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IN QUEST
OF CONTENTMENT

IN QUEST *of* CONTENTMENT

BY

Marjorie Barstow Greenbie

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FOREWORD

WHAT would happen if some hapless rich man left a fortune to the family which in a given length of time had produced, not the largest number of children, but the greatest number of books? Reader, shudder and say, God forbid! It is significant that one of the most outstanding figures of our time, Havelock Ellis, maintained separate apartments from his gifted and much loved wife. To her brilliant interpretations of her husband, the world owes much. The Brownings matured apart before they married; the Webbs, Sydney and Beatrice, who, like Siamese twins, seem always to have been "The Webbs," have latterly been politically divorced into Lord Passfield and plain Mrs. Webb; Shelley and Mary Godwin were like two pathetic cyclones, and George Eliot had her intellectual handmaiden, George Henry Lewes. These, from the finished realm of literary marriages, offer a wide enough experience to guide any millionaire who might contemplate so dangerous an experiment as the one suggested above. In current life there are many, all too many, examples not yet suitable for public mention from which one might deduce an eligible theory. Hollywood is too discouraging, even though successful marriages blaze forth, and everyone remarks, with doubtful surprise, when a literary marriage does not end on the rocks quickly enough.

It is therefore with a sense of great timidity that I again let myself be lassoed into introducing a wife-written book. I

call upon these hosts of the great with no implications of personal comparison, but merely to plead that what has been done successfully by these should not be lightly discredited in us. We can't help it. None of the arguments for limitation of offspring hinted at in this volume and in *The Arts of Leisure* works. The books will appear, most unexpectedly, and with a spaced regularity that is circumscribed only by nature's laws. The publisher urges a foreword, and the author seems eager to acclaim the legitimacy of the relationship between myself and the "blessed event." Perhaps that is why she has quoted me so copiously; so that I may not be able to disagree with it or disclaim it. In her own behalf, her modesty is misleading only in the twist given the title, *In* Quest *of Contentment*. She is a natural enough mother to prove, in its character and make-up, that she has found it.

Sydney Greenbie.

Castine, Maine,
October, 1936.

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IN QUEST OF CONTENTMENT

When You Can't Laugh It Off—Introduction

TIME was when a man might take some comfort in his miseries. Then the tourist en route through this vale of tears looked on washouts and blowouts alike as so many attentions from the Heavenly Father, sent to strengthen a man and try his fitness for that Paradise to which he journeyed. And clearly marked on his roadmap, like a shining star, and drawing nearer every day, was that City where God would wipe away all tears from his eyes and there would be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, for "the former things are passed away."

Now, there is no more heaven for us at the end of the trip, at least not a heaven so near and so childishly simple. If you cannot make heaven out of your own house and garden, you are out of luck—now, and probably for evermore. But to make heaven for one's self is no easy matter. He who would take over the responsibility of God and the angels must have more education in the great art of being happy than most of us are at present furnished with.

Some popular sages speak as if it were easy to be happy. All you have to do is to say that you are happy, and you are. Say, "Day by day, in every way, I am growing better and better." It doesn't work? Then, "Smile, smile, smile."

There are some forlorn and grouchy states of mind that undoubtedly yield to a little smiling. But most of our troubles are deeper and require stronger medicine if not surgery. Day by

day in every way one does not grow healthier and less fat unless one does a great deal more about it than say so. One cannot dispose of disappointed ambition, tortured conscience, and remembered heartbreak—all in one sentence. We may smile, but smiles pay no bills. We can't always laugh our jobs back, nor jolly the wolf and the sheriff.

Within the last few years, of course, there have been many specific causes of unhappiness arising out of the depression which will disappear with better times. Yet now, when a few enthusiastic souls see on the horizon another age of prosperity, many are strangely dubious. They aren't happy now, but they remember that they were even more bleakly unhappy amidst the gin bottles and knee-length skirts of the great-profit era. They were making such a noise then that they did not know how little of a good time they were having. Now, in retrospect, they seem to realize it, and yet they do not know what it is that they now desire. At this point the doctors of leisure appear with a lot of pretty new playthings. "Forget it," they say. "Amuse yourself. See the new hobbyhorse. Get on it and take a ride, and you will soon be miles away from the nasty old troubles." You take a ride. Perhaps it helps a little. But is it enough?

2

There is in modern living a widespread discontent, a malaise which is often mental rather than physical. The great crude agonies that have filled so much of human history have been largely abolished in modern and well-organized states. One has only to travel in the interior of such a country as China to realize how much we have outgrown—the omnipresent filth, the plague, war, and famine. Even with the memories of the World War fresh in our minds, we can say that, at least on this blessed American continent north of the Rio Grande, we know nothing of such war as has gone on for generations in part of Europe, Africa, and Asia—unorganized and sporadic warfare, personally and brutally cruel.

None of us is likely to walk out some morning and come back with his ears and nose cut off because he happened to fall in with a band of soldiers. I have seen dead men strung from telegraph poles in Mexico and rows of human heads on sticks outside a Chinese village. I have seen the gray faces and great eyes of starvation, not individually but in hordes—but not in the United States, not in Northwestern Europe, not in Japan or Siam. All these evils of primitive and disorganized society persist in spots in the best modern states. Some slums outdo a Chinese village in filth, lacking even the sunshine which glows there all day, and bandits and war lords are no match for our kidnapers. Yet the fact remains that great masses of men have been lifted out of these conditions. Despite the thunder of war on the horizon, most of us are likely to live out our lives in something remotely resembling human comfort.

But among groups of men who have never been safe and rarely been comfortable, there has often been a gaiety and buoyancy of life which modern people seem to lack. One seldom finds among barbaric tribes or those in the earlier stages of culture such a plaint as this, which ushered in the modern era of science and industry and has grown more poignant with the years:

The world is too much with us. Late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.
Little we see in Nature which is ours.
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon.

Or this:

the world which seems
To lie before us like a world of dreams
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Through all our literature and art, wherever men are articulate at all, there runs this sound of wailing and complaint. Men are not inwardly comfortable in modern life. They are confused and uneasy. They are afraid as they never were before. There is no longer a God that is surely their refuge, and beneath them there are no everlasting arms.

3

Yet happiness is still as indestructible as sunshine. One does not have to manufacture happiness. One does not have to chase it in cars, or buy it with gold, or lock it away as securities in a vault. One has only to take away immediate pain, and instantly happiness flows in, like the tide among the reeds, soft, imperceptible, not to be stayed. For happiness is the proper condition of organic life. There are many kinds and degrees of happiness, from the ecstasy of romantic love to the simple contentment of sleep and feeding. But is not each a truly normal condition, for the time being, of the complex and mysterious life within us? Aristotle observed that the sensation of living must be in itself a joy; else why should men cling to life? In physical pain, in poverty, in disgrace, in abandonment by the beloved, something still is left that is better than nothing—and that something is life. We pay our tribute to the joy of living in the passionate efforts we make to preserve ourselves in danger, in our tears over the still, unsuffering dead. And if life, however abused and thwarted, is itself a joy, what shall we say of the joy self-realized that steals on us through every rift in the day's struggle?

There is hardly anything which one customarily does that does not come to have in the end its subtle addition of pleasure. The familiar seat in the restaurant is cushioned with the comfort of the other times when we have sat there. Our bedroom has a still, secret restfulness, as if the sleep of many

nights were compounded there, like money put out at interest. It matters not what country a man is born into—that country becomes beautiful and desirable to him above all others, saturated with the happiness of his fathers, reduplicated in the joys of his race. So universal is this fine essence of pleasure that it even attaches itself to our own inadequacies and the limitations of our environment, so that when the time comes to relinquish a chain that has galled us, we are sometimes sorry to have it go.

Nevertheless, with happiness always there, ready to sift in at any crack, most of us manage with great success to be miserable. The enemies of happiness are as numerous as the pests that eat our gardens. If you escape the mildew and the blight, there is some fat little worm all ready to nibble at the fresh green leaf of your joy. Unhappiness multiplies as poisons in the body. It hides like ghosts in the cellars of consciousness. It is spread like gangsters and racketeers and financial manipulators through the whole of our cracked and creaking social system. We have with us, not only the aboriginal difficulties of the human race, but a lot of new plagues for which man has hitherto been too busy or too ignorant to find names. One suffers now, not only from starvation, but from vitamin deficiency; not only from the cruelty of foes and the treachery of friends, but from complexes and repressions.

Yet, if all those who are weary and heavy-laden could cast their burdens in one heap, the contents of this monstrous pile could be sorted into three piles, labeled respectively: *sickness*, *lack of love*, and *money*, with a few things left unclassified but all of the same gray, amorphous shape. In other words, if you are miserable, the chances are that you are not well, or that you cannot find or get along with lover, family, mate, or friend or at least some one to appreciate your talents, or that you lack money for actual needs or social satisfactions, or—you are just bored. The great disasters and losses of life usually affect us in our physical health, our love, or our pocket-book. Such

complex and purely mental agonies as tortured conscience, disappointed ambition, or loss of religious faith probably derive their intense power to hurt from the points where they touch our love life or our means of livelihood.

Over and above the positive agonies, beyond the specific and concrete frustrations, there may be a general condition which expresses itself as boredom or lack of faith and purpose in life. You may be happy if you are healthy, wealthy, loving and loved—and not too dumb—but then again you may not. The general sense of something insufficient in life is not one of these immediate pains which, when taken away, leave room for happiness to flow in. It is pervasive and intangible. It takes the buoyancy out of health when you seem to have it, the glow out of love when it caresses you, the security out of money when your purse is loaded with it. When civilization has successfully tackled the real sources of misery, there may still be this mediocrity of sensation and feeling and purpose which falls far short of happiness but is not easily attributable to any one cause. It is a kind of general deficiency in culture and self-discipline.

Some would say that it is lack of religion, but religion itself is a great cultural complex, offering goals to the imagination and the emotions, techniques of self-discipline, forms of personal expression through ritual and behavior, comradeship in human effort. The psychologist would say that it is due to infantilism, failure of the individual's thoughts and feelings to grow up to the actual conditions of his life, but is that not just another way of saying it is lack of culture and self-discipline? The social historian might say that it is due to maladjustment between the ideas and modes of behavior inherited from the past and the demands of the present. This is still another way of describing lack of culture—at least of a culture sufficient to the living needs of the present.

This insufficiency of our present culture patterns is obvious. Man's psychic equipment is as out-of-date as Noah's ark. We lumber along with attitudes and faiths thousands of years old,

mossy religions, timeworn ethical codes, outmoded social designs, discredited metaphysical and economic propositions of all sorts. This makes not only for mental distress, it makes for physical pain and practical disaster. We are always doing the wrong things because we are under the wrong impressions. Believing what Grandpa told us, we are always thinking that life is the way it isn't. Where we have been told that the ground is solid, we step into a bog. Where we expect to make money, we are faced with a deficiency judgment. To actual pain and loss we add the perpetual humiliation of outraged expectations.

4

The secret of happiness, which seems implicit in organic life and is apparently known to the rose and the butterfly, has been lost by man. That special intelligence by which he differs from all other life he has widely used to make himself miserable. His capacity for making his own world instead of taking the world as it comes as plants and animals do, his purposive striving, which makes him co-worker with God in creating himself and interfering with the natural habits of everything else, have been used less to make heaven than to make hell. At present our own machinery is running away with us. Sometimes it is not fitted to our real needs, desires, and notions of ourselves, and more often we are simply not educated up to the machinery. No child can be trusted to do anything right the first time, and psychologically we are but children in a world in which some of the conditions are new in the experience of the human race. In the simplest art, the most elementary game, the beginner always starts by making mistakes. So in this game of living, in our shining modern world, we can't trust ourselves to be happy. We have to be taught.

Yet we are all strangely ashamed of wishing to be happy. Sometimes we think it is naïve not to know how. Sometimes we think happiness is beneath us. We should wish, instead,

to be good. Someone who has had a chance to know a little and see a little in this great world should stop sticking his thumb in his mouth and hiding in the platitudes of the past, as in Mama's skirts, when asked whether he doesn't want to be happy. So, in this little book, I make bold to be one intellectual child that has stopped being bashful. I think that, if we could teach happiness, it would be the true education. For happiness is the one lesson we keep studying all our lives. Day after day we return to the soiled and blotted page of experience, striving to decipher that one formula which, when learned, will promote us to ecstasy. Perhaps there is no one formula. But there is a good deal of recent knowledge which encourages us to believe that we no longer have to be miserable in all the ways which the fathers have made holy.

Borrowing, then, from the current teachings of the biologists, the psychologists, and the economists what an intelligent layman might make his own, and translating it in terms of a good deal of miscellaneous experience up and down the world, let us talk of the joys of men, real and imaginary, and the uses and abuses of pain. To be truly happy, one must neither fear pain nor minimize its importance. Pain is the greatest of man's teachers and the gateway to his highest experience. Supreme human joy can be reached only by way of it. To set forth in quest of contentment in these uneasy times is not necessarily to find it, but one is bound to find much that is good and interesting by the way. And, perhaps, this is one case in which it really is better "to travel hopefully than to arrive."

Contentment in Health

There's so much that no one would care to miss
In a world so quaintly outfitted as this—
Such floors for a dance, such lips for a kiss,
And all to end so soon.

It's best to keep healthy and fit for fun,
And leap with a laugh to the short home-run,
Nor waste one hour of summer sun
In crying for the moon.

The Lusts of the Flesh—I

MAN thinks he is better than his clay. Something there is in him which resents being tied to earth by a stomach and a sewage system. From earliest times he has believed himself to be only a temporary tenant of this shanty of blood and bone, forced to remain in it only till he can grow wings and fly away.

This is probably a primitive notion. Advancing knowledge may one day reconcile us to our own flesh and blood. But meanwhile this habit of feeling superior to our own bodies, of despising, neglecting, and being ashamed of them is inherent in all our thoughts about ourselves. It vulgarizes love. It degrades beauty. It throws the shadow of guilt on the joy of the senses. It keeps us dragging about a lot of pains and inconveniences which are long out-of-date. The early Christian faced martyrdom with heaven opening before his eyes. But we keep facing it for no particular reason—every time we wear a pair of tight shoes or hobble down town on high heels; every time we overeat or wake up with a headache the morning after; every sultry July night in New York City when the masculine half of us sits down to dinner in a woolen jacket.

For the habit of ignoring the most immediate and obvious source of unhappiness, the sensations of one's own body, is very old and very widespread. Plato likened man to a charioteer, trying to manage two horses—one a winged, gentle, white horse, the soul; the other a great, black, stumbling

brute, the body. Marcus Aurelius looked forward to death as a deliverance from the need "to serve and tend this vile cottage; so much the viler by how much that which ministers to it doth excel; the one being rational substance, and a spirit; the other nothing but earth and blood."

So strong is this feeling that it has even crept back into Christianity over its Founder's protest. He who made a supper party the union of Christians with each other and with himself and the washing of a friend's feet the typical act of human service; who turned water into wine; who set out a picnic on the grass for the people who followed him, and returned from the grave to broil fish for breakfast for his friends; who was called a winebibber and the friend of publicans and sinners; who complained that he came among men eating and drinking, but that they would not dance when he fiddled the tune; who preferred a lunch in the wheat fields to keeping Sunday, and liked some fallen women better than some preachers and professors—even He has been made the patron of man's determination to make himself miserable in the flesh. There is probably not a nerve in the human body which has not been tortured in His name.

2

What is the cause of this? It seems impossible to tell. Man's abysmal stupidity about himself baffles all science. It was partly due, no doubt, to the fact that in the ignorance in which man has lived till the present and in the abuses he has had to suffer from his own kind, a great deal of physical suffering just had to be endured. There was nothing else to do with it—no knowledge of the causes of disease, no control over circumstance. Women in the horrors of primitive childbirth, the slave under the lash, the prisoner in the torture chamber might well forget the body and despise its pains. They could feel the power to do so welling up from within with a fearful joy. They could conquer in the spirit what they were helpless before in the body. So they split off this power of will, this

dreaming of heaven and heroic reward, and thought of themselves as double, one part winged, immortal, and haughty, looking down on the poor writhing clay. And men are not yet so safe in this world of woe that they dare to lose this resource wholly.

Another source of this abuse of the body is man's age-long struggle with his own fertility. The healthy and beautiful body desires to propagate itself and attracts other healthy and beautiful bodies to this end without regard to property, family, or existing state of matrimonial servitude. But society has been organized from the beginning around man's refusal to countenance Nature's happy-go-lucky scheme of mating. Hence it was better not to be healthy and beautiful. Indeed there are still people who see behind every pretty face a scarlet woman. They trust only the ugly to be good.

Moreover, man in hordes and in his domestic and urban warrens has often been quite properly disgusting to himself. There are problems of communal health, of personal cleanliness, of the disposal of waste, which could never be solved till the advent of modern plumbing, sanitation, and sewage. That ancient and ammoniac smell of the present Chinese city was the smell of Athens, of Jerusalem, even of eighteenth century London. One cannot look too closely into the privacies behind the gaudy shell of Versailles or inquire how the custom of using incense in churches arose. Commonplace as our hot baths, our drains, our materials for cleansing seem, they are one of the last achievements of civilization. Religion long antedated plumbing, and philosophy the invention of soap. So our inherited thinking is colored by the necessity of making men forget what they did not have the invention to remedy.

Nor is this discontent with the body wholly unreasonable. Even in comparison with the lower organisms man's body is not entirely a satisfactory creation. An intelligent animal cannot but envy something which the plant world possesses—the grace and fragrance of organic self-sustenance, the decent

concealment and modesty in feeding, the lack of urgency and obviousness in the disposal of waste, the painlessness and abounding beauty of reproduction. When the animal world freed itself from imprisonment in space, which never permits the plants to move from the spot where they are rooted, and escaped in the liberty of feet and wings, it carried off a great load of responsibilities and messy inconveniences.

Man's desires and impulses sometimes tragically overreach his bodily mechanism. Always he has wanted to fly. One of his earliest inventions was a set of wings fastened to a boat, with which he might skim over the waters like a sea bird. When he imagined himself delivered from the body of this death and freed to be truly himself forever, he saw himself as an angel—that is, as a man with wings. And now, at last, with the invention of the airplane, he can soar into that blue empyrean, whither his dreams have always turned, and beyond which he has so often sought his true home.

On his original discontent with his own body, man has reared a vast structure of material civilization, supplementing his hands with tools, supplementing his feet with wheels. Possibly this sense of the imperfection of the body is some impulse of advancing and self-perfecting life, the meaning of which is not yet clear to us. Theologians have believed that it was a sign that man was destined for some greater end beyond the grave. Even an agnostic might believe that it is a sign that organic life as a whole is bound for some goal beyond its present achievement in the body and brief life of man.

3

Yet, the original fountain of joy is still in the organic life. Joy sings in the dance of the blood when it is wholesome. It vibrates in every pore that meets the sun and air of heaven. Happiness is only a kind of June day in this inner world whose climate is created, enclosed, and conditioned by the responses of the body. When the organic answer to whatever it is that comes to us from outside is positive and harmonious, we have

a sense of life abounding, which we call joy. Whenever this inner response is negative or confused, we say that we are unhappy.

Joy is the normal condition of organic life. The twitter of birds attests it at dawn, and the burble of the baby in his crib. Even at night, when other creatures are asleep, the treetoad and the bullfrog and the katydid continue to testify, trilling and booming and chirping their delight in living to the majestic unheeding pageant of the stars. Fabre sees in the "violin of the locust, the bagpipe of the tree frog, the cymbals of the cacan only a means of expressing the joy of life, the universal joy which every animal species celebrates in its own way."

This joy is the normal condition of man no less than of the grasshopper, and the baby feels it and shouts his delight even before he can talk. But it is choked in the schoolroom and blinded by the teachings of the good at adolescence; and for the primal activities and scenes which feed it there are substituted subways and motorcars, high buildings and paved streets, the candy counter and the ice-cream parlor, the cigarette and the cocktail. These inventions have their own charms, and civilized conditions protect from some pains and dangers and encourage some refinements of sensation. But it is fatally easy to lose through them a simple intensity and contentment of health and well-being. Now and then a city person, exhilarated by a picnic or a day in the country, is shocked, on returning, to realize at what a tepid and flavorless level of vitality he usually lives. And with all the joys and excitements of urban or domestic existence, we have never been able to invent a substitute for the warm, self-sufficient, unquestioning happiness that comes with being a healthy person actively engaged in primitive activity out-of-doors. Indeed, a capacity for really enjoying the purely human inventions and activities, in our cities, in the interior of our homes, in society, depends on maintaining this underlying condition of organic health.

The health of the body is happiness in its simplest and most universal form. Whatever measure of health one has over and above what is necessary to keep one going is present in the consciousness as joy and is often obvious to the beholder as "personality" or "personal magnetism." Imperfect physical states are known to us in a general diminution of pleasure before they definitely assert themselves as illness. A great many people go through life so unwell that they are seldom really happy, yet not ill enough for the doctor. As the personal vitality rises, the world grows brighter and more beautiful; the possible amusements and delights increase; the objects and people to be loved multiply; the various unpleasantnesses shrink in size or number or change their faces and become pleasant. Many of the sports in which men take the keenest pleasure—such as swimming and skiing—are a conquest, through health and activity, over conditions which to the sick or inactive mean discomfort, pain, and even death. As the personal vitality sinks, the world narrows and darkens and the number of disagreeable and painful things in it increases.

The eye of health is keyed to beauty, the eye of sickness to ugliness. The ear of health hears music, the ear of sickness noise. Metaphysically considered, this is a very curious fact. It tempts one to believe that those who say that all evil is illusion are right. If only the lowly physical life, the life which we share with the woodchuck and the cabbage—which the soul disdains—if only this life were intense enough, we should see and feel no evil. This is what mystics have surmised of the life of God and the angels. Perhaps it was what Christ meant by becoming as a little child, or being as the lilies of the field or the fowls of heaven.

4

The goodness and fulness of organic life on which the consciousness of happiness depends is, however, compatible with great physical handicaps. It consists in the adequate and

harmonious functioning of the mechanism necessary to the continuance of organic life rather than anatomical and muscular perfection. Unhappiness is more often due to indigestion, constipation, or something wrong with the glands than to an injury of eye or ear, arm or leg. It has always been observed that joylessness and all its manifestations in ill temper and pessimism is a poisonous secretion of the internal organs. They used to say that an unhappy man was "bilious," that his view of life was "jaundiced," or at least that he was a little "liverish" this morning. Obviously, in such persons as Franklin Roosevelt radiance of organic life may survive severe bodily crippling. Friend and foe alike must grant his buoyant sweetness of temper and capacity to find and to make life agreeable. That a woman born to beauty of face and a rich emotional life should be a hunchback seems one of the cruelest of physical tragedies. Yet one could name more than one such woman who seems happy beyond the happiness of her normal sisters. Among the blind there is sometimes a bland contentment of spirit, lovely as moonlight on a quiet pool.

These are exceptions, and bodily crippling too often cripples the spirit, souring it, and making it at its worst perversely cruel. But the exceptions show what human life is capable of. Under ordinary conditions it is impossible to use our capacity even for physical happiness. Whole areas of sensation remain untouched. When happiness is at one entrance quite shut out, it is still possible, by making use of what is left, to build a richness and harmony of sensation greater than that of the average person. The immense unused reserves of physical capacity are the solace of the handicapped. Stimulated by the maiming of one power or another, limited to a careful regimen in matters in which most people waste themselves, forced to organize food and rest and work, to develop special skills and adaptations, the organism may develop a sensitiveness and activity and personal control of life that makes it more really happy than it might have been otherwise.

5

Modern science and modern means of controlling our environment reconcile the old war between body and spirit and make man one of the great choir of living things that praise God in the flesh. We have built our moral life too long on an old and discarded physiology. There is no need of mortifying the flesh, for fortune and the weather are likely to do enough of that. The flesh needs comfort; and the senses, culture. If subduing the lusts of the flesh means, specifically, being wary of what one puts into one's mouth and whom one makes love to, it simplifies the problem of behavior to say so. But that sort of wisdom is not mortifying the flesh. It is merely keeping it out of future trouble.

To keep an equilibrium of health and well-being, to build physical reserves which may be translated into happiness, efficiency, and good will is far from easy in our complex civilization. The rules are not absolute, and we are not always in control of circumstances. But a beginning may be made by simply changing our point of view on the subject—by ceasing to disdain our organic origins, by solving as best we can the various problems of healthy, comfortable, and cleanly living, with a good conscience and something of artistic pride. Our fathers looked down on the body and the problems of physical life because, actually, they often did not know what to do about them. We are more fortunate. Science and hygiene cannot yet do everything. But they have brought us to the point where more of the spiritual satisfactions of life may now be attained by really putting one's mind on the body than by taking it off.

It gives dignity and security to all existence if we can face our biological origins without pride or avoidance. Organic life is itself a fact as august as man's own perennial dream of immortality. This vitality in blood and bone flowering in your own particular consciousness did not begin with your first squall. It has had a continuous existence since paleozoic time

and comes trailing clouds of glory from an illimitable past. Something you now think of as *you* antedated on earth the coming of Christ. It knew Buddha, and was old at the time of Confucius. It survived the Ice Age and came triumphantly down to you through plague, war, and famine. It may go on through countless ages in the generations of your children. It is a parcel of desires and, too often, a bundle of pains. It is a little out of key with all things as they are and blind and wilful in its tremendous capacity for self-direction. It is, in some obscure way, bound for a goal no other life has reached. But, wherever it can attain to simple organic health, it knows the joy that is common to all good organisms, but translates it, through that power of memory and imagination that seems all its own, into a vast, many-colored, many-sided consciousness which easily mistakes itself for God. If this is the soul, it is no enemy of the body and certainly not its casual tenant. If it is only earth of this earth, dust of this dust, what of that? For dust is a mystery we have yet to understand.

Suppose You Do Starve!—II

ONE may cut off an arm or pluck out an eye and still go merrily into the kingdom of happiness, but there is one center of the body with which one tampers to one's peril. From it rise more fumes of melancholy than from any other.

The ancients thought that the soul had a material seat, and, with great perspicacity of observation, they placed it in that lowly region just below the belt, where the stomach and the alimentary canal pressed heavily upon it and the centers of sex lay not far away. But the consciousness of space and time and the limits of reality—which we call the intelligence—they located a long distance away, in the head, so far away that it had very little influence on wars and seditions in this quarter. For it is characteristic of any misery arising on these frontiers that it seems co-extensive with the universe, without limit in time or space. The fumes of indigestion darken the sun and discolor the day. Constipation presses on the consciousness like chaos and old night. A clogging of the humble processes of this territory results in a hopeless inertia. And often the victim cannot localize his ill or refer it to its proper source. It is a wise man that can distinguish a *Weltschmerz* from a stomach-ache.

This barbaric province is ruled by a tyrant who manages to reach out and annoy the whole personality and lead it into foolish ways. How many people in our civilization are en-

slaved by a perpetual hunger that has nothing to do with the need of the body for sustenance! They stop at a drugstore and must have an ice-cream soda. They call on a friend and must eat a cake. They go for a walk and must lug a picnic basket. Nor is it any better in Europe, where one cannot sit down without needing a bottle of wine or a whisky and soda or a glass of beer.

As Babbitt sat at dinner with his friends, "everything was dim except his stomach, and that was a bright scarlet disturbance. 'Had too much grub; oughtn't to eat this stuff,' he groaned—while he went on eating, while he gulped down a chill and glutinous slice of ice-cream brick, and coconut cake oozy as shaving cream. He felt as if he had been stuffed with clay; his body was bursting; his throat was bursting; his brain was hot mud; and only with agony did he continue to smile as became a host on Floral Heights.

"He would, except for his guests, have fled out-of-doors and walked off the intoxication of food, but in the haze which filled the room they sat forever, talking, talking while he agonized, 'Darn fool to be eating all this—not 'nother mouthful,' and discovered that he was again tasting the sticky welter of ice cream on his plate. . . . It was ecstasy to escape from the table, from the torture of the straight chair, and loll on the davenport. The others, from their fitful unconvincing talk, their expressions of being slowly smothered, seemed to be suffering from the toil of social life and the horrors of good food as much as himself."

In the past, some social groups have had an instinctive reaction against gluttony, comparable to the moral reaction of many people against alcohol and tobacco. Among the ancient Gauls, we are told, there was a "belt of agility" in the hands of the chief. At every new moon the lads of each tribe "come to the chief and try on the belt to prove that their girth has not broadened with self-indulgence, and that they have proved themselves agile and nimble. Those who cannot hitch the belt around themselves are hissed, are pointed at with derision, and must pay a fine. Accordingly they all

see to their stomachs lest they come to look like a leathern bottle on two skittles." In the Middle Ages gluttony was counted one of the seven deadly sins, more deadly than adultery. Dante consigned the gluttons to a circle of hell several degrees lower than that in which the adulterous lovers were blown hand in hand on the dark winds of their remembered passions.

But in the generations immediately preceding ours, with the great increase in the food supply and the withdrawal of large masses of men from the groups that maintained physical fitness for purposes of defense, men have lost all moral feeling about this appetite. Most men now do not really mind human swine. They smile at them, but there is no condemnation in the smile. Gluttony has been so long exemplified to us in good fathers and mothers and amiable bosses and church deacons that it has grown positively holy. When, in provincial and Puritan groups all over the world, among the Chinese no less than the folk of the Bible Belt, other sensuous delights are taboo—wine, cigarettes, games, dances, and the lighter and more irresponsible forms of love-making—food takes their place. The only amusement left is gorging. In some centers in the United States the only recreations are going to church and eating. Now, a number of influences are set against our inherited perversion—the teachings of the dietitians, the dogmas of the faddists, which represent a genuine folk reaction against a folk evil, the self-interest of the life insurance companies, and the aesthetic and social consciousness of the well to do. But so potent is social habit, reinforced by the propaganda of all who have food to sell, that anyone who wants to keep health, grace, and a wasitline into old age has to give more attention to it than ought to be necessary in a civilized society.

2

Hunger, not sex, is the lowest of the appetites, and the greatest debauchery is the habit of just eating. It makes no difference whether the food is wholesome or not; if you do not

need it, it is poison. Even alcohol has a higher appeal than food, involving, as it does, some transfiguring of the imagination. It is true that the gourmandism of Rome, which found its reaction in the spare diets and fasts of early Christianity, is lacking among us. What is common is a general slight excess and a fat contentment with it.

"We dig our graves with our teeth," says the proverb. If that is so, "O Death, where is thy sting?" For there are jolly people whose energy and zest for life seem to rise triumphant over every added pound—so many of them, in fact, that there is a general impression that fat people are cheerful. It would be more truthful to say that cheerful people get fat. Most people overeat, but only the vigorous and harmonious organism can stow the surplus away in a form remotely useful. The degree to which one puts on weight is the degree to which one possesses that easy vitality which is the secret of joy. But what a use to make of it! And, one by one, according to the statistics of the life-insurance companies, these cheery stuffers are mowed down, leaving the lean and the dyspeptic to collect endowment insurance and dance at their grandchildren's weddings.

But only a few of the great fraternity of stuffers are, as a matter of fact, cheerful, or even apparently healthy. Not all the extra food makes fat. Much of it makes fumes of discontent, laziness and ennui, slack wills, dull minds, sexual impotency and frigidity. When we have paid with health and beauty for too much daily bread, who can measure what else we have paid—the love that passed us by, the opportunity which slipped through our fingers, the wealth with which our sluggish footsteps never caught up—the glory, the poignancy, of the lost sensations of our torpid days?

3

All problems of health and good living at present are complicated by the fact that what we really act by is not modern knowledge but very old popular superstitions. The trouble

with your friend John, who did everything the dietitians told him and landed in the hospital, is not the advice of the scientists but his own mossy interpretation of it. Most people live in the age of the food taboos, or else they have just arrived at the era of patent medicine. Faced with some modern observation such as the undesirability of much white bread, they immediately want to throw it out entirely. Or, advised to drink something wholesome like tomato juice, they immediately think of it as a patent medicine that will cure all ills. So in this matter of overeating we are influenced by the long tradition of folk story and literature, for which starvation is a tragic condition that immediately tempts a tale-teller to deck it out in his most harrowing words. From the fact that death by starvation was such a really tempting subject for authors, we have derived the notion that human life is like a fire in a furnace. Unless it is stoked every day it will immediately go out. Many people think that only three meals—or at most six or eight—stand between them and death. If they have no lunch, they feel "faint" and know that life is already ebbing.

Victorian literature presents some pitiful pictures of starvation closing in within four or five days. There is poor Jane Eyre reduced to ravenous degradation within a week. One of the ladies in a story by Poe fades out completely and very touchingly in four days. Like much that our fathers wept over, this is all very sad but it isn't true. Once I went without food for six days, and danced all night on the night of the seventh day on nothing but a sandwich and some orange juice, and drove home very cheerfully at dawn, none the worse for the starvation or the dance. Many people have suffered more from a banquet.

This panicky clutch on our daily bread and the association with its loss or lessening of a great many miserable but largely imaginary states of mind is one of the legacies from the fathers that keep us from facing life with that courage without which there is no lasting joy. When people are picked up in a miser-

able state after several days of being lost at sea or in the woods, or without money in the great city, what they are suffering from is not the effects of starvation but the effects of fear. Malnutrition is a serious condition, and not uncommon, but even among the poor and unfortunate it is more often due to a lack of proper variety and proportions of food than to lack of quantity. To offer the poor fellows in the breadline nothing but coffee and a ham sandwich is to fasten malnutrition upon them, no matter how much of this fodder they are free to eat. Malnutrition is found among people who never went without a meal.

The suffering of the Depression was probably greatly intensified by the fact that so many people faced it in the ignorance and cowardice of our inherited food habits. In a speech before the Bangor Parent-Teacher Association, Doctor Clarence Little made the novel but sensible suggestion that education should fortify the child against the mischances he might have to face in this anything but stable world. One of the mischances he mentioned was the possible lack of food for a period. It was a disconcerting suggestion to make in our fat and overfed land. But until we can guarantee everyone the wherewithal for breakfast, dinner, and supper for life, it is better not to let children grow up with the notion that either their happiness or their health hangs on three meals a day.

Along with the terror which the possible lack of food inspires we have also inherited a false notion of hunger. What we call hunger is an agony beneath the belt which appears punctually three times a day whether one has done anything to use up the last orgy of food or not. This desperation in the interior cannot usually be allayed by fruits or vegetables. These seem to intensify it. What the sufferer requires is something to make him feel "full"—meat swimming in gravy, good white bread and butter, waffles and syrup, pie and ice cream. Between meals a chocolate bar or a sundae will bring relief.

This localized discomfort in the stomach is not the genuine call of the organism for replenishment. It is only a habit, and a bad one at that. When it is a positive pang, a kind of grinding misery, as it is with many, it is often the result of habitual overeating or bad eating and first cousin to indigestion. Food undoubtedly dopes the uneasiness for a while, but it is none the less dope. When this discomfort is a nervous preoccupation, a kind of subconscious hunt for something one would like to eat—one doesn't know what—a lack of satisfaction even after a full meal, it may possibly be due to the lack of some one element in the diet. Sometimes perpetual hunger is a carbohydrate habit, as insistent as an appetite for alcohol. The organism has got into the way of depending on brief spurts of fake energy derived from bread, or more often from sweets, instead of the true vigor of a properly balanced ration.

