also stand above all others in saintliness and charm?

This makes our argument complete. For religion to achieve its purpose you must make the Gospel and the Church and the person of Christ interesting to the learner. To interest him in the Gospel you must interest him in the people for whom it is meant; and that is easy, for they *are* interesting. To interest him in the Church, you must interest him in the saints; and that is harder, for the saints of to-day are often not very interesting. So, that they may become interesting, you must interest them, as well as their would-be companions, in our Lord Himself. And you cannot do that unless you yourself are interested in Him. That should be easy—for who could be more interesting? We only find

it hard because we have never given to Him the thought we have given to other people.

It is strange that the Church should so have lost interest in her Founder, and this is not the place to attempt to account for it. But because it is true in the main, people have lost interest in the Church, and because they have lost interest in the Church they have lost—or never found—interest in the needs of others; and they have treated their fellows as curious spectacles, to be gossiped and wondered about, but not as living souls to be helped, strengthened, and developed. And this idle, purposeless interest—which is really no more than a languid curiosity—is what we called at the beginning the silent mind.

To call this silent mind to active self-expression—which was our problem—you must use its natural interest in other people (in some respects so vivid, in others so dull) to give it an appreciation of all the needs and problems of human

life, and a desire to work for their solution. That was the object of the liberal education we sketched out. To strengthen that desire, to develop it to the heights of greatest passion, and to show the power by which it can be brought to realization, you must use this same natural interest to interest it in the Gospel and the Church; and to maintain an interest in the Church you must stimulate an interest in Christ Himself. When you have done that (and you will find that in this matter you must begin with yourself) you will have fulfilled the purpose both of religion and of education. You will have done all that human power can do; and you must leave it to the power of Christ to do the rest.

APPENDIX

Notes on Some Educational Experiments at the Front

THE following is reprinted from a privately-circulated memorandum.

"I have been asked to put on record some details of educational experiments with troops in the field. The word 'experiment' is ambitious, for in no case did we get beyond beginnings of the simplest kind, nor did we ever reach results sufficiently developed to admit of general inferences being drawn. I give this account of our beginnings in the hope that it will draw from others records of more successful and more complete efforts.

"1. A vast majority of our troops—representing the entire body of unskilled labour before the war and a great part of

the *irresponsible* skilled workmen (thus excluding foremen, managers, clerks and others in responsible positions)—do not think at all. They have vague ideas about things, and many flashes of real insight; but they have no power either of summarizing and appraising evidence, of examining the arguments of others, or of expressing their own ideas coherently and logically. Until this is altered progress in every direction—religious, political, social—is bound to be inhibited.

"2. To alter it you must teach them, briefly, to read and to write. *Reading*, in its full sense, includes the selection of suitable subjects and of such books as bear upon them; the power of summarizing their contents in general, and then of assimilating them in detail; finally, the sifting of the contents into true and false, relevant and irrelevant, with the acceptance of the good and rejection of the bad. *Writing* includes the expression of ideas obtained by reading, observation and

reflection, developed, illustrated, and set forth with a view to the particular mentality of those who are to read. Reading in this sense is the handmaid of thought; writing, of speech.

"3. We adopted this as a principle, that we would aim at no more than teaching reading and writing. As to *what* was read or written, it mattered little; the selection was made in accordance with the wishes or temperament of the men who took part in the courses. In other words, we held that in education of this kind it was method rather than matter that had to be instilled.

"4. As a further principle we decided that we must work with groups rather than with individuals, thus following the example of the Study Circle System and the Workers' Educational Association. In dealing with men of the type I have indicated this appears to be all-important for their minds act with far greater alert-

ness in company than alone. In fact, it may be true to say that few of them have reached the stage of individual thought as yet : they still think and argue as group-minds. The Army gives special facilities for working on the group system, as its organization falls so perpetually into small bodies of men who work, sleep, and live in common. There was therefore no need to form our groups—we found them ready-made. The value of this fact is inestimable.

" 5. The actual beginning of experience grew out of a concert party. Its members (mostly amateur and of the class I have described) met two or three nights a week after performances to discuss future programmes, and so on. The leading spirits were in private life a collier, a builder's apprentice, and a joiner ; occasional additions were a farm hand and one or two other colliers or ironworkers. They were mostly young, and almost entirely unread and thoughtless. After some

months of concert work, however, the more enthusiastic decided that they required to know the principles of the art they had adopted; and this gave the impetus to an educational attempt. With such books as Stewart Macpherson's *Musical Appreciation*, Plunket Greene's *Singing*, occasional copies of the *Music Student*, and so on, we developed a rough course, dealing not only with classical music, but also with the principles of light opera, comedy, and drama. A translation of the *Poetics* helped a good deal. The method was always the same, as far as it ever developed. The book was read by the unofficial leader, its main principles outlined by him and discussed; then various chapters were taken in detail. At all times the book was passed round among the men, and some of them read a good deal of it.

"6. The same process, with the same subject, was carried out later with a divisional band. Other groups with which

similar experiments were attempted were the batmen of an officers' mess, a sanitary section, the signallers of one battalion, the stretcher-bearers of another. Among books treated in this way were *The Crown of Wild Olive, Lectures on Painting and Architecture, Ethics of the Dust, The Student in Arms, The Riches of Prayer,* Rowntree's *Poverty*, and so on. It is only fair to say that in some cases circumstances broke the 'course' off almost at its very beginning; but enough was done to shew that the system was capable of development.

"7. In *writing* we were able to make only a few experiments. The best was with two cadets—home in England—who read the *Student in Arms* together and wrote to us the results in the form of joint letters. The letter usually took the shape of: 'This chapter says such and such things. Harold thinks so-and-so is wrong. I think it's right. Harold's reasons are . . . Mine are . . .' Both these lads were in the artizan class described above.

"8. The chief danger in all this was in the occasional intrusion of some one who thought he knew what he was talking about, and insisted on talking of it. The essential of such a course is that its members should all be painfully conscious of their ignorance.

"9. But this produces a danger of its own—that they will none of them be willing to talk at all in the presence of a chaplain or 'educated' person. Only patience and friendship overcome this danger. It takes about six months' close acquaintanceship, on my reckoning, at the very least, before there is much hope of their opening their lips: after that you have some chance of starting your class.

"10. The only reason for writing about this now is the one given above—that our army organization presents us with an infinite number of ready-made groups, any of which form valuable ground not

only for experiments but for actual work of this character. The difficulties are endless, but the opportunities for group education of this kind are far greater than they have ever been before, or—as far as one can judge—than they will ever be again."

NOTE ON PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION IN THE FIELD.

THERE is considerable danger that under conditions of active service candidates may be presented by Chaplains for Confirmation with insufficient preparation. Cases have occurred where men have been presented who appeared entirely ignorant of the nature of the rite, or of the essentials of the Christian faith. It must not be supposed that the passages on pages 136 and 139 are in any way intended to excuse or justify such unfortunate occurrences. Their object is simply to point to two things: first, that love rather than doctrine is the primary bond between the individual and the Church; second, that the instruction given to him must be given in a vocabulary he can understand, and therefore may often be more effectively imparted by communicants who move in the same circle of ideas as himself than by clergy who to a large extent are bound to find them alien. In the cases referred to on page 139, it should of course be added that the Chaplain concerned took every precaution to assure himself that the candidate did receive sufficient instruction from his comrades.

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