Sometimes hunger is just a false fear and sense of duty inculcated by parents who struggle with the "child who will not eat" as if he were a tragedy and belabor the conscience with every spoonful of cereal. Often hunger is just idle-mindedness. Meals are pleasant things. Food tastes good. And life otherwise is dull. Besides, many people are used to being stuffed. Unless the interior presses upon the belt, they don't feel natural, and make haste to restore the doped and torpid state which they take for the normal condition. Hunger for food may occasionally stand for a hunger for something else. An intelligent young instructor in a university, analyzing for a physician the distress of long continence, confessed that he had found that the pleasure of eating dulled the desire for socially less attainable pleasures. A good many others have found this out, though they do not always recognize it.

Few who have tried for the first time to follow a reducing schedule or a diet prescribed by a physician would underestimate this appetite. It is as insistent as the thirst for the bottle, and as unreasonable. It is often very complex, made up of morbid physical conditions and psychic substitutes for other joys and deep-seated but sometimes forgotten ideas inculcated

in childhood. Many who call loudly on others to refuse that cocktail have not themselves the nerve to refuse a piece of cake.

4

While food is a daily comfort and an ultimate necessity, starvation has its uses. Everyone ought to know how to starve on occasion with a free mind and a high heart. An empty stomach is not necessarily unhappy. Few people in our overstuffed civilization are allowed to know the real exhilaration of going for a while without preoccupying all the organic forces with digestion. But few who have once delivered themselves from the cowardly and degrading slavery to the beast beneath the belt would care to go back to it.

A sharp curtailment of food when there are other causes of distress frequently lightens the burden and helps the spirit to rally. The early symptoms of an illness will often vanish before a determined omission of meals. Very hard work of any character, or emotional strain, can best be borne by him who travels light. At times when one needs the best that the spirit has to offer, it is wise not to bury it beneath beefsteak and pie. The human body is not dependent on an absolutely regular stoking every day. It has reserves which will carry it for some time. Even loss of weight below normal need not be serious. There is often something stimulating in using up some of the reserves and then building new reserves out of new food. And the loss of any weight above the minimum is a pure blessing. When one omits the superfluous food, there is a diminution in those functions of elimination that the higher man hates most to think about. The flesh grows sweet and its emanations cleanly. We shall hear less of B.O. and halitosis when human beings cease to be walking garbage cans.

Anyone who has nerve to omit food for a few days will probably suffer the first day something akin to the agony of a drunkard deprived of his bottle. The second day and perhaps the third he may feel dispirited and weak, not because of the

lack of food, but because of the removal of the social comfort of mealtime and the general shock to habit. But sooner or later he comes upon that experience which has led men in so many civilizations to value a few days of starvation as the introduction to the "spiritual" life. The thought of food practically disappears from his mind. He feels light and happy, as if his heels had suddenly sprouted Mercury's wings. There is a general brilliance of sensation, as if both sight and hearing were intensified, and if, as most often happens when the experience of going without food is an accidental discovery, he is in a position of uncertainty or danger, lost in a wild country, deprived of human help, he may often have a wonderful accession of faith and courage. He may thereafter engage in hard outdoor activity for several days, enjoying it all the time, and feeling no ill effects later.

Once before when I ventured some remarks of this sort, a learned gentleman who was asked by the publisher to read the manuscript wrote in the margin, "Faddist!" I am no faddist. I am merely a traveler. People who sit all their lives in chairs don't know everything. No traveler or adventurer would be worth his dinner when he got it if his curiosity did not occasionally precipitate him into situations where three meals a day were not forthcoming. It was on the ashy slopes of Fujiyama that I first began to wonder whether what we call hunger was not just a bad habit. It had been raining when we reached the little Japanese inn at the foot. It continued to rain while we telephoned intermittently to the top beyond the clouds to know whether the storm was breaking. It rained the next day and the next. Japanese food grew so intolerable that we made shift to do without it. Finally, toward sunset, the rain stopped and the clouds that veiled the summit grew rosy red. So up we climbed, straight into the sunset and through it, and saw the clouds drop away below us, silvery in the light of the rising moon, and the great shoulder of the mountain rise dark above us into the clear green sky. We had been told that we should find food in the

resthouses strung along the rising heights, their lights gleaming red, height upon height above us, like coals. But the rain had evidently prevented them from being replenished; for the ham sandwich which we finally ferreted out tasted like carrion. So again we abjured food.

Then food ceased to matter. Up we went, 12,000 feet during the night. We should have been weak with hunger, but we weren't. We should have fainted when we reached the top, but we didn't. I only remember the extraordinary quickening of sensation, the feeling of general brilliance and sustained power, which I have encountered since, when adventure or accident removed the ever-recurring dope of meals. Descending, we precipitated ourselves in long glides through the ash, like children on a toboggan slide, and not till I reappeared at the hotel in Kyoto two or three days later did I remember to be hungry. I think the glory of dawn on that ashen summit, and the wide and shining radiance of the world below that appeared slowly and fitfully through the clouds as we came down, owed something to the fact that all alimentary baggage had been left below. I have often tested this conclusion since, under many circumstances, in many places.

Once when I was saying something of the sort, a man told me his own story. He was a cultivated gentleman, reared in comfort, highly educated, and pursuing an intellectual career with distinction. At one time in his life he had been involved in a lot of trouble, in bankruptcy and divorce, and, finally, turning over all he had to those who claimed it and determined to be free and to start again, he came to the city. He was a little overweight, depressed, not very well, and though he was still in early middle age, he felt suddenly that he was growing old, that life was ended—it was no use. As he went from place to place seeking something to do, still well-dressed, as many such seekers are, he found his money giving out and no one to turn to in the strange city. As he stood shivering on the platform of the Elevated, looking down into the street and wondering whether he could not just climb

up on the rail and jump, his eye fell on a cheap magazine that some one had dropped on the bench. To distract his thoughts he picked it up. It was one of the gaudy publications of that well-known charlatan who has had, in some matters of food and exercise, the insight of genius. His eye fell on a hyperbolic celebration of the virtues of fasting. He read for a while. Then he pulled out of his pocket his small remaining cash and counted it. "Enough left for a shakedown for a few nights," he thought. "As for food, we will just call it a fast and try it." So, carefully tearing out the article on fasting, he set out to practice it for a month if necessary. "At the end of that time I may be dead," he thought, "but then I probably would have been dead now if this bunk had not distracted my attention."

He lived for days eating nothing, only drinking from public taps. Suddenly he began to feel bright and hopeful. He thought he looked better. This gave him renewed energy. And, of course, before long he found the wherewithal for a dinner.

"That was as near as I ever came to getting religion," he said thoughtfully in telling me this story. "There was something extraordinary in the experience. I date from it a change in my whole grip on life, which has made my latter days far happier in every way than my earlier ones."

In olden times, to men fleeing into the desert from civilization, the exhilaration that follows the first faintness and depression of fasting used to seem a miracle. At such moments men were often converted and thought they saw God. And the astonishing amount of hardship or labor they could then endure without fodder, and without suffering ill effects afterward, made them believe that they were being sustained from above by the bread of the angels.

A prolonged fast is not to be undertaken except under a doctor's care. But anyone can starve healthily for three or four days. Perhaps everyone ought to do without food once in his life, just to break the strings that tie him to potatoes and

gravy. Drastic as it is, it does away with most of the agonies of reducing. It often breaks the habit of being unnecessarily and tiresomely hungry. Running out of food in the course of traveling or camping and subsisting only on adventure and the resources of the spirit adds something to the experience one would not willingly lose. Through a mere accident one touches hands across the centuries with the hermits of old, and the saints. To know rapture one must sometimes forego comfort.

The Festive Arts of Dining—III

OUTSIDE the window there is a birdhouse in an old apple tree, inhabited by a family of swallows who return to it year after year. Four naked little heads protrude from it, scanning the sky. A sail! A sail! A ship on the horizon of that aerial sea! There is a flutter and twitter, a shiver of anticipation, and four little beaks begin to work overtime. Down out of the blue sails mother, pauses a moment to get her bearings, and then is borne smoothly in, laden with her cargo of one worm. What an air of satisfaction she has! Every feather, bristling with assurance, seems to say, "There! I told you God would look after us!"

Among all creatures food seems to release sentiments of gratitude, of security, of peace. The child smiles beatifically over its bottle; the kitten purrs when it has had its milk. Most organisms seem to go on in the faith that life is good, that something beneficent looks out for them, and food when it comes seems an ever-renewed assurance to them that this faith is not in vain. So, at least man puts into words and images a sentiment which seems older than the human soul.

A complex of beautiful arts expresses to man the imaginative and emotional associations of food—music and flowers, linen and silver, the glamour of candlelight, the ceremony of dress, flavor, form, and color in what is eaten, no less than substance. The family table in the simplest home may be the guarantee of companionship, of common security, and of

mutual sharing. The instinctive faith of the living creature that food will come and its gratitude when it does come are transformed at the social board into kindness and courtesy. It has been in all civilizations a graceful act to offer a guest food. You are offering him thereby the very gift of life. Among some warlike tribes it has been forbidden to kill one with whom one has eaten. Christianity has even made a supper the supreme religious rite, in honor of a Master who seems to have had a particularly grateful, hospitable, and friendly feeling about food and drink, always ready to give thanks for a meal, always ready to share whatever he and his friends could come by in their vagabond, picnicking life. So those who share with each other the bread and wine of his last meal are thereby sharing the mysterious suffering and ultimate triumph of the supreme life of the world.

All the refinements of dining are increased by a limitation on that eating that is merely stuffing. The counting of calories removes only an unaesthetic surplus. The modern "protective diet" is set only against the least lovely materials—the bleached flour and sugar, the flesh and fat of dead animals. It serves only to remind us how far we have come from the days when hunters tore the slain animals limb from limb or slaves waited at the grinding place for their measure of meal. The limit of quantity which the doctrine of calories sets is only like the frame of a picture, the prescribed number of feet in a line of poetry. All art loves limits, and cooking and dining no less than sculpture. What is left when you have counted your calories is all the flavor and taste in the world, the cool blandness of cream, the fragrant sweetness of fruits, sweet and sour, crispness and crackling, jellies and salads and cheeses and "lucent sirups tinct with cinnamon."

The great connoisseurs of food, like the great winetasters, have been thoughtful and temperate men. There is the gourmet, who stuffs and grows fat and is precise and ingenious in his pursuit of perverse flavor. But the delight of eating for him is only a commentary on the dullness of all his other hours, and his pleasure little more than the cessation of an

artificially induced pain. Where the body is gross and overgrown, where all the powers are kept busy disposing somehow of surplus grown fetid, there can hardly be delicacy and discrimination in a sense so variable, so dependent on fine physical condition as the sense of smell. And taste is nine-tenths smell. It is the man who learns to sample and savor, to linger and enjoy, to add fragrance to sweet and pungency to sour, to make beautiful the accouterments of food, and summon the social and domestic associations of the past to his board who is truly satisfied and fed on many levels of organic experience.

Once, in a radio broadcast, I remarked that the charm of European social life in the past for the harried American consisted in one thing—the fact that Europeans in general took a long time over their meals. They would sit for hours in cafés, making a bit of pastry or a glass of wine serve for participation in all the social drama of the town—for observation of their fellow men, or conversation with this one and that, for the making of friendships, the beginnings of flirtations, the meeting and parting of lovers. This simple statement drew a long letter from a mother in a little southern town. She had little money to spend on movies and outside entertainment, but she had learned to make the meal a social event for her children, setting the table in delightful ways, planning little surprises, and sitting at the pretty board long afterwards while they told her all about their day at school and talked about life and what they would do when they grew up. It seems a long way from a Paris café to a mother's supper with her children in an American country town. But social chasms that defy books and learning may be bridged by the simple and intimate experience common to all men everywhere.

2

In the art of cookery, which has come down to us from the first discovery of fire are distilled the flavors, both bitter and sweet, of man's long struggle for the more abundant life. One

of the first revolts of civilization against savagery was the revolt against that bloody feasting on those who seemed, to the most tenderhearted men, only their brothers in feathers and fur. So there was not only the cooking of meat, but the attempt to disguise rib and bone altogether. We in the Occident have still so much of the jungle in us that we do not shrink from chickens roasted whole and rare steak oozing with juice like blood. But to the Chinese, one of the earliest of civilized peoples, this is obnoxious. They serve meat in many forms, but always cut up and removed as far as possible from the likeness of the living original.

The fine Chinese cuisine, one of the finest in the world, owes much, too, to the extreme vegetarianism of the Buddhist monks, who not only ate no meat, but forbade milk, butter, eggs, and all animal products. But they scoured the woods for mushrooms and for every kind of succulent stem, stalk, leaf, fruit, nut, and tuber. Delicious and various are the concoctions the monks can still serve you for breakfast, so sweet and savory with vegetable oil that you never even think of butter. The bland and delicately palatable combinations which even Americans enjoy in the Chinese restaurants are directly derived from this early and pious research. In the Orient one may even sup aesthetically on bamboo sprouts and lily bulbs, and very good they are, too. It was the Buddhist monks, they say, who first discovered tea, which has the flavor, the aroma, the comfort and stimulation of the social board, but adds no grossness to the flesh.

The Christian monks of the West were not so ingenious in the arts of civilization, but they turned the savages of Europe from meat to the clear, cool flesh of the creatures of the deep—so that a large number of Christians still eat fish on Friday, in honor of a Lord who was a fisherman. The Christian monks cultivated fruits and vegetables and were wise in the making of cheeses and, one might add, of wines.

The age of meat-eating gave place to the age of bread-eating for other than religious reasons. As society was organized into

large units, as land and forest preserves fell into the hands of a few, men were driven first from their hunting grounds and then from their vegetable patches and their olive and fig trees and herded into great groups as slaves, free laborers, and urban tradesmen. Then there was only one of the many products of nature which could be raised in large quantities, preserved for long periods, and easily transported without refrigeration. This was some kind of grain. So grain became the staff of life, and the diet of slaves. To this day the Japanese coolie eats too much rice, the Italian too much macaroni, the Mexican peon too much corn meal, the Occidental too much wheat. The only other thing that could be kept and transported easily, which could be trusted to give some flavor and excitement to the meal, to represent the values above mere stuffing, the sparkle, the good cheer, the social stimulation, was some kind of alcoholic drink. So wines and beers were consumed in large quantities along with grain, even by our own Puritan fathers. So to Christ and his disciples a meal was wine with bread, and so it is still to the Paris workman sitting on the park bench, nibbling from his long loaf and sipping from his little bottle.

The habit of bread-eating is a hang-over from the first conditions of industrial and urban slavery. Most people coming to America to escape those conditions brought the habit with them, and it grew and flourished with the suitability of our land for the production of grain. Then, to bread-eating was added a new carbohydrate habit—the eating of sugar. Sugar was easy to raise on our continent and became, in terms of calories, one of the cheapest of foods. Through all the great areas of bread-eating in other lands, sweets had been a rarity. Men had to depend on honey and fruits and dates—natural and delicious sweets which could be neither produced nor eaten in excessive quantities. But in America, the juice of the sugar cane oozed like milk and honey in the Promised Land. The typical pioneer lived on mush and molasses and salt pork, and drank rum made from molasses. This is still the diet of the

poor people of the South. It was perhaps the most vicious combination ever discovered in the culinary questings of man.

Behind the dislocations of industry at present, behind the revolutions in Cuba, the world-wide wheat problem, the ploughing in of corn and the slaughtering of hogs, there is a great and almost unconscious battle between a coming civilization and a dying one, with the prize beneath the individual man's belt. More vegetables are to be raised on the ploughed-over wheat fields, more fruit trees planted. There is to be more milk and eggs. It has been estimated, in some of the surveys of famine amidst plenty, that Americans will not be properly fed until the production of vegetables, fruit, and milk is doubled and that of meat and eggs greatly increased.

Social habit must be constantly stimulated to keep up with material progress. Our inherited cuisine is an ingenious invention to overcome the lack of refrigeration and rapid transportation. Once ships scoured the seas, opened the Orient, ran aground against the New World, and initiated the whole modern era in an effort to find spices to disguise the taste of decayed food. Curry and mincemeat are culinary creations of that era. So with our cakes and our pies and our biscuits. They were fancy devices for disguising the monotony of the everlasting flour.

Now, refrigeration and rapid transportation have transformed the picture. Once swift runners went to the top of a mountain in summer and brought down a miraculous gift of snow, a little at a time, to cool a king's goblet. The first Yankee who solved the problem of carrying ice over from winter into summer and taking it around the world lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in the attempt but became, in the end, a rich man and a culture hero. Now this miracle of preserved frost is in the simplest kitchen, behind the gleaming door of the electric icebox. Refrigeration is the greatest culinary discovery since cooking, but we have only begun to make use of it.

In our age, alone, have we come into possession of what men have always imagined would be the last refinement in the art of dining—to have ice in summer, to eat the fruits of the tropics at the firesides of the North, and have perpetual summer pour out on our table her salads and her vegetables, however the wind howls in the chimney and the snow beats upon the window. There is something pathetic in the long struggle of men to encompass this simple abundance. They did the best with what they had and ingeniously associated joy and good cheer with their limitations. This is the reason for that great glorification of wine-drinking which sounds a little hollowly on modern ears, which not all the propaganda of the liquor interests can now restore. We have too much else.

Gorgeous and ingenious were some of the triumphs of cookery in the past—so gorgeous that one forgets the monotony they cover. Here is Merejkowski's description of a ducal feast in the days of Leonardo da Vinci. First came "an enormous salver with a naked Andromeda, made out of capon breasts, chained to a rock of cheese curds, with her deliverer, the winged Perseus, made out of veal. During the meat courses of the dinner, everything was of purple, of gold; during the fish courses it turned to silver, to correspond with the watery element. Silvered loaves of bread, silvered lemons in cups as salad, were served; and finally, on a platter between gigantic sturgeons, lamprons, and sterlets appeared an Amphitrite of the white meat of eels in a nacre chariot, drawn by dolphins over quivering jelly, bluish green, like sea waves, and lighted up from within. After that there was a procession of sweets without end—carvings of marzipan, pistachios, cedar nuts, almonds and burnt sugar, executed after drawings by Bramante, Caradoso, and Leonardo,—Hercules obtaining the golden apples of Hesperides, the fables of Hippolytus and Phaedra, of Bacchus and Ariadne, of Jupiter and Danae—the entire Olympus of the resurrected gods." Very wealthy it sounds, but the simplest dinner table in America may be wealthier.

3

It is not the least among the many triumphs of modern invention over that general mess of material things which our fathers could overcome only through religion and philosophy and the grace of God that the ancient art of cookery can now be so daintily pursued. More and more the men are taking it over, making a sport out of the former labors of women. I know of more than one gentleman who not only cooks you a dinner but serves it as well, realizing the Christian precept that he that is greatest among you should be the servant of all. Very pleasant among American social customs is the parade of the gay ladies and gentlemen from the automobile, at midnight, in their evening dress, into some pretty kitchen for a raid upon the icebox. The kitchen is one of the two shrines of the modern American home, the other shrine being the bathroom. Electricity and plumbing are our jinns, doing away with all the untidiness behind the most savory concoctions of old—the carrying in of coals and water, the carrying out of ashes and slops.

Yet so much of the old snobbery persists, which would make even this precious service to the body degrading, that a very wise man and a gentleman, who is also the prince of cooks, has to conceal his name when he broadcasts his wisdom over the radio, lest his cultivated and well-to-do family be ashamed of him. So he calls himself "The Mystery Chef." Yet to dine with the Mystery Chef in person is the quintessence of many pleasures. Here is the festive joy of dining in its most modern and eclectic form—etherealized completely above the mess of things, freed from the clutch of the slave or the churl, the last fine flowering of many cultures.

In his beautiful living room, in a penthouse apartment overlooking New York City, the Mystery Chef is getting your dinner, while his wife, resplendent in a red velvet evening gown, sits quietly and entertains the guests. He has slipped off his dinner jacket and, immaculate in white shirt-sleeves, he

breezes back and forth through the doors of a large Spanish cabinet, which stands in the corner of his living room, discoursing intermittently on Scotland, the customs of an old-fashioned landed estate in England, the beautiful color of ripe cherries, the flavors of cheese and how to serve Roquefort with celery, the iris he has planted in his terrace garden just outside the window and the little bird that came from somewhere, over the desert of the city housetops, to rest there, the foolishness of spoiling the smooth cool taste of whipped cream with vanilla and sugar, the problem of keeping in cooking all the beautiful colors of things—the pale green of cabbage, the pure purple of blueberries—and incidentally what to do about that cabbage odor and how he can broil fish, with never a smell of it in these rich Italian draperies. And lo! while he talks, out of the Spanish cabinet comes a banquet, choice, delicate, not overweighted in quantity, everything devised with a loving sense for the natural properties of things, a kind of caressing appreciation of the crisp white nuttiness of celery, the rich red heart of a grape; for in the Spanish cabinet he has a kitchenette—icebox, sink, little stove, nesting pans, all fitted together with the ingenuity of a gem cabinet.

Deftly he spreads a lace cloth. With a courtly gesture he serves, making his guests feel themselves honored in every motion, as beings far too good to have anything short of a gentleman wait on them. He ripples along about the contents and the properties of every dish. You linger, taste, enjoy. Then with a few magic gestures off goes the first course and on goes the dessert—many courses being a hang-over from barbarism, he says, and around the dessert and the cigarettes and the little cups of coffee you sit the rest of the evening. He has no servants. Modern machinery makes them unnecessary. It is, you agree, an intrusion upon intimacy to have menials about. The conversation ranges over all culture and all history, then becomes personal, candid, confessional. Around you are the creations of many cultures. The beautiful room he designed himself, Italian in honor of his Italian wife, who has

sat all the time, serene and detached, in her red velvet evening gown. The kitchenette is American enclosed in a Spanish cabinet. The landscape without is pure New York. Here in one meal is the bouquet, the aroma, the memory of all that has been lovely in the world.

The conversation rises to that level where all good conversations at all great banquets has come to rest, and circles around the subjects that Socrates and his friends talked about at a banquet long ago—life and the way to live it. A quaint vein of old-fashioned Scotch piety runs through his observations, sincere, homely, like a bit of heather suddenly dropped on the carved Italian table. Then one is aware of something that has seemed a faint, far-off echo of many of his exuberant remarks about food, flowers, and the forms and flavors of things in general. It is as if, beyond the sophisticated talk, beyond the dim roar of the city and the sea of city lights, one heard a faint, far-off singing—voices in a Scottish kirk, far away, perhaps long past, voices of his ancestors, voices of his childhood, raised in the strains of Old Hundred, "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow."

Let's Face the Music and Dance—IV

LIFE is a dance—and not organic life alone, but everything that keeps this astonishing scheme of things swinging in orbits. Long before men knew how the earth goes around the sun like a whirling dervish and the planets swing in patterns, they had observed the general dance of things and sought therein the answer to the mystery of existence.

Now, science discovers more and more about the cosmic dances—from the dance of the universes to the dance of the atoms—but it is as far as ever from knowing the why and the wherefore. Meanwhile we must take it on the evidence of the senses that life is motion, motion often to no apparent end, motion that is its own reason for being, rhythmical, patterned, like a dance.

This motion is one of the things that the consciousness knows as joy. Happy creatures move. When they can speak, they say that they are moving because they are happy and happy because they are moving. When they cannot speak, their very motions and the other noises that they make tell us the same tale in a language older than adjectives. There is motion in nature which has no practical purpose, just as there is noise which says nothing. It is only the joy of life, made visible and oral. Even the plants, which are chained fast to one spot have a strong interior rhythm which is their life and, one sometimes gathers from their sweet looks, their secret satisfaction. I

have seen charts in the laboratory of Professor Bose in Calcutta recording these rhythms and showing, too, the shudders and perturbations which may be communicated to a fine instrument when some outward influence threatens the serene movement of vegetable juices. Professor Bose speaks as if this were an agitation in the *soul* of the plant, and perhaps it is.

There are few people who have not observed in themselves the relation between movement and the sense of joy. You have been sitting long at a desk. You are dull, stuffy. One by one, out of the gathering gloom, problems arise to worry you, bills that must be paid, the work that isn't done, the discontented face of the wife at breakfast, the chill preoccupied air of the boss who has just walked through without speaking. They get larger and larger. They assume monstrous forms. The task before you seems insuperable. You begin to suspect that it isn't worth doing anyway. But, if you get up and move, if you merely walk down the corridor to another office on an errand, or, better still, if you take your hat and walk down the block, all the phantoms vanish. You begin to feel cheerful and fit. There seems no particular difficulty in anything, after all. It is not merely that your attention has been distracted. Some warm interior current has been set up by the motion, and, like a river it goes on, bearing all the debris away.

Most Americans know this. It is one of the better elements in the distinctively American technique of life that the average person knows the immense effect of getting up and doing. Europeans and Orientals laugh at us for this. They think it is childish. It is the way of youth, and they feel old and wise, even when they are miserable from sitting still and stewing in their own juices. But there is not yet so much happiness in these old lands across the seas that one need take their opinions seriously. A great deal that has passed for wisdom in this world is only the fungus that grows in the dank consciousness of the sedentary.

2

Yet for all the mobility of American life, it is astonishing how many people are content to be cripples. They move adequately enough in cars and, when they are young, on a dance floor or a tennis court. But they have no other use of their hands or their feet, and, as they leave youth behind, they thicken, and more and more they just sit. They sit, and take their activity vicariously, in the theatre, where the musical comedy and the song-and-dance programs give them the sensation of joy in motion, at the big football games, where, safe in fur coats, they can let someone else experience the wild fighting rush down the field for them. So they borrow a kind of gaiety and exhilaration, whooped up, forced, but enlivening even at second hand. So Fred Astaire trips lightly for a million who ought to be tripping for themselves. So the teams go careering down fifty autumnal frost-nipped fields, not only for hundreds of thousands who sit on the grandstands and cheer, but for millions of others ensconced by radios, in snug, warm rooms, who get the excitement, not even at second hand but at third hand, and still find it good.

Even those who cover long distances themselves remain static. When the great round-the-world liners unload their companies of the full-fed and the well-dressed in foreign lands, what helplessness descends on them—the poor vegetables! They have come all around the world to see these temple grounds, or meander through these palaces, or ascend this storied height. But a half mile of village street exhausts them, and a climb up twenty steps leaves them panting as in their last throes. Before the splendor of the world they stand in agony, feet aching, backs sagging, temples throbbing, perspiration running down their faces. "Where is the ricksha? Where is the sedan chair?" they moan. Even the handsome and long-limbed young college students from America cannot circumnavigate a cobblestoned village, through which the

lame and the halt and the blind of Europe have somehow managed to walk for centuries.

Much of the year I live on an ample stretch of land in Maine, around which the family has the habit of moving as easily as goldfish in a bowl. There are a hundred acres of wood and meadow and a quarter of a mile of rocky, wind-swept seashore. When you want a swim you walk a fifth of a mile to the shore. When you want some balsam boughs or lady's-slippers you walk about a fifth of a mile in the opposite direction. There is plenty of wood for the great fireplace, but sometimes you have to go out to the woodshed to get it. There are bushels of red raspberries, carloads of blueberries, more than anyone ever picks, but you have to go out and pluck them. Friends from the city come up jubilantly to enjoy this country life. It is ample. It is redundant with food and flowers. It is beautiful and stimulating, and the first night they always doze by the fire, and sleep like a log, and are down bright-eyed for breakfast, hungry enough to eat a whale.

Then the troubles begin. They sprain their ankles. They get a stitch in their sides. They walked too far yesterday. They swam too much today. They like berries, but it makes their heads ache to pick them in the sun. They'd like a fire this damp night, but it's too much trouble to get the wood. After a few days they are thoroughly disgruntled and miserable, blistered with sun, with sea-urchin spines in their toes and briar scratches on their legs. Every bone in their bodies aches, and the clams they dug on the shore today and cooked over the picnic fire disagreed with them. So, they sit helplessly and imagine what the great, strong, hardy denizens of the place could do for them—how they could go out and get some kindling and start a fire, if they only weren't so thick of hide that they never know when it is chilly. This is not a picture of one urban person in the country. It is a composite photograph of most of them—only sometimes they are so sweet and polite about their troubles that they wring your heart instead of making you want to wring their necks.

Now sick people often get a good deal of fun out of life. They are protected from some of its harsher blows as well as its livelier raptures. And no doubt these valetudinarians of our urban, motor age have their pleasures, too, even within the narrow limits of their decrepitude. But one who has escaped and built life on a more ample and hardy physical base would be no more willing to return to it than to return to a hospital bed. Man is still the child of the swinging earth and the moving air and the grasses that dance in the sun. To separate himself from them completely is to strike at the heart of his joy.

There are many who realize this and yet are unable successfully to do much about it. Thousands scramble out of bed in the morning to follow the dulcet voice over the radio instructing them in the contortions of the "daily dozen." When summer comes, they take to the wilderness in hordes, but stay only long enough to accumulate bruises and sprains and a general state of discomfort which seems to give the lie to all the fine talk about the need of exercises. Back in the city, they slowly recover from the colds and indigestion and aches and reach again a neutral physical state which, by comparison with their rural agonies, is undoubtedly comfort. Some, of course, are more fortunate, especially if their vacations give them time to work through Purgatory to Paradise. Those who go west to the dude ranches, where the tenderfoot is understood and put through his paces without mercy, seem often to return with lean, hard, rubbery limbs and in their eyes the light of those who have seen a new heaven and a new earth.

3

In the past, most people had to use their hands and their feet because that was the only way they could keep themselves alive. Since civilization is bound to relieve more and more people of this necessity, it is wise to consider what to do about it. One of the reasons why a sudden plunge back into earlier

and harder material conditions seems to restore, both to individuals and to nations, buoyancy, good nature, and zest for living is that such conditions keep people moving. Unlike other creatures, man wants a motive for moving. In the past he has worked so hard for a living that he has associated physical activity with too much labor. When the necessity for labor vanished, his one idea was to rest. But much of the truly joyous movement in nature is purposeless. The birds and the insects swing round in the sky perpetually. The fish circle endlessly in the sea. Sometimes they are hunting food, but much of the time they are just moving. The young bird dog works hard when he is hunting. But between times he runs on the lawn for fun and stalks a purely phantom prey. Even if the machines take over much of our hard work they need only return us to the happy condition of many living things, whose movements are not always practical necessities, but dances and sport and exuberant play.

But really to enjoy movement we have to unload some of the notions borrowed from the social conditions of the past. One of these is the notion that there is virtue in great muscles. The advertisements in magazines read by the underprivileged often show pictures of great brawny strong men with mountains of muscle on their backs and shoulders, and promise the clerk and the bellboy that, if he will clip this coupon, he will learn how to grow similar lumps. Now a physical condition like this is no longer an asset but a liability. The strong man was once very useful. When all work was done by hand, he might serve as a derrick to drag stumps out of the ground or lift great boulders. When fighting was hand to hand combat, he was a good wall to hold off the invader. In the days of knighthood, he was handy to hang heavy armor on. Today there are only a few unimportant, out-of-the-way jobs for such men—like being prize fighters and foot-ball heroes. Where strong men exist, they are usually museum pieces, left over from earlier social conditions, something for wonder and entertainment.

To maintain any excessive condition of strength or even of agility requires a special regimen. One must give hours of the day to it. It uses up nervous energy and thought which can be put to better uses. It cuts one off from many social delights. The great brawny fellow, over six feet tall and strong in proportion, is a nuisance in modern life. He takes too much room in an office or a parlor. He requires too much food and clothing. He does not fit comfortably into a rumble seat. Where excessive height is inherited, it is better to keep it as thin as possible and cultivate activity and grace rather than muscle.

What one needs is not great knots and boulders of muscle on the arms and the back, but rather a collection of good usable muscles all over the body—enough to make one active, and cheerful, and equal to all the demands of life, but not enough to require special upkeep. The only upkeep necessary ought to be a few hours of fun—sports and dancing, walking and swimming, a means to sociability or to pleasant hours in the sun and the air. It is still one of the defects of college athletics that they are built too much on old ideas of strength and combat and not aimed sufficiently to giving students, as part of their permanent education, sports and skills which they can pursue happily all their lives.

Though great strength is not required, muscular inadequacy, even when combined with a normal physical condition otherwise, has often a most depressing effect on the psyche. It is one of the roots of the inferiority complex. It makes all the usual activities of life a chore. Even in people who do not look stout it is often accompanied by a certain amount of soft, useless fat, which muffles the physical processes and dulls all sensation and feeling. It cuts people off from a great deal of social fun and makes them feel awkward and unpopular. Yet even a slight increase in physical exercise may often be painful and accompanied by illness or emotional depression, which frightens the poor experimenter and makes him feel that there is no way out for him, after all.

The cause of these ills which overtake those who, without guidance, plunge into some regimen of physical self-improvement which they have picked up from the radio or magazines is seldom explained. Once it is understood, it is not very terrifying. Exercise breaks down body cells, preparatory to building new and usually better ones. This throws into the blood a certain amount of extra waste products. Under the happiest conditions these merely act on the nerve centers to induce a sense of fatigue, easily cured by rest. But sometimes, if they cannot be carried off easily, they act like any other body poisoning. They create emotional depression and discouragement. They produce aches. They may disturb digestion. They may force the body to a special effort at elimination, which takes the form of a cold. Going easy, resting willingly, eating moderately, carries one through the agony. One is soon well and happier and healthier than before. Even intelligent reducing schedules often have the same effect at first. This is no reason for turning back. But it is a reason for taking it easy. Joy is a rose with a thorny stem—even here.

4

Despite the pitiful softness of many urban people, the release from violent physical activity through modern machinery is a gain. Hard physical labor shortens life and takes a heavy toll of joy. Even among men whose activities out-of-doors seem, to the city dweller and listener to the radio, romantic or heroic—cowboys, lumberjacks in the north woods, sailors on the sea—the zest and obvious buoyancy of their youth give way too often in middle age to premature stiffening and organic disorders. The often hearty enjoyments of their prime are like other forms of dissipation. They have spent with extravagance, in a brief spree of activity, the vital capital which should take them to old age. Sometimes all they get for a lifetime of tough living is that they die slowly and in great pain.

Yet, though we may rejoice to surrender to industrialism much that used to be work, there is no reason why it should

also take from us the activities which used to be fun. No one wants to indulge in the physical exercise from which modern plumbing has released us. But every kind of activity which may be socially stimulating or personally amusing ought to be kept out of the hands of the machine. Walking, home activities, handicrafts, gardening, are worth keeping, even if they take time and a machine would be more efficient. In a good life, at least three hours a day should be given up to lively physical activity. For the sake of our Puritan consciences and our growth in social grace, perhaps one hour should be deliberately purposeless—sports, or dancing, or walking just for the sake of walking. But two hours might be devoted to tasks which a machine or a servant or an office boy might do for one but it is fun to do for one's self—walking to business, mowing the lawn, shoveling snow, setting the house in order, painting the front porch, even shopping if it is indulged only so long as it is amusing and not carried over into an agony of dragging feet and aching, overladen arms. There is a complex of satisfactions in such activities which nothing can quite take the place of. They are at once egoistic and sociable. They enhance one's own sense of self-importance and pride in property. They are colored by intimate affections. Even the innocent vanities and trivial daydreams which are associated with them are good for the psyche. They release us from social and intellectual tensions and let us relax to the level of being just folks.

Many people, however, suffer so from a hang-over from the old days of hard labor and driving necessity that they cannot take such activities lightly nor lay them down without conscience. Once they are involved in a self-imposed task, they drive through with fury, beyond the point of fatigue, beyond all satisfaction. There is no reason why all the lawn should be mowed tonight. The other half won't grow into a hayfield if it is left till tomorrow. But they want to "finish." They stiffen and are virtuous. They don't like to leave things half done. And tomorrow they have another task which is riding

them just as fiercely. Like so much else that we have inherited from the fathers, this sort of conscience ought to be sold to the junkman.

Activity is happiest when there is a progressive acquisition of techniques and every so often an entire change of habit. One ought to learn a new dance step every six months or add something to one's repertoire of swimming and diving tricks every summer. One ought every now and then to acquire a new handicraft. There is, too, a certain amount of purely formal discipline that is stimulating. There are those who laugh at the idea of the daily dozen or the setting-up exercise, asking quite rightly how such a very small amount of activity can influence any one set of muscles. The effect of such efforts is not so much physical as mental. If one bends over and touches the floor ten times, the actual result of this one performance alone is negligible. But what happens is that one is made aware of possibilities of physical motion. One's attention is centered on this part of the body or another. Feeling rather stimulated, free, and set up by this brief effort, one actually moves more freely all the rest of the day and so gives the released muscles a great deal of exercise that is never noticed, and accumulates a certain pride and satisfaction in movement.

If one is to be active—and so, happy—there is one material inheritance from the fathers on which one must cast a critical eye. This is our footgear. While the models of our cars improve year by year, the models of our shoes remain almost as bad as ever—especially the models of women's shoes. Women are hampered by the disposition of men to regard feet as sexual ornaments. Why small, delicate, and perfectly useless appendages raised on stilts should be so appealing against all the warm, honest allurement of hip and breast it is difficult to say. The Chinese, who are a sensible people in most other respects, carried this particular perversity of man to its extreme, deliberately crippling their women through years of adolescent backaches, headaches, and legaches till the lower limbs were reduced to two bundles of clumsy bandages, on the

deformed tips of which hung tiny dollshoes. Many an honest fellow came home after twelve hours in the field to cook the dinner for the family because his wife had reached that proud state of feminine allurement when she could only sit and comb her long black hair and hold out her two tiny feet stiffly before her. Chinese poets have liked to see crippled women hobble. Many a honeyed verse has celebrated the uncertain swaying motion of some lame enchantress on the feet that poetic tradition fondly calls "golden lilies." This perversity is not lacking in our West. There are still fathers who like to see fourteen-year-old daughter's feet crammed into high heels and expect the wife's feet to be merely ornaments. And even when men are sensible, there are women who proudly embrace the slavery.

It seems useless to seek the reason for such human foibles, because they are essentially unreasonable. But it may be that making a sexual fetish of feet is one of the prices we pay for other kinds of prudery. The Chinese, being a moral people, thoroughly obliterated the female form divine and all its natural appeals. Confucius thought it was immoral for a man's coat and a woman's to hang side by side on hooks. Chinese women's dress was high in the neck, tight across the bust, shapeless about the hips, and covered legs reduced to shapelessness with trousers. Chinese girls learned to stoop and hold in their breasts. All that man's ingenious imagination had to feed upon was the feet. No wonder he loved his golden lilies! So in the old days Western woman's form was swathed, though not—thank heaven!—quite obliterated. The ankle and the foot under the long skirts were overvalued. Now, in this healthy age, when a man has so much to fill his eye, he might take his gaze off the feet and let a woman alone to walk on them!

5

Education in gladness should be education in motion. Joy sleeps in the torpor of our untrained limbs. Set them in

motion to music, and something wakes that runs in exhilaration through the whole consciousness. At Bryn Mawr there is a course in physical expression which shows one the beautiful limbs of young girls coming to life, like eyes that have been blind and begin to see, like ears that have been deaf and begin to hear. There they stand, these girls, their lovely young bodies outlined in diaphanous clouds of rainbow drapery against a gray background. There has been no lovelier girlhood in the long history of art than the American girl of the more privileged classes, well-grown and well-nourished, yet with the long-limbed latent grace that belongs to this continent and a coloring fair enough to remind one of spring and flowers. Stripped of the disguise of the current clothes, standing out against the gray background in sculpturesque clarity of line, they look like the frieze of the maidens of the Parthenon, just before it was completely finished by the sculptor and brought into full vitality of line and movement. For, lovely as these girls are, they are bound. The head hangs a little forward. There is a faint strain about the eyes, a pout in the lips and sagging of the chin. Their arms and legs move stiffly and a little uncertainly, as if bound in some latent paralysis.

But under the guidance of the dancing teacher, one by one the sleeping beauties come to life. They throw back their heads and look like nymphs that dare to face the sun. They lift up their chests. The lines of their bodies grow taut and graceful. The pianist improvises. Tunes run off his fingers like water from a fountain. Music gives birth to motion, and motion to joy. They walk to music. They run. They leap. They swing each other in circles. All the movements of life are raised into gracious play, and play merges into the rhythmic patterns of a dance. All dancing has in it a sense of exhilaration, but what makes this free dancing of the Bryn Mawr girls charming is a certain sweetness in the gestures, something that is in the informing idea of the teacher, something called forth out of released girlhood itself. Their eyes shine.

Their lips smile. Each moves freely, yet with a pretty awareness of the other, in gestures of endearing fellowship. So the Graces used to dance on Helicon, and the nymphs to the piping of Pan. The vision is in the teacher and the musician. But this joy and good will is called out from the untrained limbs of these girls because something corresponding to it is really there.

There is in all of us some gaiety that would escape through the muscles if it only knew how. An old ragged drunk came into the subway—a typical souse, red-nosed, with gray stubble on his unwashed chin. But a light gleamed in his bleary eyes, and as the subway swayed he rose and tried to dance in the aisle. It was plain that something in him was singing a tune. Staggering, and swayed by the motion of the train, he was still trying to move to some inner bright rhythm. Probably when he was sober he neither danced nor sang. That is why some men get drunk. They want to dance, and strict sobriety won't let them.

We have long had a religion of the spirit, and it has left us halt and lame and paralyzed. What we need is a new religion of the body. Joy set dancing in released limbs might run inward and possess the soul. Set the limbs going to any rhythmic pattern, and instantly they open a path for themselves to heaven and the gods. Early man perceived this and made of the dance a religious rite. In some churches, the processional and the recessional and the ritualized movements of priests about the altar recall the spiritual significance of motion.

Motion is joy and motion is escape. The psychologists have taught us to be wary of that word *escape*. But the foolish kind of escape is to remain in the body and go away in spirit. To run away in the body is only prudence and good exercise. One thing to do with trouble is to run away from it—to run on one's actual ten toes. Always beyond this place is another. It may be only the twilight landscape in December, where the mist rises cold from the sodden fields and the moon hangs,

round, enormous, with a gleam like a grin on its coppery face, and a house lights up suddenly, cozy, with a Christmas wreath in the window. It may be only Main Street on Saturday night, when the shopgirls, with tight permanent waves, walk two and two, and four and four, with young men who cling possessively to their elbows, while overhead the huge winking letters of the movie house announce two features tonight, two grand passions for the price of one. Whatever world you walk out into, it's a good world, provided it isn't your own and you don't have to do anything about it.

One can walk away from trouble. One can get on a horse and ride away, or fall into the water and swim away, or in arms that seem impersonal but intimate, glide away in the waltz or the tango, into a dream of rhythm and colored light. Or failing that, one can at least set one's hands flying about some simple task.

It is a kind of insurance against unhappiness to keep the skills and physical conditions that leave this retreat from trouble always open. Pain and grief grow great in stillness. They are monstrous growths that flourish in the shadow of death, which is cessation of motion. Any pain that cannot follow one out into the light and sunshine of movement, among men or amidst the fields and woods, had better be left behind. It has not the lifeblood of true agony in it. It is only an emanation of the charnel house and the tomb, a sign that the limbs are stiffening too soon to the inertia of their last rest.

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep—V

THE late King George of England was asked what he would do, if for once he could do just as he pleased. He replied that he would take his biggest car and drive and drive as far as it would take him. There he would find a little farmhouse, and in the farmhouse there would be a small, clean, whitewashed room, furnished only with a bed and an open fire. He would lie down on the bed, and lying so, alone in the small, clean room, he would look at the glowing coals of the fire, and the flames playing blue about them—and so he would rest. For once in a royal lifetime he would rest.

Almost anything is easier to find in this modern world than rest. What sleep is, many of us have almost forgotten, mistaking for it only a feverish oblivion between one day's agony and the next. Large portions of the urban population are chronically over-smoked and under-slept. Watch the poor wretches stumble out of bed in the morning, faces gray, eyes hollow, shivering in their pajamas, calling for coffee. "I am worthless till I have my coffee," they say, almost as if this daily torture were normal.

On how many faces of pretty girls one can see the pallor of the tomb, as they totter out on their satin mules, sans make-up! The lips which last night were a painted dream of a kiss are now swollen, chapped, and discolored. The eyes which last night held love and mystery in their enchanted depths are

now dull and flat and ringed with greenish-brown shadows. Is it thus that the rose wakes with the dew on her petals? Is this morning to the bird, or the child?

But, faced with the duties of the day, one summons will power enough to serve for a great moral crisis and begins to hurry, arriving breathlessly at lunch. Then hurry! Hurry! We must hurry again and dress. Why? Because the house is burning? No, we must play bridge. Surviving bridge, one has a bath and must rush again. Why? Because the crowd is coming. Coming to do what? Why, nothing in particular. Probably to get us to go somewhere else.

How many dance through evenings in agony, when the outraged body cries only for bed! The head of the lady in the magazine advertisement nods over the bridge table. She has just trumped her partner's ace. Horrors! She starts wide awake while the table glares. What shall she do about it? Drop it all and rest? Oh no, the advertisement has an answer. Drink a glass of Lappa Loola.

In these agonies one has gone long past the first weariness, which is normally rather pleasant. Relaxation has become a pain from which one shrinks, clutching madly at more excitement, more stimulants, more fake activity. If one could but stop at the first moment of weariness, how softly would happy action merge into the bliss of doing nothing! One would lie on the couch and look into the fire and dream. One would doze off, and return refreshed as from a far journey. One could even idle at a restaurant table and watch the crowd, or sit by the window and watch the neighbors go by, or walk in the garden or the park. One could swim lazily in the bathtub and let the fragrance of pine woods or summer gardens float round one's head in steam. Or, if one were truly a fortunate man, not bound by chains to the office or the house like a dog to his kennel, one could tinker all afternoon on an old boat, in old clothes, smoking a pipe.

There is always something one could do with the weary moment, if one had only the courage and could say to one's

conscience, "Satan, avaunt!" But it goes by, and with it all hope of true rest. The overworked glands pump more excitement into the blood. We go on. We rush. We dress. We dine. The head aches. The food is tasteless. The cocktail scalds. But we still go on. We have to. Why do we have to? God knows!

2

But, sometimes, on a pile of hay in a meadow, or on the warm sands of the beach, true slumber comes back to us. We are one with the circling earth and the swinging stars. We are upborne on the great stream of being like a boat on the waves of the sea. We have laid our head on the breast of the great mother, and our blood moves to the rhythm of her breathing, and our heart throbs quietly with her heart, in security and in peace.

And ours shall be the breathing balm,
And ours the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

Sleep is not oblivion but an experience, and all rest and relaxation is as twilight to this solemn night of the spirit. Sleep is not a dead loss of so many hours of living. Rather it is a long dive into the oldest life of earth, the rhythmical vegetable being that underlies all organic sensation. Is this dim consciousness of sleep, with its fitful gleams of sharper imagery like sunlight shifting into the tranquil darkness of the sea—is this, perhaps, the normal consciousness of plants? Do the lilies and delphinium in the garden live in a perpetual warm sleep beneath the sun, with little flashes and quivers, like presages of the awakening of mind, when some unusual disturbance ruffles the placid current of their vegetable juices? The more one lays by the special waking consciousness of man, the more one relaxes and is content just organically to be, the less one can question the essential goodness of life. There is the answer to all man's questioning—wordless,

inarticulate, but final—flowing serenely into his veins, like water from hidden springs of the earth.

How gladly do we at the close of day
Come home like children to the breasts of sleep,
Finding the comfort that the shadows keep.
Is light a brief delirium of the eyes
And is it there, upon the sunless way
Of shadow that the soul of being lies?

3

If one asks what is it that is robbing us, in our time, of the oldest happiness of living things, one is faced by a curious complex—circumstances peculiar to our own time, circumstances peculiar to America in particular, all mingled with odds and ends of discarded conscience and archaic motivation of will and with general infantilism. We don't relax, partly because we are modern, partly because we are American, partly because we are morally old-fashioned, and partly because we are socially childish.

The specifically modern causes of restlessness are usually said to be our mania for speed, as expressed in such inventions as the motorcar and the airplane, and the general noisiness of a machine age. But this is looking in the wrong shopwindow for the wrong invention. Other things being equal, modern inventions should have released us from a lot of calls on our overworked endocrine glands. A car that goes smoothly over a smooth highway from New York to Chicago ought to cause fewer assaults on the nerves than a prairie wagon that got stuck in a gully, lost in the long grass, or beaten up by Indians. Reaching Chicago in three days instead of three weeks, one ought, like the hare racing the tortoise, to be able to lay off for a while and enjoy pure laziness. The sum total of all the bumps, delays, frustrations, and worry that Jefferson encountered in one journey, when he commuted by carriage between Washington and Monticello through the red mud of Virginia,

would serve us for most of the blowouts and traffic jams we encounter in a lifetime. To annihilate time and distance is to annihilate a lot of grief. Some of this lightening of the load of life ought to show in our dispositions, and so, as a matter of fact, it does. American life, reputed to be the speediest form of the speedy modern *modus vivendi*, is, compared with some of the old oxcart and buggy portions of the world, both lighthearted and bland. Some of us are tense, but not nearly so many of us are irritable. I have lived in places in Europe where people were swearing and fuming practically all the time. They had to. There was so much to swear at. Some business men drop off at fifty, but most of us live longer and stay younger.

It is also said that we are tense because a mechanical civilization is noisy. Havelock Ellis remarks that, in proportion as modern life, through sanitation, has relieved us from assaults on the nose, it has increased the assaults on the ear. There is undoubtedly a tremendous lot of noise in modern life, most of it unnecessary. Even when you have shut the door of your house and relaxed into dressing gown and slippers, the voice of the machine is in your ears. The icebox hums. The radio croons. The radiator knocks. The car going by honks. And the telephone rings.

Yet the machine is not really to blame. The noisy machine is one poorly constructed or out of order. In proportion as a machine is true to its own nature, as it obeys its own laws of physics or mechanics truly, it goes along easily and quietly. What we need is not less mechanics, but more and better. It is what is left over from the pre-machine age,—the contentment with clumsy contrivances, the indifference to things that creak and stick and rattle,—the residuum of mechanical ignorance or indifference, that really makes the noise. Some day our whole world of wheels within wheels may roll along silently and a whole avenue of cars be less disturbing to morning slumber than one old milk wagon drawn over cobblestones by a horse.

Moreover, for every mechanical noise we make we have stopped making a human noise. You can go all day in a modern town and scarcely hear human voices raised above the level of friendly conversation or, at most, an occasional shout. Not so the bellow, whine, wail, howl, shriek of some older civilizations. If you lived in one of those serene old places where human beings take the place of plumbing and all things come in and out of the house on protesting human backs, you would not hear the icebox humming, but you would hear the wail of the cook's sick baby, and the ricksha pullers fighting in the courtyard, and the Number One Boy steadily cursing the lepers in the alley. If we could grow as callous to all our mechanical noises as some ears, in the rich old civilizations, have grown to human wails, moans, and imprecations, we should all be serene as Buddha. All we need to do is to develop a cool head, which is much better, at that, than a cold heart. But what we may aspire to is to go further and arrive at a social Nirvana, where motors and human hearts, alike, have "attained to look on the beginning of peace."

But there is one invention which, though it usually escapes blame because it is such an obvious blessing, is probably responsible for much of the tension of modern life. This is electric light. It interposes its magic, its opportunity for work and play, its stimulus to the nerves, its good reason for never going to bed, between us and the beautiful rhythm of night and day. No matter how one pushed, rushed, chaffered, fought and bled in the old days, darkness came down and put a period to it. People slept, for what else could one do in the dark? How soothing are the pictures of domestic and social life in the novels of Dickens! Family and sometimes friends had an early dinner in winter. Then they sat together in the darkness. There were low voices, the eerie sense of dear and familiar forms near-by in the shadows, sometimes the glow of the fire falling fitfully on a face or a hand. In summer they sat in the garden, while the twilight fell, and the dew. Then the candles were brought, and they had tea. After that some were

benighted enough to read or to sew. But for the most part the meal had done its work. Each gladly took his taper and went yawning up the dark stairs to bed.

But now there is no pause. The electric lights flash into the face of the setting sun. Twilight and evening star—and, long before that, day ablaze again on wall and ceiling. This electric light has its own nervous effects. It is something other than firelight, or candlelight, or the soft yellow diffusion from the kerosene lamp. It sharpens, intensifies, quickens. It starts the whole machinery of life going again, in a rhythm more lively than even that of day. It shuts out what is not our world, and makes what is seem more important. The net result is that one stays up more hours, reads more in bed, works when one does not have to, and goes to rest, not gradually relaxed by the all-conquering darkness but toned up, keyed up, and wound up, ready for anything but sleep. Something has been added thereby to the joy of life. There is now and then a long and brilliant night which is bought cheap with a headache in the morning. But not every night, nor every morning.

To all these excitements of modern civilization—the speed, the noise, the light—the American continent has added something all its own. The territory covered by the United States differs from other lands in the same latitude, east and west, in that its climate is cool in comparison with the intensity of its sunlight, and the changes of temperature are sudden and sharp. Most atmospheres as bright as ours are warmer. Most climates as cool as ours are gray and foggy. Light and coolness are stimulants to action; so, too, is a great variability of temperature. When these are combined, the result is the peculiar exhilaration of the American climate, which every foreigner feels. The skies of Italy, with the temperature of England—it goes to the head; it sets the nerves tingling; it banishes sleep.

Yet there are compensations. With the quickening of the blood a lot of troubles take flight. We may be tense. We may be always on the move. But one who has had dear and inti-

mate European friends of assorted nationalities may confess that even the best European seems to have many more little troubles in the course of the day than does the American. As one lives along with them over there, listening, sympathizing, feeling concerned, one cannot but hear, in one's subconscious, the typical American voice of admonition, rising in crude sanity above the noisy physical rush of one's own land across the seas—"Aw—forget it!"

And this bright land is, by its very nature, immensely wide and open, and when one gets out into some of those spaces where size and distance and the calm reach of sky and space dwarf man to an insect, there is an American type that is not harried or rushed at all. He drawls. He takes his own time. He believes very little that you say, and knows of nothing worth putting himself out for. He has discarded most things that belong to crowded civilizations and small places hemmed in by hill or water, and coolly sits down on the few that remain, wrapped in an air of infinite leisure. Is not this man, of all types, the most peculiarly American? What other continent could produce Lincoln or Will Rogers? Will Rogers, for all his flying hither and thither, for all the pressure of an intensely busy life, kept always in his manner and his sweetly musical drawl the memory of the large, easy world out of which he came, and to which, shaking off the dust of cities, blandly uninterested in crowns, kingdoms, or cash, he seemed always about to return.

4

Mainly we suffer from tension nowadays for the same reason that more people die of cancer. It is not that there is more of cancer, but that there is less of other diseases. So, if you are going to die, you must die of what is left. So, if we are going to suffer, it must be in ways that are still possible.

Partly, we achieve the uneasiness through the application of good old-fashioned moral force to situations which merely require a little intelligence. Many people put into the accom-

plishment of needless things against difficulty, the successful battle for something not worth fighting for, and the heroic endurance of what they don't have to put up with, enough conscience and will power to save the nation. By our school training and moral tradition we are all steamed up for situations that no longer exist. And when they don't exist we have to create substitutes, just to use up the steam. In proportion as we do not have anything that requires real effort to do amidst the great superfluity of modern life—we do not have to go out and hunt or draw water from the spring or get wood and make a fire or mend the roof lest the rain leak in—and in proportion as the great primary needs are satisfied without skill and experience on our part, we are driven and harried from within. Fake necessities take the place of real ones. The remedy is probably to rescue enough real activity—enough things to be done with the hands, enough simple human responsibilities to individual people—to make us healthfully tired physically, and keep us reasonably preoccupied emotionally and mentally, and then to take it easy. It really is an easy world we live in. Most of the intense competition of modern life, the feeling that if you don't rush for what you want someone will take it away, even the sense of insecurity which keeps most of us on our toes, is a kind of collective hallucination. It is a transfer from times that were really hard and conditions where one did have to worry.

What is required in modern life is not more force and drive and effort, but more intelligence. One must take it easy and at the same time use one's head. When Richard the Lion Heart wished to show the great Saladin what a man he was, he lifted his battle-ax and hewed straight through a piece of steel. Then the great Saladin laid a silken cushion before him and said, "Cut that." Richard brought his great ax down with a bang, and the cushion sprang back resilient from the blow, showing not even a dent. But Saladin pulled out a delicate, fine-bladed knife, and with an easy turn of the wrist flashed it into the cushion—and lo! it was cut clean through,

as smoothly as if it had been butter. The real obstacles in the way, in modern life, are silk cushions, and for them one needs, not Richard's will power but Saladin's technique. Rest and relaxation are friendly to thought, and thought in action is technique. As the tumult in the blood dies down, as the ears stop drumming and the nerves stop twitching, as the hand is no longer clenched to strike, nor the feet poised to run, nor the lips tense with unuttered words, what actually happens is that any mind one has awakes and begins to function. We normally think and observe in proportion as we are quiet otherwise. And in this world, a little thinking, properly applied, will save a whole lot of effort.

We are not only out-of-date; we are also childish. The child lives in the future. Always there is a shining day ahead of him to which he strains—Christmas Day, his birthday, the day school closes, the day he will grow up. This is the voice of his own growing and stretching organism whispering to him truly, "Not yet." But to us who are grown up the voice keeps on talking. Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow—we will spend then what we make today; we will take time to love and be amiable; we will learn to play golf or buy a house in the country. Tomorrow. Hurry! Hurry! But time no longer runs with us as in true childhood. It runs against us, till tomorrow becomes but a mockery, speaking hollowly from the tomb. The child also has desires and ideas of what he can accomplish, which constantly outrun his capacities. His eyes, as Grandma tells him, "are bigger than his stomach." He "bites off more than he can chew." This is a necessary characteristic of immaturity. It is only by biting off more than he can chew that he learns to chew more. In the blessed economy of nature, time and physical circumstance usually play Mama and Papa to desire. They interpose obstacles between the wish and the accomplishment. They force the development of skill. In the end, they sober and deflate by measuring the swiftness of man's mind against the slowness and cussedness of matter. If you have only two feet to go on,

it is one thing to decide to visit a friend one hundred miles away and quite another to pace off the 528,000 feet between you and the realization of your desire. So, in the old days, the very opposition of matter forced a man, in a way, to grow up.

Our command of some kinds of machinery nowadays denies us the discipline inherent in the original relation of organic life to its world and perpetuates childish attitudes. Not so much intervenes between the thought and the deed. If we wish to visit the friend, we may hop into the car and, sitting comfortably on a cushioned seat, be there in three hours, neither footsore nor weary. If we wish to talk to a friend, we can pick up the receiver and do it. Rash decisions are not revised or vetoed by the long, slow adjustment of material things. So there is, in our lives, a constant over-programming. The immediate steps to the realization of any plan are so easy that, as one floats from place to place, as one cooks up dozens of plans over the telephone, one fails to realize that there is something in one which, adjusted to the rhythms of an older day, follows more slowly. Somewhere nerve and the capacity for satisfaction will cease to keep up with the wheels.

So with the perpetual living in the future which we carry over from childhood, but which mature experience now does not so readily check. There is something about our modern mechanisms that annihilates not only distance but the present. If you travel in a sedan chair in China, there is no use thinking about that dim future when you will arrive at your destination. It is too far away and too problematical. Days and weeks, and perhaps months, will intervene. There will be mountains, and valleys, and long pulls between by rivers. There are robbers and bandits. Perhaps you will never get there. Perhaps you will turn back. Perhaps the blue tigers in the mountains will kill you. Who knows? The net result of all this is that you concentrate on the present. You are alive now and you are going, and the slow moments slide by in an eternal present of experience. But when one travels by motorcar, one's

thoughts are on the future—the town just three jumps ahead where one will stop. It is near, and it seems certain.

So with our plans by telephone. One's principal communication with one's friends seems to be some agreement about future concerted action. One may see John and Joe dashing from opposite directions to meet in accordance with some scheme arranged by telephone and instantly falling apart to rush to separate telephones to make some other plans with some other distant friends about something else to be done almost immediately. One often meets people who seem never to listen to what one is saying. They are feeling in their purses for cards on which there are telephone numbers, or "waiting for a call," or their thoughts are running something like this, "I must call up Mary, and before I forget it I want to tell John to—and I wonder if Jennie will—." In times and circumstances when it wasn't so easy to make plans with others for the future, one usually stopped trying to do anything. Then chance took charge of the situation, and in the end managed not much worse.

It would seem that the very ease with which our thoughts are realized in action would tend to sober us. Time was when you might think that Fairyland lay over the mountain, but you had no means to go there. Now, you may go and find just another Main Street. But does that prove that there is no fairyland? No, indeed. It only shows that Fairyland is over the next mountain, and, if not there, over the next. So you go on, and on, chasing forever a dream that forever recedes.

This drive, this tension, these tired nerves and tired bodies, are all the result of inexperience. We have not yet grown up to our world. When the dignitaries of old Japan were first shown a model of a Western railroad, those worthy gentlemen mounted the little cars in wild delight and, with robes flapping, sleeves billowing, went whirling round and round on them. Old and wise in the techniques of their own civilization, they were but children when they faced the new. So, like children, we too whirl round and round in our glittering,

mechanistic, modern world—whooping, wild-eyed, dead tired, and quite unwilling to go to bed.

5

What to do about it? There are a multitude of medicines on the market, and most of them good. Some find the best cure in purely physical relaxation. The technique of it is explained in a little book which is excellent so far as it goes, entitled *You Must Relax*—the voice of experience speaking sternly to the naughty child. Doctor Jacobson, the author, goes on the theory that the body will manage the mind, if you will let it, and that once the art of purely muscular relaxation is achieved—and an elaborate technique it is, as he explains it—peace will flood inward through the soul. There are people now who earn a good living by physically relaxing other people—not only masseurs and the like, but those who teach a more complex art of muscular and nervous readjustment, requiring practice and will power.

There are still those who offer the same cure to the mind—in the form of a philosophy or a religion. The Eastern system of Yoga, properly interpreted to the West, offers a rather effective therapy for those who can take it, disciplining both body and mind. Christian Science has done wonders for many by naming many of these forces that harry and drive the modern soul by their true name—Illusion. But there is no true religion which does not offer rest. It substitutes at least one serene and high illusion for many small, mean, nagging ones, and every one of the great faiths, when truly accepted, is justified in experience. I have seen a Moslem sheik and son of a sheik by his tent in the desert, and an old Methodist circuit rider among cowboys in the uplands of Montana, and a Buddhist monk in his garden on a palm-crowned height above the Indian sea—and each had come by his own path to drink of the same well-spring of peace. There is probably no modern soporific so effective as was the old habit of kneeling by the bedside in prayer. To roll off all the troubles of the

day on shoulders wider and better than one's own; to summon the angels, the saints, or God Himself to watch by the bedside—the good soul thus prepared might well sink into his pillow clasping to his heart the sweetest of all the old promises, "He giveth His beloved sleep."

There are those who would recommend a return to older and simpler ways of life. Fresh air, a country house, a garden to work in, a barn with tools for rainy days—the very thought is restful, and not the less so, perhaps, for the car that takes one there so smoothly and the electric button that brings the water rushing in from the well. Some suggest great attention to the physical appurtenances of rest—to excellent beds, soothing bedtime drinks, warm baths with sweet-smelling steam. Attention to these is well, but most sound, carefree, and happy rest in the past has been enjoyed on something far inferior to the modern bed. Almost anything we call a bed is luxury compared with what Kings and Emperors have slept on—if we except such a mythical person as the Caliph in Cairo who used to sleep on an inflated air mattress floating on a still pool under the stars, with his blue-eyed tiger asleep beside him!

Modern individualism has lost something which all simpler people know—human companionship in slumber. If you should peep into the servants' quarters of a Japanese hotel at dawn, you would see the maids of the hotel all asleep in one happy pile. There they lie, twenty rosy girls, one against the other on the bare floor, each head comfortably parked on another's breast, warm, relaxed, in a great cozy heap. For a minute you may realize how lonesome your own clean, bare room must seem to them, how bleak and cold your own sleep, so unprotected from enemies or drafts! It is a question whether modern medicine has done well in divorcing the mother from her newborn baby. It used to be very sweet—that first sleep together, the new little head on the bosom which had waited for it so long. Some say that modern woman achieved a great advance when she got a room, or at least a twin bed,

of her own. Some women—maybe. But there is something, too, in the nightly habit of going down to sleep together. Lovers who have the luck to sleep all night in each other's arms find the stormiest day too short to divorce them. These things are a matter of taste. Yet some cling nervously to their taste at the expense of their happiness. "Sleep" says D. H. Lawrence, "is still most perfect, in spite of the hygienists, when it is shared with the beloved. The warmth, the security and peace of soul, the utter comfort from the touch of the other, knits the sleep, so that it takes the body and soul completely in its healing."

Sometimes, as one thinks what we have dropped of the old culture patterns of man, and what, in the shining present, we have chosen to keep, it seems as if we had let slip through our fingers the few grains of wheat and had kept only the privilege of continuing to choke on the chaff.

To pause, to rest, to sleep, perchance to dream—this is the cheapest road to happiness and the most direct. Far more misery than one suspects, in any life, is simple tiredness; and half the things that make us tired we don't have to put up with. The plain little white room with the bed in it is there for everyone. One has only to walk into it and take it. And even a king, if he were to go away and take his rest, would find that the world would go on without him just the same.

Turn Down an Empty Glass—VI

SOCIAL dissipations are among the oldest of man's inventions. Their form was fixed back in the jungle and has since varied but little. The straight and narrow path, once thought to be such hard going, bids fair to become, with increasing civilization, a rather handsome skyway. But if one wants to go to the devil, one has to rattle downward by the same old gully. Twenty-five hundred years ago, more or less, the wise man of the Hebrew Proverbs warned the young sheik of the desert against the strange woman whose lips drip honey, and against the wine when it is red in the cup. Your own boy can't find much more in a Manhattan night club.

It is strange to think how much of man's most intensely felt and dramatic life—from sordid tragedy to delicate delight—has centered in a little cluster of foolish activities. To go to the devil in any society you want but a few things—something to addle your wits a little (alcohol has proved the best, though many things have been tried), something to bet your money on (or your feather headdress or your gold teeth), and a girl. With the girl in your arms and the liquor inside you, you make some flourishes of satisfaction. If you twirl around in some preliminary approach of embrace and mutual inflamement, you have invented the social dance. If you seat her gently on a rock, and begin to strut and show off and wave a sword and run your rival through his imaginary belt, you

have invented the theatre. Whereupon, the lady may think to show off, too. She takes off some of the covering you are used to seeing her in, or else she puts something on the places you are used to seeing bare,—not necessarily clothes, though,—stones, shells, paint, anything will do. Thus she invents costumes and cosmetics and starts business enterprise off in all directions. As she whirls before you, delighted you leap upon her and clasp her to your heart. Whereupon she slaps your face and says, "No, you don't!" And that is the beginning of manners.

Social civilization is a flower, whose roots reach deep into the mud. The ancient Greek tragedy, with its severe and noble ethic, rose step by step from an orgy in honor of Dionysus, the god of wine. The ideal of romantic love, which adds color and drama to modern sentiment and may rise to the purest heights of unselfish devotion, developed out of the practice of adultery among medieval lords and ladies. And in our lighter moments we owe no less to the gay sinners of old. The highly domesticated game of bridge comes to us, teeth drawn, claws clipped, from the gaming house. Your very good and charming wife, faithful keeper of your hearth and mother of your darlings, setting off down the street and looking as you like to see her look, has borrowed her lipstick, her silk underwear, and the fetching little lilt in her walk from ladies of old who were not wives. Nay, when you yourself take a shave and a warm daily bath, swimming in soaps and scents, you have yourself borrowed from those in the past who in the perverted atmosphere of Roman or Oriental haunts of dissipation laid by the manly beard and honest sweat of virtue. In *The Good Earth*, the beginning of Wang Lu's departure from the paths of rectitude is the purchase of some pink toilet soap from foreign parts.

Man's dissipations have been the repository of his social culture. They have widened his range of feeling, polished his manners, refined his person, sharpened his wits, and replaced romantic illusion with a tolerant perception of some things

as they are. But the outgrowths of dissipation have carried in all countries the taint of their origin and a cautious perception of their dangers. The theatre, the dance, the decoration of the person, the use of wine or cigarettes, are always a little under suspicion in respectable households in every part of the globe.

It is difficult to talk of the gaudy joy of dissipation or even to be sure that it is joy at all. Too often the gaiety is but the smile on the face of despair; the brilliance is but the phosphorescence of decay. No one can say that his highest, purest moment of happiness was found in a night club—unless he found love there, and then a night watch in a factory would have been as relevant. Such happiness as men have known in desert places, under the moonlight sky, in gardens, in libraries, even, or seated by a piano, with friends or family by the hearth, lost in work—this is not the joy of dissipation. But there is something—a delicate compound of vanity and illusion, an airy escape from the grossness of the flesh and the ties of virtue and the claims of tomorrow, an expansion of the Ego, an intoxication of the sense, a sky-rocket whirl of self-glory —infinitely fragile, probably brief, and not always to be found when one wants it. And there is companionship, too, at such a level—friendships immediate, warm, confidential, though you know they won't last; a gushing forth of conversation; odd movements of chivalry; moments of love (evanescent, enchanting); brief whirls of forgetfulness. Here is the social illusion, artificially created and always incalculable, a gossamer texture. Anything breaks it. Friendship turns to brawls, love to sick avoidance. The light goes out. The spirit fails. Is this dirty clutter of painted stuff—is this the theatre of a moment ago, where one trod in one's glory, a star?

2

It is the release into the social dream, the butterfly spreading of wings into the illimitable ether, that man seeks in dissipation, and what he seeks is often much better than what he

finds. Dissipation is, as the psychologists say, the escape from reality. On a low level this escape is a neurosis, made sordidly visible and socially obnoxious—chronic drunkenness, chronic gaming, chronic Don Juanism or nymphomania. In the derelicts of society, the means of dissipation—drink, gaming, accessible females—have only brought to rapid and hideous consummation a disease that was already there. Kept safe from temptation, they would only be some other kind of neurotics and work harm to themselves and others more slowly and more secretly. The boy who falls into evil company and is corrupted was probably corrupted in his mother's arms. The poison that appears is a poison he has been breathing for years from ideas prevalent in the group in which he has lived. Yet the means of dissipation undoubtedly precipitate decay, and without them there might be hope of a cure if one could work backwards into the whole psychic and social situation and find something still sound to build on.

Where the unsound, seeking escape, fall into degradation, the healthy, the clever, the gifted, turn dissipation into art. For there are always two escapes open to men—one into neurosis, permanently, with its end in insanity or death or social disaster, the other into art. Art is a reasoned and created make-believe, clearly marked off from another kind of experience which for want of a better name one calls reality, limited in space and time, carrying the dream to its brightest realization and exploding it harmlessly in fire-works.

The social dissipations have always moved upwards into the arts. Games of chance become games of skill. Posturing and swaggering and showing-off become drama. The crude urge of sex is translated into dress and manners and all the refinements of courtship. Much of the social freedom of women and their personal habits, much of the higher companionship of men and women on intellectual and general social levels, much of the most delicate and romantic personal sentiment, arose out of the relations of men to courtesans. This is obvious

enough in the literature of Rome—the *Art of Love* by Ovid, or the heartbroken poems of Catullus to Lesbia. The courtesan was not permanently possessed, as the wife was, and she could not, against competition, always be bought. Ovid advises young men who cannot compete for the ladies against the rich old men to make up for lack of money by manners! Woman, as wife and mother, was always bound—bound by chastity, bound by the need and will of the race, bound by the child in her womb and the baby at her breast and the little one dragging at her skirts. She was bound, but in a sense she was sacrosanct and all man's relation to her but emphasized his biological unimportance. Man scarcely dared to love a wife till the courtesan taught him how. There are still men who cannot give themselves psychically in passion to a woman they respect. But in this playworld of dissipation a few women emerged from degradation by wit and beauty and pulled men after them.

So these dissipations which degrade man lower than the beasts have also raised him to those levels which are most purely human. There is no necessary routine of living, no substantial, homely affection, no domestic security but is sweetened for us now by flowers that have in the past grown out of this mud.

Yet dissipations readily become hideous. They are mortally dangerous. There is murder and rape and white slavery in the shadows just beyond the lights of the night club. Go into any social haunts, however select, however orderly, and the racketeer and the gangster sit down to dinner with you, and the procuress slides by on the dance floor. And for one individual who finds a moment of genuine exhilaration in gay company, there are dozens who drown pain in drink, or who compound in a make-believe pleasantness among strangers for the fact that they cannot find love or friendship in any solid or enduring relation. Some of the gayest and most amusing people, the most alluring lady, the easy man about town who knows everybody and goes everywhere, cannot keep one

husband or one wife. Outside of this pasteboard world whose tricks they know, all is chaos and pain and humiliation. They are integrated as human beings only as actors in the colored glare of this tinsel stage. There are probably few collections of human beings doing anything together among whom there is more genuine subconscious misery than in the gayest and most brilliant company given over to any form of dissipation. And, however the gay sinner may swagger in the pride of youth, health, or pocket, he knows that in so far as drink, gambling, or the pursuit of easy women has become necessary to his existence, he has put on chains which will grind deeper and deeper into the tormented flesh and has bound himself over in a slavery whose end is inevitably shame and miserable death.

These terrible and obvious facts have exercised moralists in every age and place. They keep the household, which is the natural enemy of dissipation, shuddering with fear, ready to bar the doors, put a lock on the family pocketbook, protect the woman in the innocence of girlhood and the helplessness of motherhood, and keep the children safe. Bright and lovely as the social outgrowths of dissipation may seem, they are fragile and unimportant, and there is some reason in the feeling which has widely prevailed that they should be lopped off without mercy if thereby one single soul may be saved from the degradation to which they are inevitably bound.

Yet it is obvious enough that any group or society which cuts out the traditional dissipations from its accepted social pattern merely takes grace and laughter and fun and good manners away from the sound and well-intentioned. Dissipation, driven from the ballroom and the general social gathering, lurks just the same in dives and illicit liquor joints, and something that in easier and happier societies is harmlessly exploded turns into a current of poisonous moral energy, persecuting witches, as in old Salem, or threatening, as now in Germany, the peace of Europe.

3

Our pleasant vices may be necessary to us. On the level of the arts they are social stimulants and perhaps social safeguards. Yet this little cluster of idiotic activities is, for the first time in man's social history, getting actually a little out-of-date. Take alcohol, for example. If one reads the reports of the liquor associations, one can see that we are in a sad way. Their trade literature is one long lament over these degenerate times. Everything distracts us from the serious business of drinking. When distilled and fermented drinks were invented, there was neither tea nor coffee, nor, most inimical of all to the good god Bacchus, the cigarette. Now we will drink coffee for breakfast instead of ale. Some people still like tea of an afternoon, for all the very genuine charm of the cocktail party, which is one of our few indigenous and modern additions to the great art of drinking. In the old days, when a customer or a client or a friend called, you offered him wine. Now, alas, there is the cigarette or the cigar.

And then there are the wild young people. To read the reports of the beer associations one would think them hopeless. They go riding in automobiles. Half the time they fill up on hot dogs and ginger pop. They meet in the drugstore and eat a sundae or an ice-cream soda. They go to the movies. The latest lament of the beer interests is that the mild form of gambling which consists of offering cash prizes in the New York motion-picture theatres is cutting into their trade. People waste all their extra pennies now on "chances." Even the influence of girls, it seems, is demoralizing. More and more, says one outraged report, the young men fail to come to the bars unless the girls come with them. And now that the first excitement of doing a shocking and forbidden thing has worn off, girls are hard to interest. They like a larger theatre in which to show off their clothes and their looks. They resent the fact, which women have always resented, that drink really takes men's attention off them. And our bars, says

the report sadly, simply aren't attractive to women. We must doll them up. Our slogan should be "Get the girl." This is shocking. It is vicious. But socially it is probably less dangerous than it sounds. It is the wail of those who play a losing game.

So with all this elaborate ritual of wining and dining. With the air of leading you into the holy of holies, the connoisseurs will explain all the old customs—the right wine with the right entrée, the shape and size of the glass, the history of the vintage. But it really means no more to the modern and American social imagination than the hocus-pocus of an old religion. One may play-act for a while in the trappings of old social usage, but in the end the necessities and tastes of one's own time assert themselves. To sit long at table, slowly savoring various concoctions and decoctions—that was the way in which some people once amused themselves. But for us, give us a sip of any cocktail or highball, for the car is waiting, and the jazz band, and there is something doing at the country club tonight. And so we leave the connoisseurs, solemn ghosts stuck fast in the social sands of yesteryear, piously mumbling over their wine cups like so many old priests. Yet wines are lovely things, rich in associations as old jewels. And something one would like to keep of that exhilaration which they once represented—just to remember Omar Khayyam by, and the turning of water into wine.

Another dissipation that is already dated is the excitement over sex. Love and sex are the glory of life, and so they will always remain. But something is gone now—the dear delicious naughtiness of intrigue, the high tragedy of seduction, the pathetic appeals of innocence. Where is that wicked roué who used to lord it over wife or blushing sweetheart with his vast and secret knowledge of wickedness? Now the lady knows that much of this knowledge concerns merely the physiology of her own sex—which is no news to her! She may even have a private opinion that much that is the pride of the sexual braggrat, the theme of barroom jokes, is,

from the point of view of the lady to be entangled, absolute poppycock!

The whole airy fabric of sexual immorality, as of sexual morality, has been built in the past on the fact that the result of mating was the birth of a child. When a woman was wooed, something great and holy, necessary to the race, bound up with the most intimate responsibility was to be attacked or defended. Now, the general knowledge of some technique of birth control among the more privileged classes, who establish social habit, has taken the foundation out from under morality and immorality alike. What was formerly a matter of social responsibility becomes only a matter of private taste. And meanwhile the wife and mother has coolly appropriated most of the charms, the knowledge, and the personal freedom which, in her former seclusion in boudoir and nursery, she feared in the "other woman." For the young, the ignorant, the inhibited, the morally bound, and the emotionally unlucky sexual adventures may have the old excitement. But increasing social sophistication deflates the once gaudy importance of sex. It only leaves love where it was—serene and high and untouched, like the moon above the fading night lights of the city.

Yet our age has its own peculiar strictness. As we loosen the bonds of sex, we tighten the girth of diet. There is scarcely a member of the more advanced portion of society who is not disciplined from childhood into a temperance his fathers never had to bother with. He must eat only so much, and such and such food. Long before one worries about Johnnie's first glass of beer, one must train him to spinach. The first negatives of temperance concern not alcohol or even the cigarette, but the extra lollipop or even the cooky between meals. It is even accepted, in those privileged social circles whose appearance of health, beauty, and well-being maintained to old age seem to prove that they know best, that alcohol and cigarettes in moderation do less harm than a habitual surplus of food. This is the most difficult art of

temperance ever devised by man and the one which runs most continually against wayward appetite. Many fight it with argument and scoffing. Few live up to it. But if ever one were trained to say "No" with firmness three times a day to the steaming goodies on the table, one should have developed enough character to say "No" to any other harmful thing one could put into one's mouth. Meanwhile, that secret knowledge of sex, of women, that pursuit of illicit glamour which is associated with the first adventures in drink, is to be made, according to the most modern ideas of psychology, an open book, in deliberate instruction to youth and even, as some advise, in properly guarded experiment.

This is a counsel of perfection, but it is the direction in which our social control is moving. It is a hard way. It takes glamor and dramatic importance out of sin, but it leaves the way of temperance and wise living just as rocky as ever, and perhaps a little rockier, lit by the bald white light of knowledge and common sense.

4

For the individual, what can one say? There is a joy of dissipation which is not the rich, organic contentment of nature. It is an artificial intensification of man's special illusion. It is something human and civilized, but evanescent, wayward, and, for the inexperienced, dangerous. All one can do with it is to isolate it from the substantial business of really keeping on going, according to the laws of organic existence, and, giving it its own limited position in time and space, to make of it an art. For what one really enjoys in dissipation is the waste of a surplus. One must have something to throw away—youth, health, money, time. If one has it, dissipation may be exhilarating. It may send one back to the main business of living somewhat released and refreshed. It may, if one is not caught by it! It is one of the rewards of a godly, righteous, and sober life that one can on occasion, dissipate with impunity. A gaudy night may be

an exhilarating experience if one has weeks of good wholesome sleep behind one. The city glitters with illusion to one fresh from the country. But these silly activities are only spice to the food. A little goes a long way. Make of them a meal, and one soon chokes or is poisoned. It is of the essence of dissipation that it should not be a habit. One must enter this fairy world like Cinderella in her ball gown, but be gone before the cock crows. Else all will vanish, and there one will stand, shivering, in the rags. And one dare not enter at all if one has accumulated any great weight of unsatisfied desire, any need that may not also be wholesomely satisfied, too much unliberated love or thwarted dreams. For who knows when a spark from this witch fire will light in the tinder of one's own emotional and mental debris and set the whole works ablaze, leaving of life a blackened and gutted ruin?

Each must find his own way, cautiously, to whatever foolishness his private constitution can stand. He must turn a deaf ear to social seduction. For almost all the persuasions and promises of this tinsel world are lies, and, for one who really is happy with what a few have chosen to call "a good time," there are actually a dozen who are not. A wise and wealthy man in New York, who entertains lavishly with food and drink, has within the last few years gained the courage not to touch what he serves at his own board. He himself dines frugally on a chop and some lettuce, and drinks only water, and smokes nothing. He says he is happy for the first time in his life. For forty years he has been socially bulldozed into almost continual physical discomfort and no fun. His one great regret in life, he says, "is all the liquor I have drunk I didn't want." Of all the things we put up with under social pressure that are really a pain to us, one must set down a great deal of drinking, dancing, smoking, and losing money at cards. It is all right if you want it—and if your purse, your constitution, and your family can stand it. It has its moments of rare social value, brief, inexplicable, glorious with an irrecoverable illusion. For the healthy and the busy it may

be a comparatively harmless habit, warmed with some real associations of relaxation or friendliness. Who can tell? It differs with different people and is the pawn of circumstance. But here, above all, a man should be personally free.

It may be that most of our dissipations, like our moralities, are anachronisms. They hang on from an earlier age. Perhaps in a century or two we shall outgrow them and think of drink, seduction, and gaming as the quaint barbarities of our ancestors. Meanwhile, the individual may still find it worth while to pay a little life or health or money for some of these gaudy assaults on the nerves. Only he ought to know for what he is paying, and how much, and whether what he gets is worth it at the price.

The Civilized Joy of the Senses—VII

THE kingdom of heaven is within you, said One who knew best, but surely not the kingdom of heaven, only. The kingdom of this world and all the riches thereof are no less interior. Man's highest dream of beauty is conditioned by the structure of his own eye. Whatever riches life might conceivably hold for other living forms, he does not know how to desire more than can be humanly heard, smelled, tasted, and touched.

Very marvelous is the universe which the body creates for itself—the music that it makes out of something which, beyond the ear, is but a vibration in the ether; the colors and forms, out of light waves streaking through space. The taste of the ripe strawberry, the perfume of the orange blossom, the soft delicacy of a dear cheek next to one's own—these are all created by the body. The honey is not sweet till it is on the tongue, and down has no softness beyond our own fingers. When one tries to think what is outside of the beautiful material world, and the myriad satisfactions which the senses make for themselves, one is lost in a horror of immateriality, amid light waves and sound waves and stimuli intangible as demons.

All sense experience is a complex, touching off the imagination and the emotions, and colored by memory. But it has been the custom of popular philosophy to limit the word *sense* to the immediate reports of eye, ear, touch, smell, and

taste and to assert that to the immortal soul these offer only rather trivial data. The moralist has believed that they are not only trivial but misleading, and yet so alluring that one had better beware of them. They enslave to a narrow experience. They bind one to a mean concern for comfort or satisfaction. They shut out heaven and one's brother man.

It is difficult to see how this idea has got such a hold upon our thinking. Partly, it is due to the dominance of one or two senses, or rather to a confusion of them with their associations. It was aimed against people who ate and drank a lot and were enslaved to the physical need of women. It was partly due, also, to the apparent fact that a cultivation of the senses and a habit of discriminating between kinds and degrees of physical satisfaction seemed to be associated with physical and muscular softness, unsuited to that hardship and danger which have been the general lot of man. Often the fear of sensuality was aimed against women in particular and was the result of man's struggle to substitute a social equality for the original inequality between men and women in childbearing, by binding man's desires exclusively to the one chosen mother, and making her safe, in the long periods of gestation and nursing, against the lures of the "other woman." The other creature was too good to look at, her voice too sweet in the ears, the emanation of her body—outrageously assisted by perfume—too sweet to smell, her skin too soft to the touch, and the taste of her kiss fatally luscious on the lips!

Moreover, the senses are set against certain strivings of the mind and the imagination. They are in the way of hard work directed to the future. So, all busy people with a need to get on in life, have despised them, at least in their more subtle manifestations. Enough to relax to gross bodily needs—hunger, sleep, sex as a physiological discharge not too much complicated by delicacies of sense. Then up again and away!

To attend to the senses, to cultivate and enjoy this immediate world, is to shut off some substitute satisfactions. There is no place in this happiness for the future. Something it derives

from the past, in wistful overtones of memory. The lilac is the sweeter to you for remembered lilacs of other years. There are traces of perfume in all the folds of the memory. They come back and re-enforce this present fragrance. But, think of the lilac of tomorrow, of bigger and better lilacs every year, and instantly you are in another world. Perfume vanishes. You are off like a dog on a scent, but not a scent to be reached through your present nose.

In old and ripe civilizations where there seems to be not much left to strive for, men learn to settle in and enjoy present sensation. So, Epicureanism arose in the ripe age of Greece. So, in China, there has been among the few a fine aestheticism bringing touch and scent no less than form and music into the retreat of the cultivated. While a Chinese gentleman was thinking, or dreaming, or sometimes talking quietly with a friend, his long sensitive fingers would be caressing a piece of jade, taking in the chill loveliness of its texture through touch. The lords and ladies at the court of the Fujiwara in Japan would spend days concocting perfumes, each secretly busy behind screens of state from which issued rare and tantalizing whiffs, preparing for the great day when each would offer his specialty in a court competition for the approval of the imperial nose!

So the enjoyment of present sensation is the resource of the old and the wise. The illusions of youth are gone. They have lost the hope of and even the desire for the fairy future. Today is enough—today as it is, sunshine and shadow, heat and cold, snow on the branches and dandelions in the grass. Though the senses may be fresher in youth, they grow more conscious with age. As the shouting and the tumult in the blood die away, their messages are heard. Youth, at its best, is undiscriminating rapture, and its chosen experiences are kinesthetic —the sharp plunge into cold water, the wild rush down the snow-laden slope on skis, the insistent drumming of jazz, the fury of motion, the sharp contrasts of experience. But, as life slows, there is time to attend and discriminate. Most people

who have really grown up remember their youth as a bright sleep. They ran blindly, pursuing visions.

2

The development of life is a slow awakening from slumber. With increasing age, with education, with experience, with the evolution of civilization, the scales begin to drop from the eyes. The external world shrinks. It becomes limited in time and space. But it becomes predictable. One's picture of it begins to match the picture that time and experience will force upon one. The curse of this dream into which man is born, and from which he escapes only in part and through rigorous education, is false expectation. We are always thinking that things are as they don't turn out to be. We build desire and hope and future satisfaction on a foundation that fails us.

The one check we have on this waking dream in which man walks is the evidence of the senses—the report of eye and ear, of taste and smell and touch, the measuring of time and accurate estimate of immediate space, and that knowledge of the future which experience shows to be deducible from careful observation. This is no academic proposition. It vitally affects man's happiness and his safety. Our civilization is rotted with mania. Now and then some crisis like the Hauptmann case, with its thousands of crank letters, its morass of morbid opinion, and outbursts of crazy action, brings home the dreadful fact that many of the people with whom we live and do business are insane. Underlying what appears to be common knowledge and orderly social procedure rendering us safe in our daily affairs, secure in personal freedom and comfort, there is a widespread nightmare. It bursts out constantly in wild and dangerous action. But even when all is quiet the murmured delirium of the sleepers is a kind of low monotone drumming in our ears, subconsciously influencing opinion, shaping social action, and speaking every now and then through the lips of the apparently intelligent and sane

At least half of the sudden and violent crimes are outbursts of this mania. They were unpremeditated even by those who committed them. They do not serve even a perverse purpose of self-aggrandizement. It is only that some one of the many who live always in a nightmare has suddenly walked in his sleep.

No one of us wholly escapes from this dream. We expect what is impossible and worry about what won't happen. Our lives are ruled by fictions—fictions of success, of reputation, of popularity. We spend money to buy nothing and marry to possess a vision. The promise of joy and the actuality of suffering are both illusion. Only in so far as we oppose to this dream a solid and healthy materialism are we either happy or safe. Wealth ought to mean, primarily, not "invisible assets," but good food, good clothes, a comfortable and handsome house, a car, a variety of conditions which nourish, comfort, and charm with pride and with beauty the eye, the ear, the taste, the touch, and the flesh. A wife ought to be neither a dream nor a vision, but a creature good to look at, pleasant to talk to, soft and fragrant in intimate contact, dependable through all the physical and social exigencies of living, loyal, sensible, and practically skillful, and ready and willing to give herself completely in love, with the body no less than the soul. We must insist that our senses and our bodies are arbiters of the good. Beauty begins in the eye, and love in the touch.

In general those parts of the world where man has been happiest, where domestic morality and social justice have most generally prevailed, are those regions where climate and natural resources and racial character have kept the attention of the average man on the problem of making himself individually comfortable in the flesh—England, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries in Europe, and, in the Far East, China. While Spain was looking for gold and the Fountain of Youth in the New World, Englishmen, individually, were casting lines for fish and cutting down the

trees of the forests for homes. The meek shall inherit the earth, and meekness begins for man in accepting himself as the little creature he is, wise only in increasing skill of eye and ear and hand and only a little bigger than circumstance.

Things as they physically are, are our discipline. This yoke of matter is on our necks, and only he who settles down and walks peaceably under it will find the path grow pleasant and flowery beneath his feet. The fundamental law of life is a law which may be seen, heard, felt, smelled, and tasted. It educates our desires, vetoes our impulses, and punishes disobedience with pain. Disregarded, the law of sense is bitter indeed, so bitter that man has wasted his best efforts trying to escape it, in vain. Obeyed and loved, it is comfortable and beautiful and deserves the praise which the poet devoted to a power more abstract.

Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads.
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh and strong.

3

Much that has been called sensuality is a defect in the response of the senses. The glutton and the sot have substituted for the pleasures of taste a hankering whose fulfillment is insensibility. Drunkenness substitutes for the pleasures of eye and ear, of touch and taste, even, a self-induced illusion, and soon wipes even that out in a blank. Though the terror of sense in the past has been mainly a terror of sex, it is the frigid and the sensuously unsatisfied who make the prostitutes and the Don Juans. The cheap little girl who gives herself here and there is, as a sensible man says of her, "dead from the neck down." The unsatisfied male who is always hunting has not learned that what he really seeks inheres, not in the mechanism of sex, but in its sensuous by-products. The genuinely dissipated man is one of the waking dead. Only by

artificial means may he be given a semblance of life, like a puppet jerked by a string.

So with the many who are insanely possessed by one sport, one pleasure, one means of being physically happy. They are jailbirds walled off from the myriad delights of sense, who have broken one hole in the wall of their prison, out of which desire rushes greedily. So with the many who enjoy in prospect, but find a pleasure long hungered for but ashes in the mouth. How many who kiss in imagination find their lips cold and frightened against the warm flesh! Much of the wild rush and hurry, the pursuit of illusory goals in modern life, is due to deadness of sensation—the habit of keeping eyes and taste in abeyance and just going. It is an apathy which the machinery of the present turns to kinetic fury, driving us, blind, deaf, and sense-bound, through the churning seas of apparent activity.

The maladjustment that the psychologists speak of is primarily a failure to grasp the immediate physical life through the senses and to shape desire and effort accordingly. The neurotic is ruled by lying images of sensation. He is haunted by memory and fooled by hope. He opposes to the vast, troubling, and mysterious scheme of things, which is only to be understood with effort and mastered with hard work and in which, at best, he is of small importance, a tawdry little dollhouse of the imagination, in which he is the principal doll. The joys of this imaginary world are a deception. They shine only at a distance and collapse in dust when one comes up to them. Only the pain of disappointment in them is real. It long outlasts the illusion, in loss of love or fortune, in physical pain and social disaster.

It is not easy for us to admit the truth of *things*. The outcry against circumstantial evidence in the Hauptmann case was a sense of outrage that, when wood in a ladder and the tracings of ink on paper and money hidden in a garage speak, they should be believed, and when a man speaks, he should not. A man wants to be as Jehovah is said to have been on the day

of creation. He wants to say, "Let there be," and see a world that suits him immediately emerge. Man's mind never keeps up with his own inventions, and one invention with which we have never caught up is the invention of language. Man uses it to perpetuate the aboriginal dream, trying to fight what eyes, ears, nose, and touch tell him with a windy noise from his own mouth.

Where the dream has not sufficient power to mislead in action, it may still be potent to take the joy out of life. The world is full of romantics whose senses and perceptions serve them well enough for practical purposes but bring them no real happiness. That glamour which inheres in all complete experience is lacking. Full and fresh sensation is always enchanting. It has an element of the wonderful and the dramatic in it, even when it is painful. Where imagination and emotion are not falsely bound to substitute images, past or future, they color and warm everything that happens. All that memory is good for in making present happiness is to provide certain overtones of sensation, a phantasmagoria of background experience against which the present stands out in the round. To make it consist of definite patterns, to which the present must be fitted and against which the present is dwarfed or awry, is no art of living. As for the future, the less it is beglamoured the better, and there is no use turning our energy of love and desire on it, for their is nothing there yet to love. What might seem meat to one's present hunger may well be a poison tomorrow. Individual hopes are almost always betrayed, but a general faith that, if today is well-lived, tomorrow will be good enough when it comes, seldom is.

Where people do not enslave the imagination and the emotions to past or future, they often carry around an imaginary standard of measurement. Every time the senses, in their innocence, report any present pleasure, they hold this out, like a sour schoolma'am, to prove them wrong or at least hopelessly naïve. Often the measurement is too big for the reality. Whatever happens is little against it. This success isn't so

much. This party is trivial and commonplace. This amount of money is far too little. These people are dowdy and dull. Such people often believe with great devoutness that somewhere else, in a place or circumstance which they may specify with great particularity, everything fits their yardstick. There social life is brilliant and beautiful. There money expands to illimitable luxury. There workmen give honest work, and bosses, proper pay. There one's talents would be recognized and opportunity grow wild among the daisies. Many people locate this country in Europe. To the traveled person there is nothing stranger than the passion and persistence with which the untraveled assert the superior excellence of sin in Paris and politics in Russia. Persons with schoolbook culture look for this Utopia in the historical past. "How exquisite life had once been," sighed Dorian Gray. "How gorgeous in its pomp and decoration. Even to read of the luxury of the dead was wonderful." Simple folk content themselves with imagining themselves the sole victims of a mysterious blight. All the glory and brightness and success are possessed by those to whom they refer as "other people." Other people don't have trouble with their servants, disappointments in their guests, and bad luck in their marriage. Other people are usually successful and always appreciated. They see all life but their own in one glossy dimension, as if it were a magazine cover or an advertisement.

The way out of the bad dream of life is to wake up and listen to the robins. It isn't easy. It is as hard as any kind of getting up in the morning. Really to use all one's senses, to keep imagination and feeling from straying off to some other region, is a perpetual discipline, which, nevertheless, brings an exceeding great reward. The happiness that men have found in their senses makes the whole fabric of civilization. Poetry and drama are the story of it. Art is the picture of it. Music is its song. Nature pours out delight on man in incredible abundance, and man adds his own inventions for gladness perpetually. There are not enough perfumes in the flowers; he

must make more for himself out of bark and gum and animal secretions. There is not enough music in the brook and the sigh of the wind in the pines and the throat of a bird; he will fain make a violin, and a piano, and an orchestra. All these things belong to us. Ours is the green world and an estate of civilization growing richer with every generation. Why invent imaginary worlds when life is all too short to catch up with the one we are in? The plain and solid substance of life is not dull. When we take the light of the imagination and of feeling off the make-believe and turn it on the stuff that eyes, ears, and fingers tell us is here, that stuff glows like a jewel.

The possibilities of progress and refinement in sensory experience are endless. We shall die before entering into our full inheritance of sensation. Educate ourselves all our lives long, and we shall still be inadequate. This is a lifelong adventure—to take from the world what we are welcome to make our own, in sight, in hearing, in sensory experience of every sort, and it is an adventure that is all one's own, independent of money or time. In any situation, one can always fall back on one's senses and use them.

For what has he whose sense sees clear
To do with doubt and faith and fear,
Swift hopes and slow despondencies?
His heart is equal with the sea's
And with the sea-wind's, and his ear
Is level to the speech of these,
And his soul communes and takes cheer
With the actual earth's equalities,
Air, light, and night, hills, winds, and streams,
And seeks not strength from strengthless dreams.

He builds not half of doubts and half
Of dreams his own soul's cenotaph
Whence hopes and fears with helpless eyes,

Wrapt loose in cast-off cerecloths, rise,
And dance and wring their hands and laugh,
And weep thin tears and sigh light sighs,
And without living lips would quaff
The living spring in man that lies,
And drain his soul of faith and strength
It might have lived on a life's length.

—SWINBURNE

Contentment in Wealth

If you'd avoid our late lamented smash
Don't sell your homestead or your heart for cash,
Nor agitate your non-conformist bones
To keep in airy step with Mrs. Jones.

The Moral Assurance of Wealth—VIII

FEW burdens blister our shoulders like that bulging package of shames, humiliations, prides, fears, and pretenses which we have gathered around the idea of money. What is the most uncomfortable moment of the average day? It is the moment when someone calls you up and reminds you of a bill, or when you must yourself dun some one for money. Whether you owe money or someone owes it to you, you seem to feel equally ashamed of it. A friend comes in to borrow money. He is embarrassed because he needs it, and you, because you do not have it to give. If you have it, and lend it in a high, generous mood, you know that by this debt you have raised an invisible barrier between you. Bidding him good-by, your heart whispers, "There goes my money for a while, but my friend for ever." Even minor financial transactions are a discomfort. Who ever felt easy about giving a tip?

This uneasiness about money we cover with pretenses. Certain classes of service are not, admittedly, given for money. Every one concerned must put a false face on the crude fact of remuneration. One does not like to pay money directly into the hands of the doctor or the dentist. One waits for the attendant to whisper discreetly the amount. The metal which might infect the pure hand of healing is purified by being passed through another palm. There is a similar bother about fees for weddings and funerals. The man of God should come

with something of the generosity of God, from whom we do not have to buy the sunshine or the rain.

The principal of a state normal school engaged a distinguished lecturer to give an address to the school. Because of local banking conditions, he could not give the lecturer his check at the time. Not long afterward he came out to the lecturer's house with a carful of friends. A man of the world would have handed the lecturer an envelope containing the check, openly saying with a smile, "I am sorry we are so late." But this rural educator belonged to that antique tradition of gentility to which money is an acute embarrassment. He blushed. He stood around preoccupied. Finally he said, with awkward jocoseness, "Come behind the barn. I have something to tell you." Puzzled, but expecting some shocking revelation, the lecturer went. There, blushing, the principal handed him a bank-note!

This feeling that money is shameful is very old. In practically every one of the older civilizations the wealthy, at the top of society, tried to maintain a personal detachment from money and the labor which supported them. Greek ethics is most toploftical about this. Commerce, money-making, industry—all these are matters for slaves. The heroine of one of Balzac's stories receives the deathblow to her love when she sees her lover selling goods over a counter. English aristocracy affected to despise all those who were "in trade." But this aristocracy was supported either by foreign investments or by receipts from landed estates where produce was raised and sold to maintain their lordships—and this was but trade at second hand. The old-fashioned Chinese gentleman wore fingernails too long to allow him to pick up a string of cash, or to make for himself one of those ingenious and lovely articles which constantly appeared for his use from below. The Japanese samurai could kill others with art and dispatch and carve himself up handsomely when honor demanded, but he left to his faithful retainers the vulgar business of finding the wherewithal to keep him alive. The origins of this almost

universal attitude to money are obscure. It is of one piece with the whole of man's fairytale about himself, his unwillingness to accept the plain and finite bounds of physical life, his capacity for projecting an imaginary world of which he is the sole glory.

The fairy tale about money takes many other forms. There is the objection to stating the source or the amount of one's income. One would like to have it believed that the jinn brought the gold, just as the stork brought the baby. While there is nothing more definite than a given amount of money, and few things harder to get than more money, we erase the finite bounds of cash with an airy hand. There is a general social understanding that one could pay, if one would. When one is acting the gentleman, a dollar more or less makes no difference. Caught in some social predicament, like paying for drinks he does not want at an expensive bar, a man must fling down a week's food or the month's rent in gallant defense of the lie.

Our pretenses about money extend to every honest means of getting it. Most people feel a little humiliated in asking for a job, as if they were temporarily beggars. Nothing is more honorable than the wish to work, but some rags and tags of old aristocratic prejudice makes us shamefaced about it. Many pretend that they do not have to work for a living. This is the common fiction with regard to working wives. They do it because they like it.

Nothing makes sense in our myth of money. At one level of life it is a disgrace to live on charity—to be supported on a government dole, or the town's poor fund, or the kindness of a neighbor. At another level, it is an honor and distinction to live on somebody else—on money squeezed from the labor of children or from underpaid young girls, wrung from other people's need through profiteering on necessities. Our thinking about money is still in the stage that all thinking about sex was a generation ago. There is the same airy superstructure of

inconsistent pretenses, the same reticences, avoidances, furtiveness, and shame.

2

Nine-tenths of the suffering associated with money among those who live above the poverty line has nothing to do with actual want or even the near prospect of it. It is simply the individual's share in the general social neurosis. This makes debt a nightmare. This brings the chill and shudder between you and the man with whom you have money dealings. This makes for the flight of capital from land to land on the wings of rumor. This awakes us in the gray early morning with the sweat of worry on our brow. This drives some even to mania and suicide.

But the reward of those who truly believe the money myth is poverty. The only ones who manage to keep a steady hold of wealth are those who don't believe the money lie, though they often cheerfully tell it to others. The lower the standard of actual wealth, the more the money myth flourishes. It is in the slums that one finds in their perfection those delicacies of health or taste or caste which won't allow one to do this or that work, the high hopes of the invention that will in one minute bring a fortune, the hints about rich uncles who will leave a legacy, the stories of one or another who has been plucked out of poverty and lifted up to wear a diamond necklace and divorce a rich husband on the front page of the tabloid.

As one climbs upward, everywhere one finds people keeping themselves poor by some pathetic worship, not of the money-god but of his lying double. The exploiters live on these poor believers—who think it beneath them to question prices or values, who won't haggle over the terms of a lease or a contract, who won't descend to this or that work, who can have their pennies jockeyed out of their fingers on any sort of promise, who can be run into debt for nothing and then scared sick by the debt collectors.

Political democracy began with the silent skepticism of the common man with regard to the divinity that hedged about the king and his perception that, if he rose up and defied the man on the throne, the gods wouldn't do anything to him. So economic democracy will come when we stop believing in all the hocus-pocus that now hedges in the idea of money; when each man not only sees that he gets his own little store of economic nuts, but, when he gets them, keeps guard on them and refuses to let himself be bullied or charmed into giving them up for nothing.

3

For the individual it is not easy to think and work his way out of the general economic nightmare. There has been no attack yet on our economic superstition comparable to that which has brought the light of day into the individual's management of health or his thoughts and feelings about sex. This is the crudest and most backward element in our social design. The whole world is bogged in financial superstition, and no individual can quite get his feet clear of the mud. But something the individual can do. It is straightforward; it is crude; it is not sufficient, but it gives him a start. He can take this collection of economic pretenses by which we are ruled, and, severally and individually, he can say to each of them, "You are a lie." And then, wherever pride, the opinions of the neighbors, the promise of the promoter, the threat of the lawyer, and the dulcet voice of gentility advise him to walk in one direction, he can turn on his heel and walk in the opposite direction. If he keeps on going, he will ultimately walk out of a whole jungle of worries and inconveniences and find himself bounding along with a little cash in his pocket and a rather pleasant demesne of property ahead, a free man for the first time in his life.

The first of the pretenses to which one must give the lie is the pretense that money does not matter. It matters desperately. Without it you have neither life nor health, nor love,

nor personal freedom, nor moral integrity. And there is no amount of money so small that it does not matter. For lack of a five-cent fare you may be unable to succor a friend in distress or obtain an opportunity which means a whole lifetime of happy work. For lack of a three-cent stamp, you may lose a sweetheart or your life. Lucky is he who has early had the transcendent importance of money, of money not only in large sums but in small, burned into him by experience, without thereby learning to think meanly of it.

There is no more necessity for being vulgar in one's thoughts of money than in one's thoughts of sex. Let this penny shine in your hand in the light of rational thought and sympathetic social imagination. It is heavy with the burden of human labor, and bright with human enterprise and ingenuity. It keeps all the goods and services and joys of men circulating. It will buy you not only food and clothes and warmth, but security in your love, happiness in your children, and the moral freedom to say "No" to the man who would buy you or enslave you against your will.

Once a man has an honest respect for money, it is easier both to earn it with dignity and to spend it with wisdom. He has something within him which protects him from that subtle bulldozing whose end is to crush enterprise under cowardice, to bind labor in idleness, and jockey the solid goods of life out of one's fingers in exchange for promises, humiliations, and fears.

Where money is respected, one must respect any honest means of getting it. It is better to earn money by any means short of those which bring direct harm to other people than not to have it at all. It is better, in such extreme cases as became all too common during the Depression when money was not to be had by work, to take it as a gift, or as charity, or a dole, rather than to sit and fester in one's pride and humiliation. It is a test of personal dignity and rational social thinking to face down in misfortune that poisonous cloud of shame and pretense in private ownership which we have

interposed between ourselves and the original generosity of Nature.

So, also, if one is to work free of this virus in our social life, one must take pride in thrift. There is no art which is not thrifty. The actor, with all the gestures in the world at his command, takes pride in conveying the widest and subtlest meaning with the least change of expression. The poet makes a sonnet not out of the whole dictionary but out of a slim hundred words. Though the world is rich to overflowing, something impels us to conquer matter with mind by showing that, in all arts, we can make the least go the farthest. Only in the management of money a vicious and silly pride, born originally of robbery, identifies thrift with meanness. Meanness consists rather in generosity at some one else's expense. To be thrifty, because thrift is art, to be thrifty with time, with materials, with money, may have all the nobility of fine craftsmanship. There is nothing beautiful in waste, even if what is wasted is one's own. It is childish, ignorant, unskillful. But wasters in general do not waste their own. What they are so handsomely generous with usually belongs to some one else.

Some day, when this least civilized portion of our psyche is subjected to a little culture, shame will cling only to all money gained through luck. It is beneath man's dignity to hang his future or his living on a jade so senseless as Fortune. If the lady is not vicious, she is nevertheless no better than she should be, and no one is honored in her gifts. A man is a man just in proportion as he has in his own wits a little security against the blind chance of life. Good fortune hoped for or counted on is already a misfortune.

Still, luck is fun. Only, in the conduct of our daily affairs, it ought to be moved to that airy realm where we keep our dissipations, our flirtations, and our cocktails. The only luck that makes joy is luck completely unforeseen. One must take it as one takes a fine day, and gambol in the sunshine and forget it, for, if tomorrow is not rainy, the day after surely will be. It

is good only as frosting spread unexpectedly on a cake of one's own baking that would be good enough eating without it.

The man who respects money, who is willing to earn it by any honest means rather than be without it, and is disinclined to have it charmed out of his fingers by pride, speculation, or the opinions of the neighbors, a man in whom thrift and good management have something of the pride of art—such a man is not long poor in any society. At the present moment this attitude, which has served since Adam first spaded the garden in the sweat of his brow, is being attacked by honeyed voices which whisper that no man now needs to maintain an economic backbone of his own. Let him relax in spineless inactivity, like a jellyfish, and enjoy his leisure, while the economy of abundance votes him a pension. Practically speaking, there is some reason in this. The present agricultural and industrial potentiality of the world is such that even the utmost exercise of man's wits will not long suffice to keep us poor. The only hope of retaining poverty is that our obvious psychic inadequacy to the wealth we are already making will ultimately blow up our economic machine and force us to start again from scratch with primitive tools and organization. Society is at present desperately, with bleeding hands and aching backs, trying to build dams against a flood of coming wealth, which threatens to carry former distinctions, gentilities, and patterns of culture out to sea and deposit on everything a fine new fertile layer of mud.

But it is man's dilemma that, while the world is rich, his own impulse to art and skill is keyed to poverty. When actual poverty deserts us, we may have to get a social substitute for it. Whatever machinery and economics may be about to do, for us, in our generation, the only security lies in the ancient virtues of hard work, enterprise, and thrift. They are a little ironic, in the face of things as they are, and when some old bankers talk about them, one feels impelled to violence. Nevertheless, in the face of universal economic insecurity, if anything serves for material comfort, they do. And psy-

chologically, they are still indispensable. The real reason for conducting your financial affairs with decent respect for money, with a willingness to work, a distrust of fortune, and a pride in thrift is not that it will make you financially comfortable—though it probably will—but that it gives you the peace of sanity. It scatters the various goblins and witches which make men start up in the night, wild-eyed with fear, though there is money in the bank; which keeps them cringing before the boss, swaggering with expenses they cannot afford, and thinking of suicide when they actually have everything to live for. It is obvious that there is in modern life a fatal disease of which the infection is spread by money. At its worst it ends in mania and self-murder. Most of us have a touch of it. States and societies are rotten with it. If one wants to be wealthy in this world, and as happy as one should be in wealth, one must learn to distinguish what is true wealth in this madhouse and to get it and hang on to it, and one must also have a psychological antisepsis against economic malaria.

4

Of course it would be easy to get money and to keep it, if money were actually to be earned by anyone who wanted to work, and if it could be kept safe over long periods. Neither of these conditions exists. Employment is uncertain, and profits are precarious. And ever since banks were invented, banks have smashed every few years. One gets money in modern life the way the animal gets his prey. One must be perpetually on the hunt for it. The people who keep themselves well-supplied with income from jobs or profits are not necessarily the best workers nor creators of the best goods. They are the people who know how to hunt for the opportunity to make money. To know how to find a job or a client is the main thing.

The true workers and creators of the world carry a host of parasites who feed on them. The big cities like New York are

full of people always looking for a creative or fortunate person who is also a sucker. If you get a little fame, they are all ready to show you how to make money by it. If you have some money, they propose to make you famous by giving you a chance to endow a charity or a literary society—to be run, of course, by themselves on a good salary. The air buzzes with insects hungry for your economic blood. The propagandists and the advertisers and promoters sit and spin shining webs to entangle you.

Of course these parasites are nothing new. They were as numerous and greedy in Athens and in Rome. They have nothing to do with the true entrepreneurs, tradesmen, and salesmen, who have been the carriers and interpreters of material civilization. If we are ever to digest the enormous wealth which the machine makes possible, we shall have to have more and better advertising and salesmanship. He who shows you how to use an invention, to amalgamate it with your existing culture pattern, to translate a tangible, like an icebox or an electric gadget, into an intangible, like leisure, hospitality, or cleanliness, adds something to that machine more precious than paint or oil. But against the real interpreters of the machine in terms of civilization and human happiness one must set a host of pretenders and liars.

A narrow shrewdness, a willingness to hunt for money as such, and some cleverness in outwitting other hunters may still be necessary in our jungle if a man is to keep clear of the greater demoralization of being without needful cash. The only thing to do is to cultivate as much shrewdness as necessary but keep it within the narrowest possible bounds. This is not quite as immoral as it sounds, for nine-tenths of shrewdness consists in a skeptical attitude toward the money myth. Genuine honesty and integrity need only to be sharpened up by a little experience and a determination not to be fooled to outmatch the best blades of the rascals.

And since getting money, in our civilization, is a difficult and uncertain process and somewhat repugnant to man's

inherited notion of himself and the ends of life, one ought to make every dollar stretch over as much actual wealth and personal happiness as possible. As Lord Bacon said, it is better to stoop to small savings than to small ways of making money. The one hope of capitalism is to force the lowering of prices and increased consumption of goods while raising wages. Every dollar in the spender's hand is a means to that end. Every penny you spend may be a vote for the industrialist who is giving better goods for less money and so making a wider distribution of real wealth possible. Every penny you pay beyond the needful price is the tax that you pay on the luxury of your pride to an invisible and corrupt industrial government which is keeping the world needlessly poor. Enterprise in making money may be more and more limited in our civilization—at least for a while. But enterprise in spending it may increasingly expand. Here are the real triumphs in personal finance. Here is that exercise of the creative imagination in wresting goods out of life which in cruder times men found in exploiting the earth for raw materials. In earning money one may be at present enslaved. In spending it one is a free man. There is no financier or industrial magnate so strong that he does not have to kowtow to the man who buys his goods. Through exercise of the power of spending, any economic tyrant could be brought toppling to the earth.

This elasticity in the dollar you spend is due to the fact that there is at present very little relation between values fixed by custom or by producers and the satisfaction which is actually bought. The trim little shopgirl, stepping down the street in a $4.95 dress, may have bought more pride in her appearance, more charm in the eyes of others, more feeling that she has what she wants and is getting on in life than a dowager stepping into her limousine in a mink coat. To some extent we are all capitalized. And the possession of intangible capital gives one just so much freedom to spend tangible money as one pleases. The dowager is capitalized in her fur and her limousine. But the shopgirl is capitalized in youth

and beauty and hope. Years ago, when I was writing some fashion copy, a wise and experienced editor of a great fashion magazine, hearing my remarks on an expensive trade-showing, turned to me and said, "My dear, you are still green. You'll never know this business till you realize that all expensive clothes are made for the old, the fat, and the homely." When I looked amazed, she pointed to a little clerk and said, "Look at that little girl. I could put her in a cheap ready-made suit, with some violets at her belt, an inexpensive hat and gloves, and a pair of simple Oxfords, and she'd take the eye right off the richest clothes here. No woman with a slender figure, a charming face, and a good walk needs to spend more than twenty-five dollars for a costume. She's a fool if she does."

"You can buy joy for a penny," says the poet. So you can, and every penny is not only joy but innumerable specific joys of quite different textures and flavors. The amount one really needs to spend may always be measured against the much greater amount one may, in any given circumstances, get for nothing. It would be a wise budgeting to keep not only a record of all money spent, but a parallel record of the amount of satisfaction actually bought for it, and to correct this against another list of capital goods—tangible and intangible —which one could utilize to get the same satisfaction for less money or for nothing.

What you don't need to spend is your power, your freedom, and your security. This is a variable quantity but far larger than we realize. It can be used to add indefinite values to every cent.

5

Some money everyone needs, and a man's first consideration should be to get it. But how much he needs is quite another question. The worst inflation is that social gas which we keep blowing into the dollar. In our present economic situation the dollar may be uncertain and hard to get, but the number, variety, and cheapness of the satisfactions to be got for it in-

crease all the time. If you rigorously limit your conception of what may be bought for money to your own needs and experience—the amount of house you can comfortably live and entertain in, the service which really releases you from toil instead of being a worry and responsibility, meals which nourish, please the palate, and don't make you sick or fat, clothes that can be worn out before they go out of style, recreations which really make you happy—you find that the total of any man's real wants, in terms of our civilization, does not involve an enormous amount of cash.

It has been suggested that, in any industry, the highest salary should be no more than ten times as much as the lowest wage. The suggestion raised an outcry. Yet, as a matter of fact, in terms of the present goods of the American civilization, the highest economic and social well-being does not involve more than about ten times the expense of the lowest level of genuine sufficiency. To figure this, however, one must include the intangibles and the inherited goods from the past which capitalize average present living. For example, on the lowest satisfactory level there are pleasant villages, well equipped with churches, parks, and other public property, where the good life, the abundant life even, in American terms, is obtainable for an American family for an actual cash income of $1500 a year. One can point to couples with two or three children living happily on this amount. They have a house with a garden, modern plumbing, electric lights, and some mechanical conveniences, enough to leave housework a light and agreeable occupation. They belong to local lodges and clubs. They read books and magazines from the local library. They have a car. There is usually some local music or drama in which the more talented or artistically enterprising participate. There are local dances and an accessible motion-picture theatre. The family takes occasional trips in the car. The children attend the public school, but the family is saving a little for college or vocational training and has a small reserve against illness or trouble. Thousands of American

families thus live up to the full level of their own capacity for social, cultural, and emotional satisfaction. The only way to make more money worth while to them would be to increase their taste or capacity for enjoyment.

On the upper level, there are many distinguished people in public life, persons in the Social Register, persons of wide social contacts here and abroad, who meet all the actual necessities of the highest life of our present social aristocracy on $15,000 a year. They belong to the "right" clubs. They are present at the social performances reported on the social page. They go abroad. They send their children to certain schools and colleges. They entertain pleasantly. They have adequate clothes and cars. They come and go among the wealthiest at no disadvantage. What they do may be done simply. But it is all right. They also are capitalized—capitalized in social skills, in inherited position, in acquaintanceship, in special talents or achievements. No matter how much money they might spend, they could not get much more, for already they seem to have everything.

Where people have money beyond their own personal capacity to use and enjoy it, they usually spend it in working for other people for nothing. They give lavish entertainments—in other words, run free clubs and restaurants. They have country houses full of guests, and so run country hotels. It is very nice to work for other people for nothing. But it can be done just as well without money. The effect of the present abundance of goods is to take all the pride and distinction out of possessions. If one really wants to show off it must be with something else.

Every person has to keep his idea of cash tied fast to the gold standard of what is, for him, the good of life. In turning money into personal satisfaction the law of diminishing returns inevitably works. At a certain basic level, money is indispensable. The expense of a little cash seems to yield an enormous return. Some bread and milk may keep you from starving. A few dollars spent on a coat or on coal may keep

you from freezing. A doctor called in time may keep you from dying. But as one progresses upward through the various levels of expense, for comfort and then for social pride or cultural satisfaction, one spends more and more to get less and less. Soon it is not worth while to spend money but to get the fun some other way. Hard as earning money now is, unnecessarily uncertain as our rotten social system often makes it, there is thus a blessed limit set to the slavery. As Arnold Bennett says, it is easy enough for a man to get the wherewithal to buy anything he needs in this world, so long as he does not need the admiration of snobs.

Our Neighbors, the Joneses—IX

WE all know the problem of the Joneses. They are trouble enough in themselves, and probably all that is necessary to make some of us happy is an invitation to their several funerals. But worse than the Joneses themselves is the preaching we get on the subject. One would think, to hear the moralists talk, that to stop trying to keep up with the Joneses was easy. It is just as easy as giving up one's religion, one's love, one's friends, one's means of livelihood, and the drama and pride of personal achievement. For the Joneses have their fingers in all these, and if we wrench ourselves away too suddenly, we are likely to leave with them most of what we have loved and striven for in life. Wives have divorced husbands to stay with the Joneses. Children have left their father's house to go off and dance with the Joneses. Men have seen their business depart and become amalgamated with "Jones, Incorporated." It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for us to enter into the kingdom of happiness with that pack which the Joneses have bound to our aching backs. Nevertheless, if being happy depends on selling all the gaudy goods which we keep by permission of the Joneses, we may well turn away helpless and not a little sad.

The manner in which the Joneses rule us is well known. When they get a new Buick, we must get a Lincoln. No matter if the old car is in good condition. No matter that the pay-

ments mean hocking our bank account and our peace of mind. We must do it. When they send Johnnie to an expensive private day school, we must make haste to dispatch Jimmie to a private boarding school. When we object to Eleanor's going to her fifth prom in three weeks, all she needs to say is, "But Mother, Madeline Jones is going," and, hastily, we reconsider. Father has his moments of fretting at this domestic rule, but he always ends by coming around, for Mr. Jones rules him at the club and the office. He has his lunch at the club, where he systematically overeats and drinks what he doesn't always want and piles up a bill that embarrasses him because it wouldn't do for Jones not to think him prosperous. A man must go along with his friends. There are one or two superfluous rooms at his office and a stenographer or two that he might dispense with. But it wouldn't look well. Business will pick up, and he wouldn't want Jones to think he wasn't doing well. And is Jones himself so rich, secure, and socially omniscient? No, indeed, he is the same sort of person that Father is, and his wife the same sort of person that Mother is, and while Eleanor is saying, "But Mother, Madeline is going," Madeline is saying just as effectively, "But Mother, Eleanor Smith is going." As to what possesses Jones and Smith to make gods of each other, your guess is as good as mine.

2

We are bound to the Joneses by great and holy ties. In the first place, we share a common religion. The God of this religion is a little vague, but he holds us by that wish which has always turned man to God, the desire to be better than we are. And the prostrations at his altar are fixed by infallible social ritual—so many bridesmaids at the wedding, such and such plate on the table, such and such mixture in the drinks. He controls all our life by a code more exacting than Moses ever dreamed of—such and such food, such and such clothes from such and such shops. Underlying all these minutiae are a few great general laws of behavior. One is that one must

never do anything one really wants to. Another is that one must always spend more than the thing is worth. And a third is that any secret inconvenience or privation must be gallantly incurred whenever it is necessary to keep up the show. The Heaven that is held out to the true believer is the prospect of doing more of what he is now so miserably and feverishly doing. The Hell is the hell of excommunication. You will be cold-shouldered. You will not be invited. You will be whispered against or worked against in silence. And this excommunication is one before which even a brave man might quail. For it may easily take from you all that you have genuinely loved and what appears, at the time, to be your whole opportunity for genuine achievement. As a matter of fact, this excommunication is usually not very serious. The Joneses are a fraud, and the harm they can do is as empty as the goods they offer. But one has to get a long distance away from them, sometimes, to see that. And, meanwhile, the pain of offending them, though its roots are only in the imagination and the poison is all in the smell, is a pain nonetheless.

But religion is only one of the great ties that bind us to the Joneses. We are as closely bound by love. You may have married Miss Jones. Certainly, if you were the right sort, the Joneses approved of the match, and naturally you are anxious that they shall not lose their good opinion of you as one able to keep a sweet girl in that station to which the Joneses have trained her. Your hopes and plans for a home together were made to a pattern the Joneses had set. Genuine love went into them, and a fervor of young happiness. If the burdens you took on were artificial and unnecessary, the strength in you that rose to meet them was honest and manly. You had admired Mrs. Jones. She was chic, graceful, smart, and always knew how to do things. And you knew that she was given the courage to keep going in the hard way you were all brought up to by a genuine devotion to her husband's and children's welfare—as she saw it. You knew she had "made

a success of Jones." You expected your wife, as she grew older, to be just like her.

Then there are the children. As they grow out of that sweet period when they look to you as gods and givers of all good and seek to understand the world outside their homes, to formulate standards, to learn the tricks which serve them best abroad, you naturally begin to shrink from parental godhead to human stature. You don't want to shrink any faster than you have to. You'd like to prolong that period when they think you can do everything and give them anything. You don't want them to know any sooner than they have to that some men are richer or more successful than you. If Jones can do it for his children, you can. And Jones, seeing you do it, grits his teeth and says, "If Smith can do it, I can." But the children are no happier. For human desire can outrun any god. They only seem to themselves to have less and less in proportion as your goodness leads them to want more and more, and, missing happiness, think that you, in your omnipotence, are taking it from them, and hate you in consequence.

And beyond religion and love there is something even more intimate that binds you to the Joneses. It is the sentiment of self-regard, the desire to be something and do something in life. The sign of power in a man, in the society ruled by the Joneses, is the earning of money and the capacity to carry responsibility easily and handsomely. Moreover, to him that hath shall be given, and unless you advertise your capability through showing off what it earns for you, you may miss your opportunity for a larger display of your talents. So at least they tell you and you believe. What would happen to you if you didn't believe you dare not think. Probably not much. But you don't know that, you poor chump.

3

In a way, this crazy competition with the Joneses is the same disease as the money mania. But there are some elements

in it that are not so bad, and whereas money has always spread a certain amount of insanity, there is much in the delusion of keeping up with the Joneses that is peculiar to comparatively recent times. People always have competed with each other and showed off before each other. But the opportunity for pulling the wool over each other's eyes as Smith and Jones do is one of the superior advantages of the age of print, locomotion, and democracy. In old and settled communities, the Joneses may swank for all they are worth, but, after all, one does know who their great-grandfathers were. So an old landed lord might pretend to be rich. He might pawn the family plate for money to raise a troop of horse for the king. He might entertain lavishly. But it could not last for long. All wealth was too solid and too established. Your neighbors either saw it unmistakably spread around you or visibly rotting in your house and fields. If a lord didn't have so many acres, so many fat kine, so much coming in from so many tenants, what did he have? Now, however, the secrecy of banking, the general invisibility of assets, the handsome flurry of words we can raise about us—mention in the social column, publicity well placed in the credulous ear of a young journalist, gossip set going in clubs and places where people have no historic knowledge of us and no particular check on us—all this allows for considerable jugglery.

Again, there is the beautiful idea of every man a king. A lot of foolish homage was formerly paid to kings, but at least a king was a particular and, fortunately, a rather rare species. He had his points, his markings, and his pedigree. Now, even on thrones there are no real kings, which leaves any man free to be anything he can get away with.

This freedom of jugglery and pretense we have grafted on to very old ideas of tribal control. Instead of being really free, mobile, modern persons, in a mobile, unsubstantial world, where if few can check up on us few also should hold us, we have voluntarily kept the sanctions and taboos of the tribe. It is no longer a real tribe. It is imaginary, comprised of people

to whom we refer as "They" or as "People"—"They say," or "We don't want people to think." And while we are all pretending to be kings, we have actually kept so much of the old habit of subservience once natural to serfs or other underdogs that we raise even Jones to kingly power over us, fearing to offend him, believing that, if we propitiate and obey, all good will attend us.

Chains that our ancestors actually knocked off two and three centuries ago still cling round our limbs as shadows, binding us with a dreadful, imaginary force. Those very forces which have made it possible for us to strut and pretend, destroying old landmarks of birth or wealth, have also destroyed the old power of individual persons over our welfare. The forces on which our life and livelihood depend are increasingly collective and invisible. What may throw us out of our jobs is not the opinion of old Swankum but a fall in stocks, something quite out of our hands or his. But many people try to do business and bring up their children in a world peopled with various mythical lords, dukes, and earls, from whom inestimable blessings would flow to us and ours, if only we could get at them. "If I could just get an introduction to the head of the Simla Oil Concern, and if John could get Mrs. So and So to take an interest in him—She's such a social leader. She knows everybody—" etc., etc. The modern era began when the common man perceived that even actual dukes and earls with large lands, and troops at their backs, were not nearly so much as they pretended to be. What can one say of these purely imaginary lords and leaders of our day, of whom the best are pawns on the chessboard of necessity, and most of them but upstarts in their actual capacity to help or hinder us—here today, gone tomorrow? We have replaced the real power of men over our welfare with social shadows. And shadows are more terrifying than real persons. You can't fight them. You can't kill them. You can't run away from them, for they run after you. You can only, if you have eyes, stare them down.

4

There is something better than a clutch on our cringing souls of an old and vanished social power, in our subservience to the Joneses. The inventions of the modern era and the vast and rapid spread of social comfort and refinement have lifted great numbers of men swiftly out of the crudities of older forms of economic life. Behind Smith and Jones is a memory of grinding poverty, of dirt and mess, of rough manners and vulgar bodily limitations. Smith, living on the modest salary of a high-school principal, with a dainty wife and two children, in a little house smartly provided with hot and cold water and an electric washing machine, remembers how his own mother washed in an old washtub for nine children, and how he carried out all the slops, pail by pail. Every Monday, when all the fresh and pretty family linen goes out on the line by nine-thirty and his wife dresses up and goes off to lunch with the bridge club, he thinks of the gray, soapy stew of his own old home on washday, of the tired mother with her hair dragging against her steaming face and her slatternly wrapper wet with suds, hastily throwing some cold homebaked bread, three days old, and apple butter, and boiled potatoes on the bare kitchen table in the middle of the mess and calling it dinner. He ought to think of the difference with gratitude and satisfaction, and so at times he does. But much of the time he cannot believe in the present. He is still in his own imagination the loutish son of that old worn mother, carrying out the dirty suds, and to be what he is now seems a pretense. So he clutches at all he now has. He heightens the pretense. He strains himself. He adds to it, as if more and more things would give the lie to the memory, would fortify him, would prove to himself and the world that he is now what he seems to be. So, when Jones adds to the washing machine a girl to hang out the clothes, terror seizes him. He will not be pushed back. If a girl, also, is necessary to this immediate fiction, a girl his wife shall have, too.

Behind most of the competitive souls, behind the striving, the pretense, the mad rush to get more and more of the shining modern things, there are these memories. They are not shadows. They are immediate. They are often brought back to one, face to face, in the older members of the family, in friends of childhood who have not made the rapid leap into the gay present. There are, of course, groups of climbers who have no such background. The psychology of the climber may last for many generations, may become fixed as a social attitude and be transmitted even in groups and families which have been long at the level of comfort that is now generally available but was, even a generation or two ago, the exclusive property of a very few. There are also those who formerly had the pride of being above the general constriction and mess, of being the few "gentry" in small places. As more and more people rise from nowhere and appropriate the education, dress, and manners once limited to a caste, the gentry take fright. They can't let Jones, Jones with his background, get ahead of them. So they begin to run as fast as they can, on the social floor that spins away under them, in order to keep standing where they are.

Nor is the competition with the Joneses limited to material things. Indeed material things are the least part of it. What these people have risen to is a truly better life—to sweeter manners, to customs that give gaiety and color to the day, to a certain freedom of conscience with regard to drink, cards, and flirtation, to education, and to honorable repute among the neighbors. All this was once the property of the aristocrat, something rightly admired in the few aristocrats who floated by on fairy wings above the formerly submerged masses of men. Around these bright beings clung all the romance of civilization. There is an effort to appropriate this romance in the imitativeness of Smith with regard to Jones. Most people who have risen in life have risen necessarily by imitation. They had to take other people as their patterns. They had to

fear errors and blush for mistakes. They had to be wary and observant. They had to play their new part in life, at first, only as a part.

There is nothing despicable about the uncertainty of new societies—their anxiety and exactitude about small points of manners, their readiness to avoid this or that person on superficial grounds, their imaginative imitativeness. Those who are more securely settled in economic comfort and the culture that goes with it may laugh at the social aspirations of Mrs. Jones from the West. But the person that is truly despicable is not Mrs. Jones but the fortunate one who laughs. There is nothing despicable in being a culture-hound. Social climbers often have something much better in them than those who sit secure at the top of the ladder and push the others back.

The society actually created by Smith and Jones is in many respects better than that of the old gentry. One has only to go from some modern, showy, suburban group into the exclusive inner circles of some old city like New York or Boston, where people who have inherited some of the old wealth of the city still live in their dark old houses and move in circles closely bound together by blood relationship, to see that Smith and Jones have really overreached the people they started out to imitate. They have greater physical refinement, "smoother" manners, more wits and mental activity, a brighter, more dashing adequacy to the whole business of living. What they lack is security and unity. Their past is at war with their present. The ties that bind them to each other are ephemeral. Their lawgivers are not genuine old dowagers, with historic dignity behind them, but temporary incumbents, elected from their own midst. And, above all, they are haunted by the suspicion that they themselves are not real. They are only a pretense. As a matter of fact they are less of a pretense than the left-over gentry. But to feel yourself secure even when you aren't is a lesson learned at the mother's knee.

5

Painful as this business of keeping up with the Joneses is, it has its moments of hectic joy. It sometimes represents life on the upward move, the drama of something achieved, the perpetual excitement of laying the old ghosts. It is a caricature of satisfactions that are quite legitimate for the unregenerate soul of man. Even a man of sense might enjoy a little competition, now and then, nor be wholly above showing off. To stand well with the neighbors, to do what is usually done as well as anybody, perhaps a little better, to be successful in ordinary ways and display it by ordinary tokens, to be quick and imitative in making use of all that our own age brings us, and not above taking a hint from our betters—this is no crime. It adds ripple and sparkle to the social stream. What is wrong in keeping up with the Joneses is the element of the ghostly in it—the magnifying of Jones, poor old Jones, with his bald head and his poor golf stroke and his own note coming due at the bank, into the stature of all the kings and earls that ever held the power of life or death over a cowering serf; the magnifying of the miscellaneous opinions of miscellaneous people into the solemn prehistoric taboo of the tribe; the dressing up of our perfectly legitimate satisfaction in possessions, and of our efforts to better our manners and improve our minds, in the discarded rags of a vanishing gentry. Nor need the memories of some other less satisfactory state pursue us as the Furies pursued Orestes in vengeance for his murdered mother. What we are now we have a perfect right to be. There is no need to pretend—only to live in the present. And, meanwhile, it is foolish to believe any one else's pretense.

It is the ghosts who drive us into debt, the ghosts that whisper, "You are not what you claim to be. But don't let them know it. Prove it. Prove it." It is the ghosts who keep us running breathless, cracking false promises and lying penalties over our heads like a whip. Smith and Jones now

advance on each other like those painted warriors who used to decorate their forms and faces in fierce colors both to scare the enemy and to conceal any expression of fear on their own faces. But if one has the courage to take off the warpaint and just settle down and be what one is—not very rich, not brilliantly successful; but not a pauper, and nobody's fool, either—with great relief Jones soon drops his grinning mask. If he doesn't? What of it? You can still drop Jones.

Bigger and Better—X

THERE is an old joke, which is just as good as ever if you haven't heard it, about the Englishman, the German, the Frenchman, and the American who once went to Africa to hunt elephants. After they returned home, the Englishman published a pleasant volume of reminiscences entitled *Wild Elephants I Have Known*. The German devoted the best years of his life thereafter to a four-volume work entitled *The Origin and History of Elephants*. The Frenchman published a little paper-bound volume, which you could buy in Paris for a few francs but had to smuggle into this country, entitled *The Loves of the Elephants*. But the American was hot off the press with the greatest book of the year, of which several editions were sold out before printing. It was entitled: *Bigger and Better Elephants*.

Ever since Columbus found a bigger and better continent lying unoccupied on the seas, we have breathed aspiration in our shining air, and our eyes have leaped over whatever pleasant field we might be treading to rest on a brighter world rising fair on the horizon. The hope which the industrial and social revolutions planted in men's hearts has bloomed brightest on this continent and has already borne so much fruit in increased comfort and pleasantness of material life that we are justified in watering it and tending it. However old and sour wisdom may laugh, it is probably better, on the whole, to think of material limitations in the new world style, as

something that may still be overcome by wit and luck, than to follow the inherited philosophy of the old world and say that one's mind is powerless against the corruption of this flesh and this world and so had best turn away to the contemplation of higher things. Though we have just survived one of those recurring moments when all our bright balloons are pricked, there is every sign that we are soon to plunge into a new era of bigger and better—better housing, brighter and cheaper electric light, better roads, better schools—and if not bigger and better earnings and profits, perhaps something bigger and better in what they buy. This energy of material civilization may slacken some day. But it will probably outlast our time. Before we severally step into the Ferris wheel and are helplessly swung upward in the cycle of a new prosperity, it is worth while to stop and make sure that the going up will be really fun; and that the coming down again, which is probably inevitable, will be easy.

Some ebb and flow, some alternate rhythm of activity and rest, light and dark, winter and summer, is probably inevitable in all human affairs. The universe seems to be constructed that way. Some up and down of fortune, some inflation and deflation of money and credit, some alternation of prosperity and depression, is only man's share in the general cosmic dance. But civilized man has ceased to be the victim of some kinds of alternation. He has learned to enjoy both the going up and the coming down. As the sun climbs upward from dawn to noon, he does not say, "Always the sun will go up, brighter and higher, and I so fresh in the sunshine will never tire. So let me start bigger and better works to be done now before a night that will never come." This is exactly what the big business men were doing in 1928. Forseeing night, we have learned to slacken our efforts easily and with pleasure as the sun goes down, to brighten the fire and draw the curtains and light up the lamps, and lay open the beds, for night has its pleasures, too, if only one is not too amazed and outraged by the passing of day to notice them. So with winter.

The first winter must have come down on organic life as unmitigated disaster. But even the birds and the woodchucks learned how to deal with it. The few human survivors who took refuge in caves before the first blasts of the ice age found no way of stopping the snow and chaining the wind or making the sun come back and warm them. But they found a way of shutting out wind and snow, and making a sun of their own on the hearth.

Yet, despite this ebb and flow, something there is in nature which encourages the idea of bigger and better, provided one is not in too much of a hurry. Life improves. Within historic time and the circumference of this globe, it always has. If one only sits still, time tends, on the whole, to work with one. Any plant or animal left alone will conquer the earth. Loss and destruction tend not to keep up with growth and conservation. Things accumulate a little faster than they wear out. The odds of life are not quite fifty-fifty. They are rather as forty to sixty in favor of things being, on the whole, a little better next year. We all share in the slow increment of civilization. What we are and do keeps on working for us long after we have become something else and are doing something different. But man's mind moves faster than the world he lives in, and much of the slow growth of things we mar by impatience, plucking the fruit green, tearing up the plant to see how it is growing. Few people realize how long life really is. They think they have to do all their living in one day. They want to have everything and do everything this minute, and only a certain doggedness in circumstance saves our satisfactions for us and doles out what we are grabbing at greedily —a little sweet here, and a little sweet there, like a child's Christmas package of lollipops commandeered by a careful mother and made to last through the whole holiday season. "What one longs for in youth," says Goethe, "comes to one in heaps in old age." Most people's desires are really fulfilled, but not when and as they expect. The moral of this is that one should be patient, even in pursuing the bigger and better—and one should also take care to live to a green old age.

2

One arrives at achievement as one makes a poem, with a certain alternation of accent and lack of accent—a caesura here, a variation there, all within a fixed limit set by time and fortune. To grow, to progress, to get more and more and be more and more, is one of the ultimate goods of living. The sensation of growth and progress is itself happiness. What one achieves is but a visible symbol of the true good, which is intangible. A happy life is a life progressive on all fronts. The trouble with many of us is that, instead of letting time and our own work make wealth or success for us, we try to whoop them up artificially. Instead of improving real estate holdings by building up the property, letting even the grass and shrubbery grow and make value for us, we begin to proclaim a boom in that section. The hope and fair prospects that created the disastrous Florida boom years ago were entirely justified. Florida was bound to go on developing. It was bound to become the winter playground of the nation. But at a certain stage legitimate hope turned into madness. All the honest values that were in the seashores and the sunshine and the perpetual summer evaporated into a cloud of illusions. So with the growth of industrial enterprise before 1928 and that spread of wealth which made more and more people shareholders in the great corporations. Much that was bigger and better was really coming. Probably most of the hopes of increased individual wealth, of general well-being, of corporate profits, which made men suddenly dizzy in 1928, would have been realized in the normal course of things by 1936, if only the genuine economic growth could have gone along at normal pace. But we got in too much of a hurry. We couldn't believe our good luck. At some point normal economic tissue becomes cancerous and begins growing and growing to destruction. Now, in 1936, we are individually and collectively poorer than we could have been at any normal rate of growth, if only that disastrous boom and its collapse had not intervened.

In a world as rich and busy as the world now is, about the only thing that could keep us as poor as we are is this periodic skyrocketing of our expectations. To some extent the big collapses are engineered by rascals. But many of the rascals are also themselves deluded, and not all of them go scot free in the crash. But even rascals could not do much to harm us if there were not something in us that yielded to their lies. It has been wisely said that the only person who can be cheated is a cheater. Most people are cheated through yielding to some suggestion that they can make their money earn more for them than it is worth or can somehow get something for nothing. They are taken advantage of through their hope of taking advantage of someone else. A person who is habitually honest in wishing to give value for value received must be a blind fool not to see when what is offered him is not value. He has unconsciously trained himself to judge value. But those who are easily misled are those who don't really believe in values. They think values can be created by words. If they are not consciously cheats in relation to definite persons, there is something cheating in their whole attitude to life. They don't quite accept the rules of the game. They keep looking for a chance to get away with it.

Most of our capacity to fool and be fooled in our pursuit of the bigger and better is due to words. It is amazing how words act on us. Something said, though the most obvious lie, has, just in being said, a kind of reality. It begins to act and have tangible results. In modern life we live in a perfect enchantment of words—words in the newspaper, words in the car card, words coming over the radio. They whoop up our expectations. They enchant us with stories. They beglamour us with visions. Through the shining dust raised around us by the infinite duplication and magnification of words move dream figures of financial magnates, of motion-picture children who make $4000 a week, of demagogues promising old people $200 a month. Is it any wonder that one does not know what to expect in this world, that unsatisfied longing takes fire and

flares up in speculation or keeps us so haunted by visions of what might be that we cannot enjoy what we have nor make a rational effort to increase it?

A young bride sits on the porch of her pretty cottage on the Maine coast, with the bright waters breaking below, and a mile of sand stretching golden in the sunshine—all her own. Her little house is fresh and charming, full of things she had dreamed of having—only a few months ago. But on the table beside her lies a smart magazine showing beach fashions at Deauville. "It makes me sick to see what some people have," she remarks, miserably fingering these pages that have taken all the shine out of her own beach. "And my life so simple and dowdy!" She doesn't really want to go to Deauville. She has absolutely no conception of the real place and probably would be disappointed in it. What she sees is a mirage, a lying imitation of bigger and better, something which could not be attained and, if attained, would not satisfy—big, only to the extent that it makes what she has look small; better, only in the evil capacity to make all the real good of her life look worse.

People who pine like this, in the very midst of what they really want and have striven to attain, are suffering from that incapacity for realization which is a common malady and always a wretched one. What they actually see and have and touch has no meaning and reality to them. Only something conjured out of words is real. The present is nonexistent. Only the future exists. A few months ago, when the little house was still a vision, the young wife was happy in it. She hoped and planned. She said daily to her husband, "When our house is done . . . . " There is not a piece of furniture in it which was not, till yesterday, her dream of bigger and better. Now it is done. She has lost a vision and gained nothing.

It is not safe to look forward and see the bigger and the better on the horizon unless one also looks backward and constantly sees something smaller and not so good behind. One who would be happy must school himself to stand still

before every hope and turn around slowly and look back. And when he has come up to anything he has long aspired to, he should not let it go till he has taken in his joy through every sense—looked at it, listened to it, felt it, caressed it, let pride and satisfaction shine all around it. There is the difference between heaven and hell in enjoying a thing when you have it but not pining much after it if you haven't it, and pining for something in anticipation and not enjoying it if you get it. What is the use of another orange till you have sucked dry the one that you have?

3

There are several hours in a day, and a good many days in a year, and a little added to a little will in the end make a whole lot. This is the true mathematics of bigger and better. Improvement is one of the dearest of the joys of life. For it men will undergo great pain and do without many pleasures. But it is too heady a delight to be taken in large doses. It easily goes to the brain, and, unless each successive addition to one's life is very thoroughly possessed and every new sweet completely digested, one soon finds every plain rule one has ever lived by and every simple sensation one has ever enjoyed evaporating into a vast, poisonous delusion. This is the curse of easy money and sudden success.

Some of the greatest and soundest of modern enterprises were those originally built up by poor and simple men, little by little. They earned their capital as they went. They made their first mistakes on a small scale and rectified them without undue disaster. They consolidated their gains as they went along. The most satisfactory success in the arts or in politics has not been a sudden and rapid rise to glory in youth. It has been a slow increase in power and "following" through a lifetime, coming to full achievement in the later years.

It has been the wisdom of some who have attained great personal popularity or political eminence that they have early

learned to soft-pedal the ballyhoo about them. Benjamin Franklin did it deliberately. So did Disraeli. Will Rogers had the knack of continually deflating the love and admiration which he aroused. Some of the tricks of great men—the deliberate inconspicuousness and simplicity of expenditure in men growing rich, the pretenses of folly or of practical incompetence on the part of the wise, the refusal of publicity on the part of the beloved or the glamorous—are at once a protective coloring and the expression of that genuine vitality and wisdom of slow growth which make them what they are.

The Greeks, who had more insight than any other people into the true course of human affairs, were always afraid of success and high position. They said that the gods were jealous lest any man should aspire to their place. At a certain point in any man's rise he encountered nemesis—the divine envy which knocked him down again. The most representative picture of life, they thought, the story which was most philosophically and universally true, was the *tragedy*. And *tragedy*, by their definition, was the story of a man who rises to great eminence only to fall suddenly by those very qualities which have made him great. At a moment when the whole ancient thought had come to an impasse, recognizing this as the law of life but seeing no way beyond it save utter pessimism, a whisper of new thought, like the south wind of a new springtime, ran through that wintry world—"The meek shall inherit the earth." "Let him who would be great among you make himself the least."

Now, however, the press, the technique of advertising, the motion picture, and the radio have outgrown human thought. All they can do is to give the authority of public and universal expression to the ancient follies of man's dream world. Where is there an antiseptic against the subtle poison of this continual suggestion? It is not true that if you use this or that cold cream you will immediately become the lovely lady in the picture. But you may slightly improve your complexion. It is not true that tomato juice will give you pep, vim, energy

for the whole day. But tomato juice is a wholesome addition to the diet. It is absolutely false that one can deliver oneself from money worries by borrowing from this or that finance corporation. It may be true that this or that person is making this or that great sum of money by this or that means, but it by no means follows that you can do it, too, or that you are a failure if you don't. This sugar is fed to us continually, by the eye, by the ear. It brings no satisfaction—only a dark-brown taste in the mouth and a kind of hopeless depletion of energy. But it takes the taste out of good food and it leaves one disinclined for the healthy and invigorating exercise of really living and working. In the dim past men were blinded by superstition. In more recent times they sometimes fell for bunk. But this mental poison gas is new, and we have new names for it—"blah," "hooey," "ballyhoo."

However, one of the present persuasive attempts to distribute the bigger and the better is wholesome. This is the rediscovery by advertisers of the *routine*, and by industry of the installment plan. You are to spend one minute a day brushing your hair, fifteen minutes a day improving your mind. Go ahead and spend it, for, strange to say, the formula works. A very few minutes regularly devoted to anything that betters you in any way is like a few pennies regularly saved. It does mount up. And, what is more, it gives an ever-renewed satisfaction. For the sweetness of improvement is not only in what is attained; it is in the stimulus and expenditure of effort. So with installment buying. It may easily be carried too far. One actually pays a very high money tax on it, amounting as high, sometimes, as 33 per cent actual interest. Nevertheless, whereas an outright debt is often a curse, and a charge account a continual invitation to folly, the making of small regular payments for a substantial thing actually enjoyed and used has a rather good psychological effect. It may organize and direct to one end small sums that would otherwise be wasted. It disciplines one to get what one wants by slow but steady means. And it takes some of the more inviting posses-

sions of life out of the realm of hankering and glamorous vision, and makes them physical possessions.

"My soul with vision is satisfied," says the poet. But vision is a dangerous satisfaction. It may have served in the solid, material, provincial world of the past, where a man's possessions were actual land and gold. But in this modern world all goods are increasingly invisible and intangible. The bedevilment of the imagination is not left to a few poor artists but has the aid of vast mechanics. Under these present conditions of economic enchantment, anything that brings what we desire out of the fairy world of the imagination and sets it in our kitchen or our garage, and then sets us to work actually paying for it with actual dollar by dollar earnings and savings, is wholesome.

The world is full of people sick and miserable with aspiration, poisoned with vision. The remedy is to go to work anywhere, in any way, to make something in one's life better. Nor is there any virtue in the snobbery which says, "If I can't have the best, I don't want anything." Something less than the best is considerably better than nothing, and substitutes, whatever the advertiser may say, often serve excellently. The moment one turns away from the vain contemplation of what one can't get to the active pursuit of what one can, happiness rushes in, as if one had turned a tap. A repeated attack on the wall of one's limitations at any point where it will give a little will bring the whole structure toppling. And of all ways of being busy, the attempt to work out from where one is into some situation that is bigger and better is the most exhilarating.

There are those who decry the modern American tendency to think of bigger and better in terms of material things. But the greatest need of the present is to digest the new material of civilization, to incorporate it into our culture patterns, to refashion our manners and techniques, our hopes and our dreams, our expectations and our satisfactions, to correspond to it. The reason for the present maladjustment between pro-

duction and consumption is partly a culture-lag. Not enough people have yet shaped their pattern of happiness, their aspirations for better living, to the new mechanics.

John purchases a refrigerator to surprise Mary at Christmas. And what does he purchase with it? He purchases a renewed glow of love and gratitude in his articulate recognition that Mary is a good girl and has worked hard for her family. He purchases some pleasant visions of hospitality—iced drinks on the veranda in summer, cocktails or ginger ale after the movies with his friends. He purchases a little beauty. The refrigerator will dress up the kitchen—make it look smart and neat. Cold things will look inviting on the table. And Mary, bless her, can now sit in a cool blue linen dress on the veranda of a summer noon, looking as a charming wife should look, and know that lunch will come out of the icebox. Love, friendship, and beauty—a few dollars laid down monthly on the installment plan may be an offering at their altar. This is a truly modern and American way of worshiping the Lares and Penates—the old gods of pantry and hearth—but is it really the worse for that? Who made some other time and place better for us than our own? "The old spinning wheel in the parlor" had no monopoly of domestic romance. The old machines were but matter, too. Only love and memory have made them poetical. Out of every material, civilization makes something immaterial, and this is the true bigger and better—this progressive release of the capacity for happiness in the increasing appropriation of the materials of our world.

Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
Makes that and th' action fine,

said George Herbert. The words might conceivably apply to the purchase of a vacuum cleaner!

The Technique of Security—XI

THERE is no security. The world we live in rests on something considerably less than thin air and must keep spinning for very life. The ground under our feet wouldn't be safe if it did not keep moving. We run a race with death every day—right down Main Street, between the home and the office. That we all manage to get three meals a day is a perpetual miracle, and the fact that some fragile drop of protoplasm which started off away back in the sunshine of Paleozoic seas is still going along in you and me is against all probability. Time flies, and everything we loved flies with it. You buried the wife of your youth a long time ago, though an even dearer helpmeet now sits at your table. Your babies have gone away. Their little chairs and tables are dusty in the attic, and their baby shoes are empty. The tall young man in college, and pretty Alice off to the dance are something else again. And what is money or a fixed income that it should stay as it is? Nothing does.

The only security is a certain exchange and balance. Something may be taken away, but something must be put in its place, and our sneaking hope is that the something will be better. It is a fair hope. Rather better than worse is the general law of life, though there are many exceptions. But this security is not for those who hanker for or believe in the fixed and immutable. It is for those who keep going, and always expect to.

At present writing many thousands of people are looking toward security in old age in an income of $200 a month guaranteed by the government. But who knows what $200 a month will buy a few years hence, when you and I are old, or whether, indeed, it will buy anything? And who has power to guarantee? God Himself might, but He never does.

As the world actually becomes safer and safer, the psychological sense of insecurity increases. The world is safer because more and more forces move in it, and move faster. They create a kind of balance, one against the other. The result of all these spinning and interlocking activities is actually a kind of stability. Probably at no time has hunger and want been so intensely felt as in the last depression. Yet so far as the actual individual suffering on a purely physical plane was concerned—not including the social humiliation and the rightful social resentment—there has been many a time of peace and plenty in the past which could show more of it. And now we rise up and call for social security when we were probably never before so secure. And we ought to. Man's mind is one of those balancing forces which keep the perpetual movement of things safe. And it is high time he used more of his mind to this purpose, collectively and individually.

This cry for security calls particularly for security against unemployment, and for security in old age. Behind these is a desire for security even deeper, though less articulate, the desire for psychological security. Collectively a little may slowly be done about it—a little which may mount to a good deal in times to come. Meanwhile, the average middle-class person will probably have to look, as before, for his own security, at least within this generation. Probably it is safer to trust one's self than to trust either the Democratic or the Republican party.

2

What can one do about it for one's self? Not all that could be desired, but something. Employment in all types of work

is needlessly uncertain, and the machinery for bringing those who can do the work into contact with the work that is to be done is antediluvian. The discomfort of being out of a job, the many false moves in finding a new one, the uncertain tenure of most jobs, from the high executive down to the office boy and the janitor—the whole crazy waste of life and misdirection of skill—simply exist, and until we can force a better arrangement we must individually make the best of it. But when one speaks of unemployment one means specifically the failure of cash income through unemployment. Most people would be content enough to draw a wage or a salary and not work. That is the way one admired and envied social class lives. Their invested money draws a wage for them, taking a little tax off the earnings of all who do work.

Until something better is worked out for everybody, there are some kinds of protection which the individual can work for himself against this failure of cash income. In the first place one may recognize that, our economic machinery being what it is, the actual acquisition of cash is bound to be irregular. There are certain salaries which go on comfortably for years, regardless even of depressions. There are certain soundly managed enterprises, dealing in indispensables, which show profits uniformly in good and bad times. But, for the most part, wages, salaries, and profits go up and down, and there is no absolute guarantee against their failing altogether. The best guarantee is solely in the skill of the individual, as measured by his own past performance. Quick-witted managers can sometimes make one thing pay as another fails. Some people are clever in getting a new job as soon as they lose an old one. But in our periodical economic crashes, even skill and wit are no protection. The lightning strikes by chance. One man keeps job or income from investments. Another, just as good, loses it.

Not only does cash income go up and down, with a pretty fair chance of stopping at times altogether, but if there is anything that seems sure in this uncertain world, it is that

we have an economic depression every eight years or so. No one believes this. Everyone thinks it can be avoided next time. But until we get a new way of running industry, money, marketing, and our own psychology, history will probably repeat itself. Now that we are pulling out of this blizzard, it is likely that along about 1944 we shall be running head on into another storm. At any rate it can do no harm to prepare for it and may do some good. What would happen if everyone believed that there would be a depression again and was ready for it, it is difficult to tell. Perhaps there wouldn't be any, after all, for the prime symptom that everything is going to smash is the universal belief that it can't possibly.

What happens at that moment when healthy prosperity and enterprise begin to skyrocket? A man feels not only that he is making money, but that he is going to make more and more. So he takes on a lot of obligations commensurate with his present and supposedly future state—a bigger home on a mortgage, a new car on payments, a few debts easy enough to pay off next year, and a lot of stocks which are going up and are bound to go up indefinitely. When the crash comes—And why fool ourselves? It always does come—there are all these things to pay for if you wish to keep them, and the money in stocks and bonds which might have covered them has evaporated.

If one could distill out of the bitter experience of the last depression a little wordly wisdom, one might reverse all the procedures which take us head on into the storm, all sails spread. By judicious taking in of canvas, and making all tight and snug, and standing to, all hands aloft, for the worst, we might ride through.

When the skilled workman or salaried man or business man finds the making of a cash income easy, when work is plentiful, salaries are cheerfully raised, and profits are good, naturally he should concentrate on making as much money as he reasonably can. But he should not increase his overhead to the level of his earning. Most people who get caught in depres-

sions have spent far too large a proportion of their income in an overhead which they have guaranteed, through lease or long-time payments or social habit, to maintain. This increase in overhead gives less real pleasure than most spending. It is very easy to lose a few hundred dollars in increased rent, or a different school for Mary, and have no tangible increase of happiness or well-being to show for it. The new situation, which charmed for a moment, soon becomes commonplace, and one is not conscious of being better off. But the same amount of money spent for possessions, or for special experiences like travel, or for special forms of education such as training in music or art, gives positive and recurring pleasure. If income is lowered, one does not have to repeat these expenses month after month or year after year, and one usually has something left from the good times to make life pleasant.

When acquiring money begins to be easy after a long depression, it is usually safe to assume that there will continue to be improved earnings for a while. A portion of these may very properly be spent in better possessions and in cultural satisfactions, and the short-time payments offered by retailers of cars and household furnishings are usually safe enough. But there comes a time when wages and prices are both very high, the prices running well ahead of the wages, inflated by advertising and costs of salesmanship, inflated by fancy overhead, inflated by apparent success in catching suckers. This is a good time to keep one's money and not to buy anything one does not need. It is the time not to make long-term commitments, and to buy one's self off from debts and contracts. If one does buy, it ought to be for cash. Money at this minute is more valuable than anything one can do with it, except to pay debts, and in a short time it will probably become infinitely precious. How to keep it is, however, another question. Social opinion discourages the good old stocking. Any fool ought to know enough to keep out of Wall Street with it. As for those sound institutions in which Grandfather

invested, one must fall back on one's knowledge of the last depression and judge accordingly.

When one heads into the storm, some cargo soon proves to be dangerous and ought to go overboard early and with resolution. But some cargo is very valuable. It consists in stores of things to see one through, and the wherewithal to make bunks and cabins cheerful and not unamusing, till the sky clears and there is some landfall of safety in sight.

Dangerous cargo consists of: a large mortgage on a city house; a long lease on a city apartment; notes due at the bank; bills due at private schools; unpaid dues at expensive clubs or house-bills that are bound to get you posted if you can't meet them immediately; a miscellaneous collection of charge accounts, on all of which you owe; stocks bought at the price peak; and a social life so completely bound up with people living in a certain way at a certain standard that if you give it up you lose face and your friends.

Cargo that makes one snug in bad economic weather consists of: a house, either in a small town or suburb or in the country, which is completely paid for or on which the mortgage charges amount to no more than modest rent, preferably one attached to a garden and of a type which invites perpetual improvement with your own hands; a car in good running order, completely paid for, not necessarily new or expensive; household furniture and domestic conveniences, including such luxuries as a refrigerator, a washing machine, and a radio, on which you owe nothing; good clothes of a generally conservative and usable style, including coats that will outlast two or three winters, and recreation clothes which do not have to be often renewed but look well and are adequate for one's own type of good times—anything from tuxedos to ski-suits; books, music, games; a good education; the memory of travel; the habit of using one's hands and enjoying the out-of-doors; independence of any one group and their opinions or their pity; the affection of the family and of some friends; no debts worth speaking of; and some cash in hand.

Most people will admit that the humiliation, apprehension, and genuine agony of the Depression were largely bound up with the first type of economic goods, and that such comfort and security as they found in it, regardless, were due to the second. This answers the question what to do with cash when you can make it.

The worst thing about this periodical collapse in banking and credit is that it destroys faith in savings. Excessive saving of money is insecurity. Some of it goes in bad times, and saving encourages a faith in investment and in the future that social experience has not yet justified, and makes one a too easy victim of promoters and Wall Street. A few people suffered at the beginning of the Depression from the fact that they still had too much cash in hand. It encouraged them to keep up the regular expenses and hope for the best, whereas it is better, when you are heading for the bottom, to hit it quickly, for, when you have hit it, you are in a position to start upward. Some material goods are better than money in the long haul, and some immaterial goods better than the material.

3

In working for personal security we have to face the fact that we all live a double economic life. What we have in modern civilization is a shining structure, very happy and convenient when it works, built entirely on money and credit and the exchange for money of highly specialized services, insecurely consolidated as yet on an older economic and social base. On this older base activities and skills were more miscellaneous; a good deal was exchanged without the medium of money; and happiness and reputation depended not on one special thing you could do but rather on the kind of person you were in general. Some day we may be able to trust ourselves to the brilliant new world we are creating, but not yet. Our economic life now runs the way the first automobiles used to run, and the best advice, in trouble, is

the advice the small boy on the street used to give—"Get a horse!"

It was the security of some well-to-do families in the Depression that they still lived a double economic life. They had a big new house or an apartment in the city, but they also had a summer camp or old farmhouse in the country. They might have a limousine with a chauffeur, but the children had an old roadster which they drove themselves, or a station wagon at camp. They were smart lawyers, and bright graduates of good schools, and debutantes, but the elders remembered and the children had acquired at camp or from the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts a number of old simple skills and a pleasure in roughing it or letting the servants go and doing things themselves. This is no fancy picture. A number of the best American families are like this. It is the strength of one great family which in its various branches has always been a shining example of social security—the Roosevelt family. Many a family very cheerfully dropped off the urban shell when hard times came, and, falling back to their second level, came through happily enough.

On lowlier levels, there were skilled workmen out of jobs during the Depression, who used very happily on their own affairs the skills they had been accustomed to sell. Most towns can show carpenters or masons or painters or plumbers, once recipients of high wages, who kept going all through the depression on a little casual cash income, plus work on a house or place of their own. A good workman can usually master two or three other crafts sufficiently to serve himself. I know of several extremely pretty places, houses and grounds, in one community, that have grown up through the depression. Some houses were built up from the ground, everything that went into them paid for bit by bit. One was an old, abandoned shell rebuilt by a mason out of work, and now a flourishing gas stand. One was built out of a wrecked barn. One has been put together—Heaven knows how!—in an exquisite stretch of woodland, from boards, logs, almost anything. It is

unbelievably pretty, and the simple hired man who has done it has slowly landscaped his own woods with his own hand and hoe—making stone walks, rustic fences out of cedar posts cut on the place, a stone gatepost with nasturtiums blooming in a trough at the top, and now a lantern at the entrance, shaped probably out of an old tin can and painted bright orange. Passers-by think it the summer camp of some well-to-do person. It is only the work of an unskilled laborer, done on the days when he couldn't get work.

About all these various householders seem actually to have paid for is the original bit of cheap, wild land and a few gadgets and some paint from Sears, Roebuck. The rest they have got in trade or have taken in exchange for odd jobs or have asked for and been cheerfully given by some other householder. The workmen who have thus survived and accumulated property during the Depression—and there are many of them—have had a security which even a trade-union could not supply. Usually they have been members of old American farming families or of that European immigrant peasant stock which has not yet forgotten its earlier economic management. They fell back from their first level, which was that of specialized craft, to the second level of generalized competence in dealing with land and materials. Most of them had done a little of everything as boys or girls, and could do a little of everything again if they had to.

There is no reason for living only on this level when the opportunity to work at the first level again returns. But in our present society it ought to be kept. It is properly the level of leisure-time activity—a retreat and a rest after the highly specialized and intense life which the economic and social machine at high pressure calls for. In good times, it soothes the spirit and feeds certain atavistic hungers, as going fishing does, or camping. And it is a genuine security. Until we work out our present economic problem more satisfactorily and really consolidate goods which now we only grasp at under the influence of speculation and hope, we may enjoy our urban

life, our commercial amusements, the sale of specialized techniques in the best markets, and the bright flow of cash through our fingers, but we need to hold them lightly. They will probably smash. They always do. And even if they don't, some background of another habit—living in the country and digging in the garden, making things and doing things for yourself, finding satisfactions which are inherent in yourself or in nature and independent of money and Mrs. Jones—these give what we need as much as financial security, a certain psychological security. They give a man courage to say "No" to financial prospects which enslave him or bind his moral freedom. They make one content in what one has, among the shining goods of modern life, but not inclined to stay awake nights for fear of losing them. They make one a free man before the banker, and not too uneasy in the presence of the boss.

Our Lady of Poverty—XII

AMONG the many goddesses that men have worshiped there is a simple gray-eyed wench whom Saint Francis called "My Lady Poverty." Her lovers have not been many, but they have been the great ones of the earth—the wise and the fortunate, the most saintly, and the most beloved—men who trod the dust with the bearing and assurance of gods. The happiness which was sufficient for Jesus and preferred above a king's palace by Buddha, which drew Saint Francis from the pleasures of the tavern and the dance and was rediscovered, almost in our own time, and in our own land, by Thoreau and Walt Whitman, must have in it a peculiar poignancy.

There is no mistaking the love and gratitude which some men have lavished on Our Lady Poverty. The crust she has set for them on the bare rock has tasted better than a banquet. They have slept in her arms on the open hillside and have awakened refreshed as no one is refreshed by silken couches in marble palaces. There have been times, as in the late Roman Empire, when the best men fled from wealth as from a plague. By hundreds the rich young men and women of Rome left their perfumed baths and their slaves, their banquets and their changes of raiment, their ladies and their lovers, and, barefooted, in rough garments, followed Our Lady Poverty out into the desert. There they found hunger and weariness of limb. But, with blistered feet and bleeding fingers and

aching heads, they stayed, for there, strange as a gift from God, which they took it to be, they found happiness.

In the praise of poverty there has been an authentic note of rapture which no magnificance of wealth can draw from human throats. Some who have chosen poverty, like Buddha, might have been wealthy if they had chosen. In the Orient, where luxury is far older than in the West and has been more elaborate and ingenious, it is touching to see how many a rich man of the better sort still looks forward to the day when he may walk out from his business, his courtyards and his gardens and his baths, may say good-by to his harem, his children, and his slaves, and, going forth alone, without money or change of raiment, live henceforth as a hermit on the mountainside or as a wanderer, in the Buddhist's yellow robe, begging his food from day to day. This is no idle or cynical dream. It is a wistful vision of genuine happiness, haunting the market place and the palace, and not many who have found this way of life have cared to return. There is one great man, known to the West as to the East, whom I have visited in his simple desert retreat. What he finds there it is not difficult to understand.

What is it that he finds? What is it that they all find? First and foremost, like health after sickness, like the fresh air of the fields beyond the plague-spotted city, they find escape from the money mania. This complex of feverish fears, humiliations, and false desires seems so inevitably bound up with gold that they are glad to drop the gold and run. When Thoreau walked into town with his sack on his back for his groceries, he would contemplate with gratitude the chains which he had escaped, chains of houses, chains of lands, chains of neighbors' opinions. When Saint Francis sat down in his shelter of boughs to a picnic supper of scraps, he gave thanks for the banquets he had fled. Men commit suicide to escape from the mental anguish of the money myth. Is it any wonder that the more active and intelligent run away, instead?

Some of these lovers of poverty—and those the most ardent —have escaped from satiety. Man's capacity for heaping up wealth is really much greater than his capacity for enjoying it. In the finest creation of wealth there is something limited and dull. The greatest palace will never be high and spacious as the sky. The sweetest perfumes will not tingle in one's nostrils like the breath of the open sea. The cookery that ripens the peach, the morning dew that crisps the lettuce, puts electric range and refrigerator to shame. And among his own creations man's senses, at first refined and stimulated, soon grow dull. It takes more and more to interest them, and in the end nothing will. But in struggle and abstinence appetite is renewed. Weariness adds down to the pillow, and hunger sauce to the meat.

2

Yet that Lady Poverty whom the spiritually adventurous have loved is really a creature born of wealth. She knows nothing of slums and hovels, of hunger and rags. Neither slums nor rags can long survive in her presence. Religious repudiation of wealth has immediately re-created wealth, on a new and better plane. The Buddhist monks intended to go about in clothes patched from any piece of cloth they happened to be given. To this day the gorgeous brocaded robe of the Japanese priest is made like a patchwork quilt, of little pieces of varicolored cloth, priceless in themselves and matched in harmonious design. So much did art immediately triumph over material. For general use the Buddhists soon settled on their characteristic yellow robe, a single great piece of cloth, inexpensive, adequate, not difficult to keep clean, involving no carrying of trunks or suitcases, no stitching and pleating and tailoring, but actually very beautiful, even magnificent, in the Eastern sunshine. The sculpturesque dignity of its golden folds often sets off nobly the bronze limbs and chiseled quietude of face in some who wear it. So, when these first great lovers of poverty took to the woods,

repudiating all animal food, all rich pastries, they had soon put together, out of mushrooms and green sprouts and fruits, food so delicate that it was adopted into the menus of kings. So, also, early Christianity, repudiating the wealth of Rome, built comfort and magnificence anew in cloister and cathedral.

Almost any group that starts by embracing poverty for the sake of intellectual or social release actually attracts wealth like a magnet. The Franciscans were soon one of the wealthiest of the religious orders. Such sects as the Quakers have grown sleek with the goods of this world. The selection and rejection of materials which a deliberate poverty implies is already the beginning of art. And art applied to the raw stuff of life is soon wealth. If Thoreau had stayed on in his hut on Walden Pond, continuing to garden, and to build, and to exercise the same ingenuity in making himself comfortable without enslaving himself to too much wage-earning, year after year, he would inevitably have had an estate and a manor house.

These lovers of the Lady Poverty dare not settle down. Homesteads and cities grow up around them. Most of them have known this and have insured their freedom by a deliberate vagabondage.

This poetic, inspiring, and creative poverty is not really want at all. Rather is it the proud appropriation of more wealth than money and possessions have had to offer, and the self-assertion of intellectual or spiritual culture achieved through centuries of struggle for the more abundant life. Even Thoreau was already rich, both in the practical skills and in the intellectual resources built up through two centuries of the New England battle with the wilderness. He built his house of boards that machinery and industry had wrested from the forest. He built himself a fireplace, using knowledge that his forebears had painfully gained. He hoed his beans and his corn with tools that were so much capital, inherited out of the past. In his leisure hours he had books; and beyond his woodland retreat there was a society of

intellectual men, Emerson, Channing, Alcott—the best of his time—among whom he moved freely as an equal. Around him stretched a property of lake and wood which was really as much his own as if he had bought it. Working only six weeks a year with his hands, for wages, what he had actually managed to appropriate was very nearly the social position and the landed security of some old lord or prince, without the worry of tenants and rents and lawsuits with the neighbors.

So with Saint Francis. He was wellborn. He had the graces and social accomplishments of his age. He stepped out of his particular town only to make himself socially at home in all Italy—a rich, various, and amusing Italy. Going up and down the highways, from hovel to palace, from town to field, in a sense he possessed them all—possessed them by the culture and religious faith which made him one with the great of his time, possessed them by his own inward appropriation. While petty lords and princes fought for the name of possessing this or that stretch of Italy, controlling the people, taxing their goods, Saint Francis took the whole land. What he wanted, he asked for. What he told people to do, they did, rather more willingly than they did what those who had the name of rulers asked. Homage and love followed him. He had his battles, his struggles, but so does every lord.

In a similar spirit Walt Whitman took possession of the American social scene, making himself at home in many homes and many places. "I will make the true poem of riches," he says, and proceeds to survey what is his:

Land of coal and iron! Land of gold! Land of cotton, sugar, rice!
Land of wheat, beef, pork! land of wool and hemp!
land of the apple and the grape!
Land of pastoral plains, the grass-fields of the world!
land of those sweet-aired, interminable plateaus.
Land of the herd, the garden, the healthy house of adobie.
Land where the northwest Columbia winds, and
where the southwest Colorado winds!
Land of Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan!

and so on in endless enumeration. All these were his to live in. From all he could draw some tribute of goods or friendship. All these he possessed in imagination. It is a question whether Napoleon's or Caesar's possession of Europe ever went beyond imagination, or was, as a matter of fact, more personally effective. Men who choose the vagabond's empire get most of the fun of ownership, and leave the troubles of it to somebody else.

What we take to be wealth and security is often only a prison. "Give me my boots and saddle," sings the voice over the radio, and the officebound and the homebound feel their hearts leap to the wish, and with good reason. But boots and saddle and a horse are already property, and the cowboy, roaming the open range, is lord of a magnificent domain.

3

A man's appetite for life may very easily be too large for private ownership. Very little of the wealth of the world is as yet locked up in banks or parceled into house lots. Only a fraction of what we are at liberty to take comes to us by way of salary, wage, or profit. Three kinds of wealth the lovers of our Lady Poverty have usually been rich in: the resources of the unappropriated landscape, skills and social culture, and that relation of fellowship and power to the whole social world of their time, which is commonly sought through money or political rule but is open to personality without them. In so far as a man has any of these, he has wealth over and above his bank account. One may be limited in the amount of cash one can actually earn, but the whole tendency of modern life is to give one more and more time in which to take effective possession of this wider property.

It becomes a nice question, in the management of any life, how far it is worth while to earn the money wherewith to buy satisfactions over and above those basic necessities that must be bought for cash, and how far it is better to use time and skill to get them directly, without money. Is it better to

earn the money to pay a gardener to make a rosebed, or to earn less money and make the rosebed one's self? Or is it better not to own a rosebed at all, but, instead, to take to those old Maine roadways in June, where roses spill in pink, fragrant waves over every old stone wall—roses and roses, for miles on miles? Most people's imagination will leap to the old roadways in Maine. But they will feel this choice the least possible. We are prisoners of our possessions, and for every man-made luxury we pay something in natural wealth. There is no roof, however handsome, that does not shut out the sky.

There have always been sour souls who misunderstood the wise and saintly lovers of our Lady Poverty and their large-hearted acceptance, through her, of all the wealth in the world. They have mistaken it for a narrow mandate to mortify the flesh, or a good reason for keeping other people poor. Voluntary poverty has always been the invincible foe of involuntary poverty. Wherever the first Buddhists and Christians went, slaves were released and the poor man took heart. If you lift up the wretch festering in the castoff rags of economic pride and greed at the bottom of society, and make him face the money-god that voodoos him and say, "I don't need your goods anyway," he is already in a fair way to get some goods of his own. Nor is this old gospel of Christ and Buddha out of date. Man has not yet reached the point where he has to depend for water wholly on the fellow who owns the tap. There are still the mountain springs.

Contentment in Love

Love is an apple, but look not for harvest
In the blooms that beglamour the orchard in May.
They hang like a kiss between springtime and summer,
And breathe out their delicate lives in a day.

But how can one know that the apples will ripen
When storm shatters the bloom that caresses the bough?
The apple-blossom is sweet as the apple.
It's a pity to lose what is lovely now.

One can't keep the petals but, when they fall,
There seems to be nothing at all.

One can't keep the petals, but oh for the courage
To see in the fruit-buds, knobby and sour,
The promise that looked so sweetly and purely
Out of the heart of the opening flower!

Set Love in Order—XIII

THERE was a young woman who wrote a poem about her marriage—wrote it after the orange blossoms had faded and the wedding gown had been made over into an evening dress, and the towels in the hope chest were being used to dry Billie's dirty little hands. She told how, like the Italian women recently with their wedding rings, she had gathered all her girlhood trinkets together and thrown them into the fire of her one love. And of the melted gold she had made an image of love and set it up to worship, as her one god for evermore.

I melted all my trinkets, and I made
An image that was grave and full of grace,
And set it up in the domestic shade
Of this my temple, where I serve as wife.
But when I looked for love, lo, from its face
There stared at me the awful eyes of Life.

Perhaps, as she grows older, in faithful service, those eyes may grow more benignant. And some day when she looks into them, she will be content, and will no longer ask whether love is there, because they will be so full of wisdom and of peace.

This, at least, is the end of love which poets have promised. When Dante followed Beatrice upward from star to star, he came at last to an ultimate light, and "within its depths I saw

gathered, bound by love into one volume, the scattered leaves of all the universe; substance and accidents and their relations, as though together fused, after such fashion that what I tell of is one simple flame. . . . To the high fantasy here power failed; but already my desire and will were rolled—even as a wheel that moveth equally—by the love that rules the sun and other stars."

This was the climax, in mature manhood, of something that had begun long before as the prettiest case of puppy love in history, when an adolescent boy saw a little girl in a red dress, and felt "the spirit of life" "tremble so violently that the least pulse of my body shook therewith." After that, he says, he often stood on street corners or in the shadow of doorways, where he might "see this youngest of the angels." Meeting her years later, a girl of eighteen in a white dress walking between two older ladies, he heard her speak for the first time, and "came into such sweetness that I parted thence as one intoxicated." Betaking himself to his own room, in a state of mind which every young man has known (or if he has not, he is unfortunate) he was "overtaken by a pleasant slumber." During his nap there appeared to be in his room a "mist the color of fire, within which I discerned the figure of a lord of terrible aspect." And so he passed from boyhood into manhood, for

> *Love was shown me with such terrors fraught*
> *As may not carelessly be spoken of.*

Some people think that it degrades the love that moves the sun and every star to trace it back to the simple stirring and maturing of sex, and to see at its root the mechanism for transmitting the gift of organic life. But how wonderful is this life which is in us, and which we have the power to send on far beyond our own graves, if its own crude reachings to immortality carry such happiness and culminate in such a visionary sense of oneness with the whole inexplicable scheme of things! Dante's vision of the scattered leaves of the universe

bound by love into one volume has been reached by lovers of widely varying climates, times, and social customs. The transition from sexual desire through love to religion seems to be normal to man. And the "spirit of life" set trembling in the youth by the glance of a girl comes to rest at last in union with some ultimate which the man calls God.

2

In our own time Science has taken Love, this pretty Cupid who grows up into a "lord of terrible aspect," and has laid his beautiful body on the dissecting table and opened him up and showed us what his insides are made of. This Freudian analysis has not been particularly pleasant, but it has been useful. It gives intellectual authority to certain old but often neglected intuitions of the teachers of the human race. It offers new and good reasons why a man should leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, "and the twain shall be one flesh." It tells us again, with a certain absoluteness, to "let the dead bury their dead." It even makes the Western mind wary, for the first time, of that dread goddess against whom the best shafts of Buddha were directed—Maya, the evil one, goddess of illusion. It gives us the advice which the "precious Lord Christ" gave Saint Francis: *Set love in order.*

So the psycho-analysts hung out their shingles as professional setters in order of love. And noisome enough was the mess which they found behind the fair façade of social life. These emotional house-cleaning establishments have ceased to be a special feature of our lives not because their technique is not as useful as ever, but because it has been generally absorbed into medical, legal, philanthropic, and pedagogical practice. Every literate parent now knows something about complexes and the danger of the mother image. Yet it is as difficult as ever really to keep love in order, and when we think we are applying all that the psychologists have taught us, we are just as likely as not to be making fat and sleek our particular neurosis.

The first element of love to set in order, said the Freudians, blatantly, is the original germ plasm of sex. One must analyze and revise not only the sexual behavior, but all the thoughts and feelings about sex. Sex wholesome and released in physical love for the normal mate is the glory of life. From it develop household ethics, social responsibility, political organization, and creative art. Sex is the unacknowledged mother of the Muses and the Graces, and of those ministers of the imagination which lead to God. But sex thwarted and repressed is moral and social rot. From it comes every kind of unhappiness, physical illness, mental delusion, and moral obliquity.

What Freud said to men and women in whom the joy of life was languishing, for whom love withered on its stem, health wilted, and social relations seemed spotted with a blight, was what a gardener said to a friend whose peonies began unaccountably to shrink and shrivel in the June sun. The history of the peony that year was like the history of some people's love-affairs. The bush had shot its delicate red shoots up hopefully in April. In May it had bushed out in a glossy profusion of leaves. In June it carried a whole crop of bursting buds. But when the first great flower flung out its first petals, they fell off in a day. A second bud just barely slit its sheath and then hung its head and died. The others made no further effort. They shriveled where they were. There was no blight on the leaves, no insect invisibly sucking the juices, no call, apparently, for pruning or spray.

The gardener said, "Dig it up and look at its roots." So up came the plant, and sure enough, those great, fleshy, sensual peony roots, which look so vulgar, like something which ought to be kept hidden away in the privacy of the earth, were mushy with rot.

In this case the plant was too far gone for help. But there is a simple remedy for some of these perennial plants whose bloom is the ever-renewed glory of the garden but whose fading often seems as slow, insidious, and inexplicable as the fading of many a life. One may dig up the plant, cut out all

the rot, and start pieces of the sound portion off in new soil, in a new place. Iris dying in the roots and so treated will start off again, all flags flying, as if to the music of a band.

And what is usually the cause of the rot? Exactly the cause which Freud found in human rot at the sexual roots. The plants have often stayed too long in the original family cluster. They have to be separated from the parents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, and cousins that grow with them in one household knot, and moved off individually to start a new family in a new place. For this reason shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the twain shall be one flesh.

In most neurotics the sexual life, balked in normal outlet, has clung to the images of the original family. It tries to make domestic intimacy a substitute for physiological intimacy. This substitution of an idea or picture of domestic intimacy for the organic intimacy of sex is the most subtly demoralizing kind of sexual repression. Young men and women of the better sort often fail completely to find the true amalgamation of marriage because they are so busy living up to some external picture in their minds of what a good wife or good husband should be and demanding these superficial virtues from each other. Members of a family—father and daughter, brother and sister, mother and grown-up children—keep a household together, usually for economic reasons, and weave out of domestic intimacies a morbid chain to keep one or another away from genuine love. Some repressed people rush into friendships easily, and immediately suggest semidomestic arrangements. They propose to spend a week end at your house. Why don't you move into their apartment for a few days? They want you to drive out and see Mother. She would love you. One type of person apparently incapable of permanent sexual intimacy is most charming socially. He or she keeps open house, gathers in the young and the strangers, floats around between times making an agreeable addition to any hearth. This perpetual social activity is probably the

most wholesome outlet for the individual concerned. And all goes well so long as one treats these charmers as the butterflies that they are. But beware how you fall in love with them, or believe them capable of really responsible friendship!

A few repressed souls get a little nearer to physiological intimacy through flirtation. They are the feminine teaser, who perpetually invites a kiss, and perpetually dodges it; the masculine mauler of women, whose hand is perpetually on your arm, whose knee is always meeting yours.

A genuine inability to achieve permanent sexual intimacy is a misfortune. Such people are like other handicapped. Where they have achieved a reasonably wholesome adaptation, one can only allow for them and be tender with them. Some who confine their emotional life too much to their own sex are like this, and some flirts. Many of those who perpetually marry and unmarry are of this sort. The tragedy is in the harm they do to normal people who become entangled emotionally with them and, looking for normal response and not finding it, are for a long time thrown off their own balance, blaming themselves, seeking to change themselves, tortured and worried, and driven themselves to morbid adaptations. Often the truly inadequate person is bland and charming, and seems so well adapted to society's superficial demands that it is the normal individual in the relationship who seems irritable, "ugly," and unreasonable. Many of these folk are great missionaries for their own kind of inadequacy. They often become teachers or preachers or philanthropists and impose on the young or unsuspecting their unconscious perversions, in the form of moral teaching.

A great deal of emotional misery among people of normal impulses who are still finding their way to happiness in love is caused by entanglements of heart with the inadequate. One is caught by their adaptations—their social charm, their continual appeal for notice or love, their offer of the social or domestic intimacies and pleasures of life, their faith in their

own virtue, and often by the social approval of the unthinking. When one is unhappy in a personal relationship, the only thing to do is to try to appraise the situation fairly. It may be one's own fault, but it may also be the other person's fault. Nothing is more misleading than the bland social tradition that, in any difficulty, both people are likely to be wrong. If this were so, we could have no courts and no justice. There may be superficial mistakes on both sides, but in most difficulties between people one is fundamentally wrong and the other right. A good deal of moral and emotional suffering could be done away with if the sufferers could realize that they are right, but that the situation is insoluble because of underlying tensions and morbidness which no amount of good will on their part can cure. The only thing is to clear out.

A marriage or a love affair that cannot be established in genuine physiological unity ought to be broken. Any other affection or friendship or personal relationship which, for any reason, becomes involved in the tensions, the expectancies, the disappointments, the nightmare uneasiness, which the instructed modern person ought to be able to label neurotic, should be abandoned, at least for a time. It is rot at the roots. Cut away whatever is sound in your own emotional life, and move it away to new social ground. A certain rigor in recognizing these impossible social situations and breaking them promptly saves untold agony. It is a condition of moral health and social good living.

3

Love is far too precious to risk. It is the lifeblood of personality and of happy living. But our need of it is so continuous and so blind, our childhood teaching about it so misleading, and the human scene often so falsely beglamoured, that it requires dignity, and honesty of feeling, and decision in action, to keep us out of emotional misery and social discomfort.

Only three things may a man love safely and with his whole heart—his human mate, bound to him by ever-renewed and ever-fulfilled desire in the body, his work, and that ultimate ideal which may be called God. Sexual desire may, as Freud says, be "sublimated." But it cannot be safely sublimated in relation to any single person except the physical mate. It only remains as an energy which may be worked off, in creative art, in useful activity, in general but comparatively impersonal social effort—in anything which a normal man may call work. And something of it remains—something emotional, imaginative, transfiguring, and deeply satisfying—in any system of faith or of ideals which constitutes a man's genuine religion. A great deal of religion is false and misleading just because it so obviously excites sexual emotion. Revivalism of all sorts does. The mysticism of celibates has often been disgustingly erotic. Nevertheless, there has been in all ages a kind of religious feeling which is a wholesome projection on the whole mystery of existence of a sweetness and security of devotion which is akin to the passion of lovers. It is quite consistent with intellectual agnosticism. It has animated the greatest of the scientists, no less than the saints. Probably the way to keep this devotion healthy is to use as much of the energy of sex as possible in perfecting one complete lifelong human love. And then to use as much more as possible in any satisfying work. What is left may safely be given to God.

Three groups of persons a man may love happily, but only with discretion—his parents, his children, and his friends. There is a domestic intimacy and social fellowship, a happiness in doing anything with other people, a common sentiment of good will and mutual helpfulness, even a beglamouring of affection, which has none of the tensions of passion. It is another kind of love altogether. Its charm is that it is so blessedly neutral. Where sex is unsatisfied, and unsublimated in *abstract and impersonal ways*, it is almost impossible to keep this other personal sentiment sweet. Sex blocked in its proper

and vital expression, which is creation either in the body or in a creative relation of the mind and the will to the whole physical scheme of things, through work, will run off to the side in thin streams and make out of the domestic and social affections a marsh that breathes spiritual malaria. Only when there is an onward rush of the waters in their main course can the overflow to the sides be bright and wholesome—changing little eddies and pools among the rocks.

Three objects a man may love utterly. Three objects he may love discreetly. This suggests one of those old numerical patterns of thought. One feels bound to find another trio—just to make a perfect Pythagorean number. And another trio there is. Being mathematical a little longer, one may say that there are three objects which a man loves always in peril. These are himself, his own past, and his dream. The most poisonous use of this great energy of creative life is to turn it inward on one's self—to become the glamorous center of a series of day dreams, to see one's self, in any relationship, not as loving but beloved, to cherish high expectations of some bright particular fortune or great position for one's self, to see in every new person an emissary sent from on high to help one to some eminence or good luck, or, when disappointed, to feel one's self the object of some special and malignant fate, an individual fighting a personally inimical scheme of things. This way madness lies. The extreme of this type is the paranoiac. But most people have a touch of the disease.

This love feeds on dreams which are substitute images of reality, revised to suit the ego. Time, in the past or the future, can easily be involved in this delusion. Anything associated with one's life becomes glamorous with an imitation of the purple light of passion if only it is nonexistent in the present. Over what has happened in the past one may grieve as for a lost love. Into the future one may press like a bridegroom running to meet the bride. Only the present time can never be embraced by the false love. The present belongs exclusively to the true.

4

That love is happiness is the lesson of every movie. We know it. We are never tired of hearing it. But we can't always live it. For some objects of love have an unfair hold on us. Mate, work, and God come late into our lives. We have to grow up to them. But a man is born to the company of himself. He is enslaved to his parents by his first baby hunger. He is bound over to the past by memory, and to the future by every impulse of immaturity. And during the long period of youth before he enters into true possession of his life,what else has he to live on but dreams?

To break loose from the original ties of home and tribe, to strip from one's eyes the veils of the dream life, to forget one's self and one's importance, and to love with increasing integration of all one's desires and powers one's mate, one's work, and some ultimate beyond which men have called God —this is to grow up. It is probably impossible without genuine physical and sexual maturing, and without enough sexual and social life to release and exercise the growing impulse to love and bring it to full maturity in the whole maturity of the personality. This is a difficult feat, and the social tradition of the past gives very little guidance. Education in sex and love is usually painful (though it has its high moments) and may be socially disastrous. Probably true love, like human life itself, cannot be born without some agony.

But love, like life, is worth the agony. There is no explaining the infinite value of love. It is one of the ultimates, and all the skeptical mind of man can do before it is to bow down and be silent.

Man's mind is inherently incompatible with this universe. To our intelligence there is much in the scheme of things which seems utterly amateurish. The world looks like the creation of a fourteen-year-old boy who had a good idea but not enough technique to realize it. Man feels impelled to supply the missing technique. Even this great glory of love is

tied up with a mechanics of reproduction and childbirth which seems about the clumsiest and most stupid piece of machinery now going.

But there are also things in this incredible complex of living which come to us like light and music from beyond a door to which we have no key. One is the profusion of beauty in the world, beauty not inherent in the form or function of things, but shed from somewhere else, perhaps from our own consciousness, which makes it no less wonderful. One is the omni-presence of joy. It is always there. It sings gallantly out of the very heart of pain. It glorifies the good, but often beglamours the bad. It is the tune to which life dances—dances with blisters on its sole and thorns in its heel, but keeps on dancing and says that it is good. And lastly there is love, with its roots in the body and its head in the heavens. Who understands it? But who does not believe in it, utterly? Beauty, joy, and love—a rich mixture—the lifeblood in the veins of Time.

On Making the Twain One Flesh—XIV

A LONG time ago, when I was a girl traveling about in the Far East, I had two rather casual English friends, who used to act as a double escort for me. One was George, a long, slim, blond man in his late thirties, who lived on a remittance from home. He had a wife, to whom he seemed lightly but truly devoted, but he had always left her somewhere else, and meanwhile he was free to entertain a lady in his own idle, amusing, and well-bred fashion. The other, who was always with him, was Percy, a much more intense and striking man, perhaps forty or more, who seemed to be administering large industrial affairs and was very rich. Once when I was taking passage to a tropical town, the pair of them turned up on shipboard. They had to go to that town some time, they said, and hearing that I was going, they had suddenly decided to come along now, just for company.

Percy, as usual, was gloomily preoccupied. He spent his days seated before the bookcase which contained the small ship's library, which he appeared to be reading through, methodically, from the top shelf to the bottom, at the rate of about ten books a day. Whenever possible, George would drag him out on deck. Having seated me solicitously in a steamer chair as audience, they would then fall into deep discussion and forget all about me. They had the Frenchman's idea—that men talk best when there is a lady between them.

One day the argument turned to marriage. George immediately began to wear that look of profound and secret wisdom which marriage seems to confer on some people.

"Take my word for it, old chap," he said, "a bachelor never understands these things. Wait till you are married."

"Married!" said Percy, violently, "What do you mean by married?"

"Oh, come now, Percy. Marriage is marriage," said George, laughing a little as if to ward off a scene.

Percy began pacing up and down the deck. Suddenly he burst out, in words which I quote from the book I wrote about these various adventures, long out of print.

"Suppose you have a lot—money, position, and all that, and ambition. You've got to marry up to it, especially if you have political ambitions. And all the while there is a girl. She hasn't any money, isn't anybody, you know—quite out of your set, or your class, or whatever you call it. She lives in shabby little rooms of her own. You don't know how it happened, but that place is home to you. It is home as no other place ever was, or ever will be again, so long as you live. It's not passion, understand! There was passion once, but it's all burnt out, and in its place has come *kindness*, and a habit deep as life. Your life is no longer your own. You think, you feel, you act in terms of her. When you think, you are only holding mental conversations with her. When you feel, you see your heart reflected in her face. Another personality lives in your blood, moves in your soul. She's getting old and thin. All the prettiness you cared about once is worn out. But you don't care. She is the book in which the history of your youth is written—the hopes, the rapture, the passion—all its misery, repentance, and failure. She knows everything about you, and understands. You know that if you came to her door penniless, disgraced, or drunk, she'd take you in. She is the only person in the world before whom you could break down and weep and not be ashamed.

"Then the time comes when you say to yourself: 'I must get married. I must stand for Parliament. I must found a family and leave my fortune to a son.' And you look around for what the world calls a wife. You give her up. And it is like slow suicide, a daily rending of your flesh, fiber from fiber, nerve from nerve, flesh from flesh. You walk the streets to keep from going to her. You read book after book to keep—"

He stopped suddenly before me, and, ignoring George and fixing his burning eyes on me, ended coldly, "And that, my dear, is *marriage*."

2

From the drama and complexity of Percy's life, one may go down the ladder of culture till it ends in the jungle, and find on every level something that still is marriage. A little old lady of seventy-five, who has lived all her life in an American village, is talking to a caller who has brought her some books and magazines to read. She is a homely old lady, with a squat figure and a snub-nosed little face that could never have been pretty. As she talks, she keeps listening, with a happily preoccupied air, for the step of her old husband of eighty, upstairs. "I like to read the news in the papers," she says, "and articles in the magazines about taking care of the house, and books about foreign places and the way other people live, but I don't like the love stories. They are all about silly young people, and I don't think these children know anything about love. There isn't any story as good as life, when you have lived it all through together the way Edward and I have. But then," she says, with a sweet little far-away smile breaking over her face, like light from a stained-glass window falling on a worshiper, "Edward and I have always been happy together."

Probably every village can show at least one old couple still beglamoured in each other. Here and there, all over the country, among the plainest old people, one comes suddenly

on some hidden store of sentiment, like a comb of honey which, unnoticed, the wild bees have been storing, bit by bit, from all the vanished flowers of the year.

From the village to the jungle is a long step, but love is a fruit that grows wild, and tastes as sweet in the wilderness as in the garden. About the only good word Stanley, in *Darkest Africa*, has to say for the perfidious and childish black people is his account of marital devotion. Romantic love, he says, has nothing to do with culture. He has seen naked black couples, with no arts above the level of the animals, show in their devotion to each other, in sickness, in trouble, and in danger of death, an unselfishness and a grace of behavior and caress which would put the proudest lords and ladies to shame.

Nor does lifelong love in marriage begin with men. In *The Romantic East*, Sydney describes a pair of those creatures who are collateral with our own ancestors. At Penang he visited one of those zoos where creatures are brought in alive from the jungle to be shipped to menageries in all parts of the world. "I stepped up to a cage no larger than a dry-goods box, with a grating in front. There on the floor of the raised showcase sat two orangoutangs, male and female, with reddish brown hair. . . . They sat there with flagging spirits, pretending not to notice us, looking sadly off into the distance. The female, much smaller than the male, sat up against his breast, snuggling, and he put his great right arm around her, with his long left arm stretched out, holding a bar of the cage with his hand. For all the world they were grandma and grandpa, dreaming away their departing days, and age never brought such sadness into any human eyes as that which shone in theirs.

"The female snuggled closer to her mate when we approached, and dropped her eyes, bashfully; then, curiosity getting the better of her, she raised her right arm and held her elbow up before her face and peeped over it shamefacedly for a second and dropped her eyes again. Over and over she

peeped, while he sat there with the glorious superiority of the general of a defeated army who had fought for a lost cause. With the utmost reverence for the nobility of Lee, I believe that he could not have presented a more pathetic figure when he carried away with him the sword Grant would not take, than did this captured orangoutang, still sniffing the jungle on the air, still dreaming of the days when he was a creature to be feared and not stared at, still knowing what the reach of an arm really meant, its freedom and its grip." But in that strong right arm his wife still snuggled. It still was refuge to her. And her grizzled little head against his breast was still to him comfort.

3

One must emphasize this lowly foundation of marriage; for here is the point where man's tendency to disown his own roots in the organic life, to despise matter and the flesh and spin a fairy substitute for it, presses on us the most sorely. It is the fashion to talk about trouble in marriage as if it were like any other sort of social trouble, susceptible to the same kindly adjustments, the same ignoring and forgetting and covering over. It is not. It is an absolutely unique human relationship, and its primary bonds are not social but physical and organic. Not till the physical and organic basis is completely established can the social bonds be healthy.

While it is now generally recognized that most trouble in marriage is due to badly managed or insufficient sexual interchange, social opinion does not yet allow very satisfactory instruction in the matter. The more available a book on sex is, the more misleading it is likely to be. The good ones are those which fall most quickly under the ban or are, at least, limited to circulation among doctors and lawyers. We still treat knowledge on this subject as the mediaeval Catholic Church wished to treat the Bible. It was to be kept in the hands of certain interpreters and doled out at their discretion. The idea is that, some knowledge being undesirable

for the immature or unmarried, the married are therefore to be kept in the same ignorance.

Another trouble with most books on the subject is that literary expression is a rare gift. Not everyone who is moved to write on so difficult a subject can say what is to be said with truth or delicacy. One of the most mentally honest and morally sound of the innovators who have written on this matter was old Doctor Robie. But his limitations of culture and of social experience and of language intervene between him and many a fastidious person who very much needs help. Despite the bawdy books the true experience of sex is outside of literature and, therefore, of intellectual and imaginative enlightenment. The French have sometimes pretended to do something in this way but have not got far beyond the superficial and the conventional. Only Walt Whitman, in unnoticed phrases here and there, came near to getting sex into poetry, for he had an imaginative sense of the true dignity of the organic life. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, D. H. Lawrence tried, with an almost painful honesty and with all the resources of literary talent, to describe the experience of sexual union, but he sewed these purple passages into a third-rate and inconsequential story. Most that is good in that book is what the moral censor would describe as bad.

Some day the dark foundations of life may cease to be a sink and cesspool and be subjected, not only to the increasing investigation of science, as at present, but to imaginative understanding and transmission of experience through art. As it is, every maturing person must learn, as best he can, whatever is to be known about the science and art of the sexual relationship. Young people who are married ought to learn it together. There are a good many books, and, though they are not always good, if you read about everything there is, one thing seems to correct the other. Those who are truly in love have something within themselves which gives dignity to the interpretation. Yet even between frank, intelligent, and mutually experimental mates the full lesson

of sex is never completely learned. To keep on learning it together, as long as life can bestir itself to desire—which, we hope, means up to the hundredth birthday at least—keeps love from satiety. There is no satiety in the true marriage. It is drama right up to the last curtain.

On the other hand, one of the most devastating forms of sexual suppression is mutual suppression in marriage. These mutually repressed persons may go through all the motions of matrimony. They may bring up a large family. They may be bound together by a certain kind of good will and domestic comfort. But there is dullness between them, for physically she is to him only a convenience, and he to her is really a nuisance.

Yet there is no release in sex, unless it is continually integrated with all those emotional and social attitudes which normally grow out of it. One of the wisest observations of Freud concerned the curious relation of words to the sexual life. Man's inventions are continually leading him astray through his failure to amalgamate them with instinctive and organic experience, and some of the oldest inventions, like language, are as badly used as the new ones.

The intimacies of lovers must continually be clarified in words between them. The organic unity is established on the cultural levels when it leads to full, frank, and gentle talk. One of the most common statements of those who are unhappy in marriage and are advised to talk their troubles over, is "We can't talk." The social tradition which has obscured sexual experience in silence or smut carries over even into this dear relationship. The poets and makers of language have supplied no adequate words, and many simple people who can talk well enough on general social levels cannot in intimacy find speech for themselves. In the embarrassed silence which settles where sex is touched, mutual understanding is lost.

The talk of lovers is the true psycho-analysis, the analyzing of the soul. It picks up and carries away on a strong, pure

stream of feeling mental junk and debris which confuse our social thinking. It organizes memory and breaks down that wall of self-enclosure which all other human relations force upon us. Once the wall is broken down in relation to one other person, of another social experience and the complementary sex, both good will and understanding can reach out to all the rest of life.

Percy was right. The end of passion completely fulfilled is *kindness*. In this recurring kindness, and an honest attempt to interpret it in words and social gestures, the other difficulties of common life can be resolved. The wonder is that, with everything against them, with only false or superficial social teaching to go on, so many people manage to find this out.

4

Like most important human relations, the idea of marriage has accumulated about it a good deal of traditional junk. There is the idea of husband and wife's mutual possession of each other. Marriage guarantees no possession—only mutual discovery. Those who really belong to each other need make no claims. To those who do not, mutual claims do no good. There is also the idea of jealousy. This has been universally questioned in modern literature and social life. Apparently jealousy is no necessary concomitant of the most intense mutual devotion. People in the past have often been jealous because they thought they ought to be. Now that jealousy is no longer expected, a great many men and women in marriage seem to have little of it. It is mainly a matter of individual temperament and circumstance. On the whole, jealous people are those who feel insecure in each other. Many who are genuinely secure even like to play with their happiness in apparent complaisance with regard to other relationships and in the modern freedom of extramarital flirtation.

There is also the idea that the relationship must be exclusive, and this exclusiveness is retroactive—the young suitor

must be able to swear to Amelia that she is the only girl he ever loved. This idea also is questioned, and by the most serious people. Experience has not shown that continence is necessarily the best preparation for marriage or physical unfaithfulness the most serious detriment to it. This unity is organic and of slow growth. It is an integration in relation to one person of all the powers of the growing personality. Monogamy cannot be imposed. It must be achieved. It is undoubtedly the end to which the higher organic life works and the only relationship which ultimately satisfies. But to bring together the dispersed, superficial, distorted impulses which our social tradition creates, in this transcendent unity of desire, imagination, and feeling, this co-operation on all the levels of life, requires considerable education. It is a question whether it is wise to try to get all sexual education within a relationship in which there is so much at stake. Perhaps some things can be learned in lighter ways.

This, at least, is the theory of a good deal of very earnest modern experiment. The generation since the world war, in America and in England, has attacked the old dilemma of love and sex, of family security and mutual passion, with a frankness of experiment never before tried in any group which was also trying to found homes and bring up children. There have been similar experiments in the past, most of them of great social value to succeeding generations. But they have been in very selected circles, separated by gifts or social position from the great mass of householders, and frankly barren. Such groups were the homosexuals of Athens, whose philosophy culminated in the beautiful idea of Platonic love, the medieval lords and ladies in the castles of Provence, who invented courtly love as a sublimation of adultery, and certain circles of pre-Revolutionary France in which the mistress-lover relationship was sustained through life, without benefit of clergy, in intellectual and social co-operation. But in modern circles of the most enlightened people one may see couples who have tried nearly every kind of sexual experiment, singly and

together, and yet have grown steadily into emotional unity, and are bringing up their children in households of the utmost sobriety and integrity.

5

The reason why attitudes to marriage that were formerly limited to small, specially protected, and barren groups are now taken into the framework of the home is simple. There is a much better technique of birth control. Always, in the past, there has been some birth control. But a better knowledge of biology, chemistry, and mechanics has greatly simplified the problem.

This matter of birth control is crucial to personal happiness. An enormous amount of worry, tension, and mutual torment in marriage is the result of attempted birth control without adequate knowledge. Yet to spread the knowledge is not nearly so simple as some radicals make it appear. The present laws are stupid and ignorant. Yet the Catholic Church is quite right in pointing out the dangers of the narrow economic and social dogmas on which much of the agitation for birth control is based. The problem is moral, as the Catholic Church says, and it is social. It is no argument to say that modern economic organization does not provide an income for family maintenance. It is to the everlasting credit of the Catholics that they immediately rise up and say, "If it doesn't, it ought to. And let's see that it does." Nor are the various population arguments to the point. There is plenty of room on this earth for people if we want them.

If, on the other hand, the legal restrictions were removed, we have abundant examples in other advertising of the way in which the most intimate and sacred relations of life would be dragged through a slime of blah. Already the law, which does not allow anything honest to be said on the subject, permits gaudy advertisements in the name of "feminine hygiene," which are misleading and play callously with women's tragedy. So serious is this possibility that a sound

scientific organization, which possesses and advertises to doctors a really adequate birth-control technique, is opposed to a change in the present laws until we have found a way to protect the problems of marriage from cheap industrial exploitation.

Nor is the Catholic alternative impossible. It is a counsel of perfection, but not beyond the best children of the Church. The Catholics offer a method which they call the rhythm method. It is said by their opponents that it is not secure, but on the basis of inadequate trial this argument has been opposed to other contraceptives which are really secure. Perhaps this rhythm method has not been adequately tried. The Catholic idea involves the acceptance of several propositions: that abstinence for periods, undertaken in the spirit of the great saints and celibates of the church, may have emotional advantages and intensify the love between husband and wife; that children, within reasonable social and economic limits, should be welcomed; and that the social order should make it possible to provide for them.

In this argument there is a moral dignity which some of the economic and social discussions of the birth-control propagandists lack. On the other hand, the Protestant position is not without moral dignity, either, if only its proponents were not so afraid of appeals to that antiquated institution, the soul. For physical union perfected beyond the needs of parenthood comes nearer than anything else devised by man to making possible that union which Plato dreamed of—the co-operation of two minds and souls and hearts in common social or intellectual creation. The children of such union, he says, are not only boys and girls but ideas and institutions and creative art. Passion rightly directed is a great purifying force, burning up a lot of emotional and imaginative debris, organizing the life impulse to all social and creative ends.

One great difficulty with this whole question is that our highest thinking about sex in the past was developed in relation to institutions which, biologically and socially, were

really immoral. There is, for example, the very beautiful thinking of Plato. It was taken over wholesale by the first Christian fathers and became the pattern of the traditional Catholic ideal of marriage itself.

Plato, writing to an intelligentsia which found its only romance in homosexuality, naturally recommended complete physical abstinence in the relationship if possible. But he makes allowance for those who fall from grace. Love, he says, is the irritation and uneasiness of the soul sprouting wings. There is a swelling and an itching for which physical appeasement is only a temporary balm. Some, he says, "if they have given in to a coarser habit of life, and one unfriendly to wisdom, though *not to honor . . .* in a moment of drunkenness or like abandonment" may be surprised when their souls are "off guard," and "being brought together in one place will choose and consummate that practice which the world deems happy, and once consummated will for the future indulge in it, *though sparingly* as *doing what is not approved by the mind.* Dear, therefore, to each other, though not so dear as the former two, these continue while their love is burning, and *when it is extinct;* for they conceive themselves to have given and received the strongest pledges, which *it were impious to violate at* any time *by becoming alienated.* And in the end, without their wings, it is true, but not *without having started feathers,* they go forth from the body, so that they carry off no paltry prize for their impassioned madness; for there is a law that the paths of darkness beneath the earth shall never again be trodden by those who have as much as set their foot on the heavenward road, but that walking hand in hand they shall live a bright and blessed life, and when they *recover their wings, recover them together,* for *their loves' sake.*

"So great and godly, my beautiful boy, are the blessings which the affection of a lover will bestow. But the commerce of one who does not love, being *alloyed with mortal prudence,* and dispensing only mortal and niggardly gifts, will breed in the soul of the loved one a *sordidness which the vulgar laud as*

virtue, and doom it for nine thousand years to be tossed about the earth and under the earth with reason."

And what is this passage, so beautiful that it has been taken as a proper pattern of Christian marriage, and of sexual passion in marriage? It is a blast against domestic virtue as practiced in Athens. For in those days marriage was not a matter of instinctive desire and personal choice, as in our society. Far more outrageous than homosexuality would have seemed our American idea that when personal love fails, the household may be broken up and a new marriage established. Marriage was a social matter and largely determined by the family. Girls were married young, and in ignorance, and the purity of the family inheritance was maintained by keeping the woman virtually in jail during the whole childbearing period. This has been the usual arrangement in all societies till the present time.

As Doctor Carrel points out in his book *Man, the Unknown*, modern inventions usually take no account of man's real nature. This was just as true of the earliest inventions. The original mechanics of sex and childbirth is poor enough, from the point of view of man's own emotional and imaginative impulses, but the domestic machinery man first invented for its restraint and social transformation was only a slight improvement.

Those in the past who could free themselves from the dominance of the household through social position, or personal gifts, usually did so, and found personal love in some extra-domestic imitation of organic, lifelong mating. Usually this relationship was socially or biologically immoral. Unfortunately all those who were able to do any real talking about love and sex were of this type. They were idealists, but their idealism was warped in trying to grow out of a bad social arrangement. This explains why a great deal of the most beautiful and idealistic writing about love, writing which has profoundly affected our thought and feeling, has consistently recommended the obliteration

or extreme subordination of sex between "true" lovers. Nothing else could be suggested when the choice was between a domestic slavery which Plato called "sordidness" and a corrupt freedom. There was every reason for Plato's counsel to his homosexual friends to avoid physical indulgence and to try to grow out of it in other forms of emotional, intellectual, and artistic co-operation. But sexual indulgence against every normal impulse and even against instinctive taste is one thing; the organic union of genuine mates is another.

Here again we encounter the failure of language to establish an adequate contact with man's organic experience. Language is the transmission of social experience. By it we are enabled to make the experience of men long dead our own and rise, as it were, on the shoulders of our fathers. But the loveliest language of those in the past who have thought most deeply and most truly about sex has transmitted a warped social experience. The attempts of the best minds to sublimate the love for boys, courtesans, and other men's wives has unfortunately set the pattern, and set it within the very sanctuary of the Church, for the attitude of husbands and wives. There is no parallel. We owe much to those who grew wings out of the muck and mire of the past. But they carry the handicaps of their origin. It is better that, sound, wholesome, and free, we should try in our own age to grow our own wings.

Good Will Is a Cordial—XV

ANYTHING done for love is done with pleasure. This is so obvious that it is a wonder anyone lets himself be miserable. Good will is cheap. Most people have far more of it tucked away in dusty nooks and corners of their hearts than they use. The recipe for happiness then becomes very simple. Take out these hidden stores of good feeling, of really sweet feeling, which you have hidden away, like old jars of preserves in a cellar, and shine them up and hold them up to the light. They shed a glory like jewels when the sun hits them, and the taste of them is very good.

Anything in this world may be loved, and most things are—by someone. We are too stingy in our liking, and penurious in our interest. Why we go around, turning such a small, thin current of attention on things, making them dim, and unpleasant, and difficult, when a little more juice from the secret but well-charged battery, would make them radiantly interesting and easy, it is impossible to say. It is just part of man's general dumbness.

That a good many of man's troubles are just a state of mind has been observed by most popular philosophers. Almost any easy advice—to cheer up and get over it, to stop thinking of yourself and think of your neighbor, to stop whining and laugh once in a while, to stop mentioning your troubles and count your blessings—really works, in a large number of

cases. Not all the woes of man are as easy as that, but there are enough that are to justify the cheerio-venders. When the poor sufferer has taken all the other advice in this book, when he has improved his health, filled his purse, and found a way of getting along with his wife, or of acquiring a wife if he lacks one, there is still something to do. He needs a self-starter, some deliberate turning of good will on himself, his world, his friends, his work, and the great mystery of things in general, a positive awareness of his own attitude to life. He needs to look after his own attention and his feeling to see that they do not get choked or spluttery or involved in poison gas.

2

This good will begins with one's self. The counsel of Christ to love one's neighbor *as one's self* has never been bettered. The minute one goes beyond this simple share and share alike of one's regard between one's self and the other fellow, one runs into difficulty. What one is advised to love with one's whole mind and heart and soul is not man but God. To human love the bounds are set, and one is happiest when one keeps within them in a cheerful balance between self-regard and social sympathy.

One of the more recently discovered plagues of humanity is the inferiority complex. One dare not depress one's self unduly, for the ego immediately takes its revenge by swelling up like a balloon with imaginary importance and gaseous desires. We are all like Alice in Wonderland. It is hard for us to keep our true size. At one minute life hands us a bitter cake which, when nibbled, makes us shrink rapidly to the level of the insect. The next minute another cake, frosted with success or praise or opportunity, sets us growing into the treetops. It takes a constant exercise of judgment to keep us aware of our true size. If we feel smaller than we are, we go around stepping all over other people. We don't know the real importance of our behavior or adequately judge its

probable effects. Most disagreeable people have inferiority complexes. They are the selfish, the self-seekers, the jealous, envious, and easily hurt. A great deal of inconsiderateness and selfishness arises in a small opinion of one's self. One honestly does not realize that one's own behavior has so much power to do damage. Other people seem so big and easy and strong to the poor little cowering ego that it does not seem that they could be helped or hurt by such a worm as itself. Self-seeking and egoism are the same kind of inner smallness. The individual does not know that what he wants he has the ability to get for himself. He is always trying to sneak or charm it out of the great and the strong who seem to get it by some magic which he can't exercise.

On the other hand the habit of seeing one's self too large gets one stepped on. Things look too easy, the distance to achievement or money or love too short. Troubles are on one's neck before one is forewarned and roll right over one. This makes one a miserable person and a not very useful citizen.

So the beginning of self-regard is to get one's self to the right size, and to keep one's self there. It requires an objective habit of mind. Only a perpetual and friendly interest in other people will keep a standard of measurement. Every time one's feelings about one's self get sore or depressed or, on the other hand, one's hopes begin to skyrocket, the remedy is to get out among people and to stir around. Anything will do. One can stop and talk to the telephone girl, or go shopping and chat with the butcher boy. Probably the ordinary friendly exchanges with a great variety of people in the regular course of the day's business are a better regulator for emotional constipation than formal social life. Social life is necessary and delightful, but it is slightly deceiving and may easily become a bad habit. It is a dress-up parade for the personality. At social affairs we don't meet naturally on the true human level but co-operate in putting on a special act in costume. But, supplementing the general habit of being

friendly, of picking up human contacts of every sort wherever they present themselves, some social life also is necessary. The main thing is to treat this as the art it is. To be happy in it one must keep learning its artifices—its current jargon, its easy movement, its deft avoidances, its dress, its culinary set-ups, its games and dances, the mixture of its drinks. This helps to dress up the personality for the common or garden variety of human contact, which must be our main dependence.

3

Self-regard is the starting point for beautiful behavior. But it is always regard for the other fellow that is positively attractive. Self-respect is the negative of which the positive is active and graceful love for something beyond the self. Just as one cannot be charming if one is starving or has just broken a leg or is being beaten by whips or bitten by mosquitoes, so one can hardly be attractive if one's consciousness of self is an aching anxiety, an oppression, or a shame. And much that is fine and magnanimous follows almost automatically if, truly respecting one's self, depending on one's self for help and comfort, and ready to further one's own interests without fear or favor, one treats one's neighbor as one would like to be treated. For unconsciously we all give others what we want ourselves. Hence arise lying hospitality, pretended interest, and love which is a pampering of weakness or vanity. The reason why people fool others and lie to others is that they fool themselves and lie to themselves.

The benevolence that oppresses, the kindness that belittles, is no true love. It is only a way of making one's own small ego feel big. One must respect and deal with the grown-up man or woman in other people, and not treat them as deluded infants, or fools ready to lap up flattery. One must respect others' dignity, and, assuming that they desire a normal enhancement, generously help them to set themselves in a good light by bringing out and taking pleasure in what is best in them.

This capacity to make others brilliant, to treat them in such a way that they shine, so that they feel at ease and are happy, has often been noted as one of the essentials of charm.

The triumph of self-regard is to reach the point of security where one can lay the self aside. It need never intrude its petty troubles and miseries, its little hungers for notice, its wish to be something. A habit of actively satisfying one's own normal desires for comfort and achievement, through one's own efforts, in any way that is not a direct trouble to other people, is one way of freeing the ego for unselfish love. The genuine needs and desires of any man ought not to be so absorbing that he does not have plenty of energy left for unruffled attention to other people. If they are, it is usually because some of the expanding gas of the dreamworld has got into them.

Good will is the greatest wealth. Go into the home of any notable person, one who has achieved a full and distinguished life, and see how he is surrounded with mementos of the people whose lives he has touched with interest, curiosity, or affection, the causes with which he has concerned himself, the institutions which he has fostered. His photographs and his curios, his books and his possessions—each is a symbol of some human contact, of something loved and pursued with interest, of some bit of the widespread life of the world which he has attached to himself. This is a treasure which no one can take away—this deposit of riches in the soul by each life one has shared in sympathy, if only for a moment.

Such an open and friendly attitude to the world is often recommended to us, however, in rather silly terms. We are told to cultivate Love, with a capital L—a kind of general glow and warmth flowing out to all and sundry. It is true that some choice may be exercised. One may deliberately take a positive rather than a negative attitude. But such love is, as a matter of fact, natural to perfectly healthy persons, and, if one is not healthy, one cannot always put one's self into a state of emotional glow by simple abracadabra. One must

find what is really hurting and get rid of it. If one is tired, it is better to rest, and cultivate love for humanity to-morrow. If one is sick, it is better to get well, and to smile then. If one is unsatisfied in love, in work, in outlets for one's imaginative and intellectual energies, it is better to seek the outlets and trust to good will to grow out of them. But if one is in a beglamoured state from too much turning of the desires and imagination on one's own personal hopes or the future or the past, it is best to get out at once, right in the present, and start taking an interest in the first person that turns up.

Genuine good will is not an effulgence produced by self-hypnotism nor a soupy abstraction called "service." It is only a direction of attention. What we really attend to, we get interested in; and what we get interested in, we are in a fair way to like or to love, or, failing that, to understand with charity.

4

This capacity to love is the most untrained part of the personality. Our minds may be educated to a finish, our bearing smooth, correct, and sophisticated, but let our feelings be truly touched, let the emotional life well up from the depths, and we are but children. Our impulses become the crude simple ones which belong to sex or the family. There is, for example, the tendency to think of any relation of tenderness in terms of family affection. One becomes too intimate. We must live together, borrow each other's clothes or money, tell each other our secrets, and run in on each other at all times of the day. This almost always leads to what, in family life, is its correlative—squabbling and suppressed irritation.

There is the tendency to project on the beloved person one's own feelings of inferiority. A moment ago this new friend was a glorious being, walking secure in success and popularity. Now that you know him better, you worry about him. You think he isn't being appreciated. You are afraid he is making a mistake. You want to make the friend over,

to live his life for him, to map out behavior or action for him, and you are disappointed when he acts for himself.

Good will in social life must be separated from this primitive stew of feeling. Even in family life it is better to keep some form and separateness—not to throw all one has, thinks, feels, and desires into the common pot, to be mauled by the whole tribe.

Well-bred people of wide social experience have learned to beware of cheap intimacy. One may show to a new friend a gracious, friendly, and enthusiastic interest, a pleasure in his society, a desire to know him better. But beware how you introduce him too widely or share your property or your secrets. Each should approach the other with an outward mask of cordiality, with a genuine willingness to be friends, and give the other every chance to be a friend. But of every association which really involves one's peace, one's honor, one's possessions, or one's privacy, one must learn to be chary.

Truly adult emotion—which is the only emotion capable of serenity—has not only weaned itself from the immediate family. It has laid aside the family images. It stops looking for a father and a mother, a brother or a sister, and a sheltering roof. It ceases to hanker for someone to lean on. It does not try to recover the position of the favorite child in the house, or expect someone to set its dinner on the table and to kiss the sore spot and make it well.

The difficulty with most family images is that the family they reflect is the primitive one, which, as an economic unit, ruthlessly sacrificed individual affection and individual happiness to the physical perpetuation or protection of the group. To transfer to others some of the sentiment for father or mother might be charming enough. What is wrong with the naïve person's father image is that he thinks of Father not as someone to be loved or reverenced, but as one who might dispense to him support or social protection.

This economic enslavement of love, which once involved large family groups, is fortunately being broken in modern society. Even husbands and wives have some economic in-

dependence of each other, and other forms of dependence within the family are felt to be misfortune. Children grow up to manage their own affairs economically as soon as possible, and no adult of the modern type looks forward with complacence to being supported by the children. The older arrangements survive only among groups which have not entered into their heritage of present culture or have been thrown back to the earlier levels by misfortune. But the imagination is old-fashioned and does not readily grow up to this freedom, which, in the sphere of practical affairs, seems very precious. So those who would scorn to ask the actual father for a cent still keep seeking in every friend an imaginary father or a mother.

This involvement of sentiment and good will with economics has been carried over into business by all those who regard social life as a hunting ground for economic opportunity. The faith in social contacts and in pulling social wires is just a naïve way of thinking of life in the old terms of the economic family. And a good deal of the blah about "service" is the same sort of greenness. Instead of really doing some work and developing skill and resourcefulness in the actual competitions of life, one is to get along by pulling the wool over Father's eyes, and jollying sister May, and taking a nice little gift to Aunt Emily. The exigencies of industrial life since the depression are taking this nonsense out of business, but there is still too much of it. The vice-president of a large corporation, in announcing to the staff of salesmen the appointment of one of their number to an important executive position, said severely, "And do you know why he was appointed? He was *not* appointed because he was a good mixer, or popular, or aggressive, or because he had personality. He was appointed because, by longer and harder work than anyone else here has done, he learned more about this business than anyone else knows."

Only when love as passion, as sentiment, as good will, as self-forgetful participation in the whole drama of living, is freed from its economic chains to family and tribe, can it

flourish and bear its proper fruit, which is happiness. Mutual helpfulness becomes a matter of manners, of emergencies, of common co-operation toward some social end. Sentiment within the family, among close friends, is enjoyed and perfected for its own sweet sake. It is developed in pleasant behavior, in social observances, in common adventures and common enjoyments. It is no longer a means of sidling up to Santa Claus. It is itself happiness beyond anything Santa could get into his pack.

Moonlight and Music and Love and Romance—XVI

"THERE may be trouble ahead," croons the slumberous voice over the radio, "but while there is music and moonlight and love and romance, let's face the music and dance." The voice fades as the hand moves on the dial to

the rose in her hair.
In my arms there was no one.
So I just put her there.

But another voice bursts in rapturously, "I'm in heaven, I'm in heaven, and my heart beats so that I can hardly speak," and moves off again, like an angel into glory, "dancing cheek to cheek."

Outside the room that glows softly in the light of shaded lamps and the flickering flame of the open fire, the moonlight of April lies still and silvery upon the sea, and from the marshes below the chorus of the peepers rises, jubilant, persistent, yet plaintive, too, with bullfrogs intermittently executing an accompaniment in the bass. The moonlight throbs, and the lamplight and the firelight throb, and all with the same tune. For what are these voices, coming out of the void over the radio, but the peepers somewhere, everywhere, in the marshes of human life?

Always man—and the creatures below him—is like the ass that prophesied. When he opens his mouth, a voice speaks

through it giving the lie to all that he seems to be and asserting in song and dance, even to the last breath, that life is unutterably good. Man is naturally a liar, and it may be that his song is only the loveliest of his lies. So some of the songsters themselves assert. Rudy Vallee, the troubadour of the common man, says that life for most people is one long headache, anyway, and that one like him, who gives the people tunes which they can whistle or sing, gives them a medicine for the pain. So easily does he propose to fulfill the mission Gautama set for himself when, kissing his sleeping wife and baby good-by, he rode away in the night to find a "medicine for the pain of the world."

Something there is of magic in the commonest thing. It is the enchantment of love, making of the crude mechanics of transmitting life a magical rite performed in the glow of fairy lamps. But it is the warmth of affection, too, and gives to simple familiarity a glamour of comfort. There is no impulse of liking for persons or things which does not immediately get caught in this star dust. Every moment of happiness we have ever known—even the simplest contentment in food and rest, the most trivial satisfaction of vanity—has some mystical property to enlarge, to transform, to make beautiful whatever has been associated with it. For every individual there are things and circumstances which his own personal experience has saturated with magic. With shining eyes a friend will lead you to the "quaintest little restaurant" in a back street, and seat you with pride as one waving the fairies to serve you. It seems a dumpy little place to you, and the food none too good. He sits on his side of the table, in the light of the initiated, but you, on your side, only in outer darkness, and generous and beaming as his wish to share his good with you may be, there is no hope for you, unless the fairy happens in and puts some of the magic juice in your eye, too.

There is no escaping this enchantment of life. And who wants to escape? The main thing is to enjoy as much of it as possible, but to keep it harmless. And harmless it always is

when the enjoyment of it is wholly unselfish, and one is beglamoured to no practical end. "It was in a little gypsy tearoom." So it was, and the gypsy tearoom therefore seems to you unique and lovely. But that is no reason for buying the tearoom and building up a big restaurant there. Nor is it any reason for buying stock in gypsies. Absurd as this sounds, a great deal of business in the sophisticated and hard-boiled city of New York is conducted on no better foundation. The hopeless romantics of this world are those on whom any glamour acts only to enlarge their own ego and build up out of nothing a fairy world, where what they wish is going to come true and any person or circumstance that has temporarily enchanted them is going to bring them a job, or a large order, or a lot of money, tomorrow. This fairy who walks with us delights to lead the selfish and the egotistical astray, dancing ahead of them like witch fire, and leaving them stranded in a bog. But the self-forgetful, the easy-hearted, who take the moment gladly but let it go without regret, the observers and lovers of things and people for their own sakes, she blesses continually, for there is nothing too humble for her wayward transfiguration, nothing so hard or so ugly or so painful but it has in it the potentiality of strange delight.

2

The magic is everywhere. It is the seasons and the elements, and the rhythm of day and night. Some simple things are consecrate to it—moonlight and roses and dawnlight and dew. One can induce it by the simplest tricks, by a shade on the lamp, a flower on the table, perfume in the hair, incense in the church, candles on the altar. It sings to us in a thousand tunes. It is exhaled in a multitude of odors. A mother goes into an attic and finds the box where the children's battered and broken toys are laid away. And lo! it is there, clinging in the cobwebs, shining from the countenance of a broken-nosed doll. In the old days, when we hitched old Dobbin to the sleigh, Romance used to go riding with us. Now it rides just

as surely as we speed through the night in a rumble seat. It is in the white throat and violet eyes of Annie Laurie, and the passing grace of the "beautiful lady in blue." But it is also in the old wrinkled hands of Mother Machree and the welcoming voices of the "old folks at home." It is everywhere wooed, but never married. It is yours to take when it comes, but never to own.

Civilized living consists in a multitude of arts for capturing this fleeting magic. You hang it on the wall in the form of a picture. You draw it from the keys of a piano or the strings of a violin. Men have embalmed it in musical notes and in print, and from the scribbled paper it is called forth and spreads and fills the room. It makes the magic of social life, transforming plain John and Jennie, by dress, by manners, by expert playing with you of the social game, into actor and actress on a rose-lit stage. You dress up the dinner table with it, with linen and silver, with flowers and candles. You pour it into the teacup and the cocktail glass. You light it on the hearth when you put match to paper and sticks. To the modern American his car is cushioned with it, and it pours out of the radio itself, as if from an inexhaustible fountain. It blooms in every garden. Something of it is folded away like perfume in evening clothes in the closet. It is even bottled in all the jars and boxes on the dressing table. A multitude of gestures and materials have become symbols by which we mutually call up the magic—the courtesies of common life, greetings, congratulations, rising, bowing, the offer of cigarette or wine or tea or coffee, the co-operation in games and dance. They are the language of social life, as trivial in themselves as the little lines and curves whereby we make a word on paper. Common agreement has given them their power, as it gives power to words and to money. This is how we make the magic, and share it. Learn the trick, and practice it with an easy heart and an open mind, and the magic is yours.

But always the magic is wilful. Nature, who makes magic continually, seems never able to bring off her own show

smoothly. Year after year the cherry blossoms bloom around the tidal basin in Washington. But one year it rains, and the next it snows, and the next a chill blast of winter comes shivering from the north and shatters the rose-flushed petals in mockery. There are brave plans to greet the blooms at sunrise with dancing and music, but the dancers skip in the mud and the band blares forlornly against the rain. Then, suddenly, the fairy who rules these elements has changed her wilful mind. Out comes the sun, tender, radiant, smiling right in the face of the Weather Bureau, and by thousands upon thousands the delicate blossoms open their honeyed hearts, and glimmer in brief, visionary reduplication in the waters below. For magic in nature is a spirit. It bloweth where it listeth and no man knoweth the place thereof.

Magic in love, in social life, is hardly less incalculable. Very simple mechanics produce it—effects of light, of color, drifts of perfume, rhythm and music, certain symbols, certain gestures. It constantly eludes us, and constantly returns, unexpected and unbidden. One must welcome it when it comes and let it go without regret, for always, somewhere, there is more of it.

3

This wayward and fantastic charm of living is so universal, and always, if one will be patient and not force it, so near at hand, that it is only by hard work and determination that men manage to keep their lives so drab. Drabness has been made into a religion enforced with all the terrors of hell. Color, which paints the sunset and blossoms irresistibly from our dust, has been declared immoral by religious decree. It has almost been necessary to put locks on men's lips to keep them from singing and weights on their feet to keep them from dancing. And, withal, color and song and dance have never quite been conquered by Puritan or priest; for always the flowers bloomed and the birds sang and the butterflies danced, and what could even a Puritan God do about it?

Yet in many social groups drabness is deliberately taught by precept and example, and any little surreptitious blossoming at adolescence or in the first flush of love is shamed till it dies again in the general social blank. There is a level of life in which the male at the head of the house has set himself on guard against any grace of life, any lightness or joy or laughter or music stealing in by way of the children or the wife. A ribbon in Jennie's hair, a flower on the table, a clean collar and a sleek coiffure in the young son, brings him snarling into the fray. "None of that. None of that." He rants and growls and shows his teeth and claws till all sinks again into dull neutrality. There is a ganging together of certain people in villages to keep everything thoroughly joyless and safely dull. These censors are seldom content to be dull in their own way. They are missionaries for their dark religion. There is no mistaking the pain that accidental exposure to some of the many glamours of life gives them. It nauseates them. It maddens them. It makes them grind their teeth and froth in fear and fury. And because they are so determined, they get themselves elected wherever possible as teachers and leaders, and so spread darkness wherever they can reach the weak or the young.

The Christian religion has been blamed for these people. But, as a matter of fact, they exist among all nations and cover themselves with all creeds, and, in our time, we have seen some of them as Fascists and Nazis and Communists making war on Christianity as something too much on the side of the graces. Many of the fiercest proponents of drabness in village and in working-class families have no acknowledged religion at all. It seems to be a disease that attacks man everywhere at a certain stage of social development, and to be due to some theory of domestic chastity imperfectly digested and consequently maddeningly painful.

Many people are sufficiently under the influence of this teaching to hold themselves in abeyance against the immediate charms of life. They do not realize them. They will not

feel them. Instead, they live on a kind of substitute magic. Romance is always something else. Some time in the past, some time in the future, somewhere else, there has been, will be, or is, some loveliness, but not here. There is in some social groups a concession to memory. What is irrevocably past may be admitted to have been beautiful. Old popular songs are folk songs and may be learned, but not the same kind of music coming out of the present common heart. Old popular dances are folk dances and may be revived, not without righteous effort. But popular dances now are just cheap. Those who have been about a bit in the social world will not usually say that the current social magic is wrong. They say that they do not like it, and take care to keep themselves taut when too directly exposed to it.

To keep themselves safe from enchantment many people concentrate on making a living, getting on in life. And here is where the fairy fools them. For she takes the magic—the magic which is so sweet and harmless when one takes it as it comes and doesn't try to make something out of it—and begins to inflate their prospects and expand their hopes, as if with poison gas. If they escape without too much agony from the consequent explosions, she then sees that if they want any joy in life, they are so beglamoured by inflated ideas of cost or value or fashion that they have to spend too much of their hard-earned cash for it. So all their toiling and earning does not seem to do them much good.

Some people are rebels against the religion of darkness. They have found some means to the magic—in drink or women or social life, in some game or sport—and they make it an opposition religion. You can't enter their presence unless you instantly kneel and swear allegiance to a bottle or to matrimonial promiscuity or to the ace of spades. If you ever object to having their creed rammed down your throat in the shape of more gin, or another tiresome exchange of wives, dark suspicion instantly flares. You are a spy from the enemy's camp. You are nothing but a Puritan, after all.

The original proselyters for the Prince of Darkness are confined now to backward and provincial groups. But these escaped Puritans are everywhere. They penetrate suburban social groups, like so many Ogpu. They are the backbone of the Bohemians, and the nuisance among the intelligentsia. "Sophisticates" they are sometimes called, but a sophisticate, socially speaking, is usually an ex-greenhorn. No longer may you let the magic of life, wayward and wilful, come as it will, now in a glass, now in a kiss, now in a song, now in sunset on the snow. You are to pursue it all the time, and just in the way they tell you, and if you aren't beglamoured they'll jolly well make you so. But some magic they forbid—the magic that is in the smile of one's own mate, and in the glow of one's own hearth, the magic that is in candles on the altar and in the *Te Deum* ringing down the long aisles of the cathedral. Domestic sentiment and religion suggest commerce with the enemy.

Withal, there is still the loveliness of life, incredible, wilful, not always to be found, never to be kept—disappointing you if you count on it, deceiving you if you believe it, destroying you if you act on it, but never long absent where the heart is at ease and nothing is done to chase it away. Within limits, one may manufacture it, with art and with manners. With discretion, one may woo it; and with luck, find it. It inheres, not in one thing, but in all things to which a released spirit may turn in love. To be a civilized person is to go through the day making one's little glamours and finding one's little magics. To be a charming person is to spread this glamour of one's own perceptions and make another a sharer, for the time, in this grace.

Who Wants to Be Popular?—XVII

THERE once was a Kangaroo who danced on a sandbank in the middle of Australia, and he went to the Big God Nqong. And if you haven't forgotten the *Just So Stories*, you know what he said to Nqong. He said just what most of us would say to the social God, "Make me different from all other animals. Make me popular and wonderfully run after by five this afternoon."

Then "up jumped Nqong from his bath in the salt-pan and shouted, 'Yes, I will!'"

And you know how he did it. He whistled up Dingo, the pariah dog of the Australian bush, who will swallow anything and chase after anything, "Yellow-Dog Dingo—always hungry, dusty in the sunshine"—Yellow-Dog Dingo, just as yellow as the yellow press!

And Nqong showed Dingo Kangaroo. "Nqong said, 'Dingo! Wake up, Dingo! Do you see that gentleman dancing on an ash-pit? He wants to be popular and very truly run after. Dingo, make him so!'

"Up jumped Dingo—Yellow-Dog Dingo—and said, 'What, *that* cat-rabbit?'"

"Off ran Dingo—Yellow-Dog Dingo—always hungry, grinning like a coal-scuttle—ran after Kangaroo.

"Off went the proud Kangaroo on his four little legs like a bunny."

With Dingo after him Kangaroo ran. "He ran through the desert; he ran through the mountains; he ran through the salt-pans; he ran through the reed-beds; he ran through the blue gums; he ran through the spinifex; he ran till his front legs ached" . . . "He ran through the ti-trees; he ran through the mulga; he ran through the long grass; he ran through the short grass; he ran through the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer; he ran till his hind legs ached."

He had to. For Nqong—who must be the social god—had granted his prayer, and Dingo was after him—Dingo, the pariah, who swallows everything and chases everything, always hungry, dusty in the sunshine, and just as yellow as the yellow press.

From running he took to hopping. His tired legs lengthened with agony and exercise. "First he hopped one yard; then he hopped three yards; then he hopped five yards; his legs growing stronger; his legs growing longer. He hadn't any time for rest or refreshment, and he wanted them very much." But Dingo was after him, and he had to. "He hopped like a cricket; like a pea in a saucepan; or a new rubber ball on a nursery floor," and he hopped and he hopped till he hopped through the Darling Downs, and Nqong said, "It's five o'clock."

"Then said Kangaroo—Tired Old Kangaroo, (just as tired as an old movie queen)—'He's chased me out of the homes of my childhood. He's chased me out of my regular meal-times. He's altered my shape so I'll never get it back. And he's played Old Scratch with my legs.'"

"Then said Nqong, 'Perhaps I'm mistaken, but didn't you ask me to make you different from all other animals, as well as to make you very truly sought after?'

"'Yes,' said Kangaroo, 'I wish that I hadn't. I thought you would do it by spells and incantations, but this is a practical joke.'"

Most people who want to be popular think that it can be done by spells and incantations, and most people who are

popular find themselves only victims of the social god's greatest practical joke. For instead of dancing happily in the sunshine on their own particular ashpits, henceforth they must run—run from the telephone; run from the mailman; run from the car stopping in front of their dooryards; run from love and run from hate; and run, faster and faster, from an ever-growing lie and an omnivorous desire. For beyond the friends you would gladly have love you, and the few of the great whose regard you rightly desire, there is always Dingo—Dingo, who will swallow anything, and chase after anything, whose attention is necessary to make any public and visible popularity, Dingo who is yellow as the yellow press, and is always hungry and wants something.

The most popular young man of our time fled, dreadfully bereaved, in the dead of night, across the wintry Atlantic, with his wife and his baby—fled from his home, and his native country, and the many who truly loved and admired him. He had to. For Dingo was after him, grinning like a rat-trap, with a hunger that devours anything.

Before anyone prays to the great God Nqong to be different from any other animal and wonderfully run after, he ought to stop and think what he is asking for. For popularity is often a perilous draught, sweet in the first sip, gloriously intoxicating in the second, but long and bitter poison in the end.

2

There is, of course, a kind of popularity which greatly sweetens life, and, if skillfully managed, never wakes Dingo; but this may not be labeled with a capital P and is too moderate and colorless to set the submerged ego dreaming. It consists simply in being a pleasant person—agreeable to look at, readily pleased, usually happy and interested wherever one is, not self-assertive but interesting enough to be somewhat distinctive, ready to take hold of any social relationship by the right end, adjusted to the current tastes and styles, provided with enough of the current social accomplishments

to get along easily, and mildly admirable in everything which it is the current and local fashion to admire. Any popularity that goes much beyond this is likely to be brief. There are always gay figures momentarily in the spotlight—the belle of the ball, the hero of the football season, the politician that has swept the country, the latest star of the motion pictures, the hero of a passing event. But each one has his little day and ceases to be. Some of the most miserably unpopular people were once popular. Some lifelong failures had success for a year or a day. Pure luck often brings popularity, but only skill and hard work can keep it. It is much harder to recover a popularity that is waning than to get it in the first place. This epidemic of love at sight which the popular person spreads is like the measles. Once people have felt it for you and got over it, they don't get it again.

While we speak of popularity as if it were a particular social commodity, definite and measurable, like salt, it really represents a number of different kinds of social goods, some of them real and some of them imaginary. To get along easily, to be generally admired and universally welcome, to know that people are glad to see you coming, and generally pleased with what you do, is agreeable. To be able to accomplish what you wish without friction, because good will usually seconds your efforts, is useful. The sensation of being popular is the sensation of being at home in one's world and of being an agreeable portion of it. This is such a satisfactory feeling that most people should seek it, and, on the whole, so easily obtained that most people should have it.

But there is also the popularity which consists in striking the beholder blind or dumb, in triumphing over other people, in arousing envy and stirring up gossip. Some people enjoy this. They court it by striking dress, by bizarre entertaining, by being in the news and in the know. There was a great deal of this sort of posturing in nineteenth century society. It is a little out of date now except in provincial groups, including certain resorts and cliques of so-called "high society" in

which the vanities of an elder day linger on. For the modern mechanism of print and propaganda which makes popularity in some forms so immense and so dangerous has tended to take the wonder out of these phenomena.

There is the popularity which consists in being first wherever you are. Occasionally first place is given by genuine popular vote, as a reward of general liking, respect, or admiration. More usually, it is simply grabbed. On shipboard, for example, there is often extraordinary rivalry for the chance to sit at the captain's table. And always there are some pushers who simply see that they are seated there. In clubs, in social groups, there are the determined souls who maintain the public appearance of being sought after. If they can't get an invitation in one way, they get it in another. They entertain, and fill their houses if not with one set of guests, then with another. In clubs, if anyone is to be appointed to anything or elected to anything, they see that they get the votes. They are wary and have an eye out for all possibilities. They work hard and don't mind rebuffs. They are not really liked. But they get away with a lot, through playing on the inertia of other people and the average person's dislike of saying "no."

There is the popularity which consists in arousing a good deal of promiscuous sexual desire—the popularity of the lady-killer and the coquette. Almost anyone who puts his mind on it—or her mind—can do this, but only a certain type will.

There is the finer popularity which consists in being the Helen or the hero of every man's unrealizable desire. This is the type of popularity which our immense means of beglamouring a notable or typical personality, through the press, the motion picture, the radio, makes so dangerous to the person who arouses this feeling. Such a person is often genuinely beautiful or lovable—as in the case of the great actors and actresses. But, beleaguered by the cranks, the curiosity seekers, the racketeers, and the press, such people are doomed henceforth to hunted lives. In the Orient one often recognizes

the fact that one is approaching the palace of a prince or the mansion of a rich man by the throngs of beggars that begin to block the highway. So it is with every man or woman who becomes prince or princess in the common man's dreamworld.

There is that even more dangerous popularity which consists in arousing genuine gratitude and love. One would think that, of all types of popularity, this at least would be safe. But it is not. It is mortally dangerous. He whom religious tradition acclaims as the most loving Person that ever walked the earth, in whose touch was healing, and in whose hands were perpetual gifts of good will, from loaves and fishes for the multitude to wine at the feast for his friends, was crucified. A young girl whom men acclaimed as an angel and a deliverer sent from God, to whom every one, from the poorest peasant to the king whom she had crowned, had reason to be grateful —this girl was burned at the stake. Probably no man in modern times has ever had such an outpouring of love and gratitude at his feet as did President Wilson in his triumphal tour of Europe after the war. And much of it was with good reason. He had stood for the rights of little nations and rescued many groups from political slavery. He was believed, and not without some show of truth, to stand for generosity and progress in international politics beyond that of the politicians of Europe. No doubt his motives were far more mixed than those of Joan in her youth and her innocence. But had he been all that grateful imagination painted him at one moment, he would only have been the more doomed. From the minute that the delighted multitude lifted him aloft on the shield with paeans of praise, it was written that he should die lonely and abandoned by popular love.

Genuine love and genuine gratitude are emotions that no crowd can long sustain. Only a few individuals can do it— the very few who are constitutionally loyal and sound of heart. Few people and no crowd can long give love without asking love in return, and the love they want in return, inflated by each man's imagination of the fairy good which may

at any moment come by magic, it is impossible for any mortal to give them. The first impulse of spontaneous love or gratitude passes quickly into the assurance that they have found Santa Claus, and then into a fury that Santa Claus isn't going to give them all they can imagine. And at that moment, they turn and slay. Even on a simple personal level, he who is genuinely loved with gratitude, who puts another under the dreadful burden of debt to him, must beware. The people who really hate us are usually the ones to whom we have done a service.

3

Yet ninety-nine out of every hundred among the young, and now and then even a foolish one among the old, still wish to be popular. If one could stand on a street corner and hold out a pill to the passer-by, and say, "This pill is poison, but it will make you popular," probably a large number of people would still take it. One cannot tell the dreadful truth—that there is no sure, lasting, unutterably happy and never painful state called popularity. Too many would droop in utter dejection asking, "Where then is Heaven?" The dream of being popular is largely a delusion spun out of thwarted love and social ignorance. There is only a mildly pleasant condition in which you get on well with people wherever you happen to be, and, with some ups and downs, are reasonably successful in what you undertake. For the love that truly matters is not the love turned on ourselves from without, but the love in our hearts which we turn outward on the world. You may be greatly loved, showered with praises, adored by millions. And you will never even know it until some one tells you about it. And when you are told, it seems strangely like a story told about somebody else. But if you yourself love—that is different. That light makes magic and transforms the world.

To the many lonely, unloved, uninvited, unadjusted people who feel themselves not very good looking, not very interest-

ing, not very much wanted, what can one say? One can say only this: As for popularity in general, forget it. But concentrate, instead, on a few very simple things. Try to make yourself pleasing, pleasing genuinely and in intimate ways, cleanly, fragrant, well-groomed, well-dressed. If you don't know how, pick up the very first advice you can get from the radio, from a cold-cream advertisement, from a woman's magazine, and start learning. Cultivate a pleasant speaking voice, a nice smile, and an open friendly way of meeting people. Do it if it takes a hundred lessons. Stand before the glass and learn. Never ask yourself again, "Does this person like me?" Learn to make it a matter of genuine indifference whether you are liked or not. Instead, let the choice be in your own hands. Ask yourself whether you like the other person, and then try to like him. Those whom you don't like, treat with civility and forget. Where people are obviously or deliberately rude, cut them. Once you have begun to do the choosing, you will cease to waste social effort on those who are not for you and will begin to find those who like you as you like them.

There are several types of unpopularity, quite different in origin, and requiring a different technique of avoidance. The simplest kind is that which is due to lack of social arts or to specific forms of personal unpleasantness. Sometimes the unpopular person is just dull or shy and is left out, without arousing active hostility. Sometimes he is disagreeable—asserts himself, is rude or ill-tempered or easily hurt, or is a bore, or has unpleasant mannerisms. Yet all disagreeable persons are not universally unpopular. Many of them seem to have friends who don't mind their ways. The unpopularity which is due to obvious social inadequacies is simple to analyze and comparatively easy to overcome. The victim just has to get busy and learn what he does not know and train himself to improved behavior, of which there are plenty of examples around him in the persons of individuals who do get along.

There is a much more difficult kind of unpopularity which makes some of the best people miserable in schools or in provincial groups. This is due to some form of genuine superiority which the possessor has not yet learned to manage. People of personal beauty or personal magnetism are often inexplicably unpopular—perhaps because they unconsciously arouse more desire and interest than they can satisfy. And what is not satisfied turns to bitterness, dislike, and opposition. Such are the people who have very warm friends, but bitter enemies also. There is also the unpopularity of intelligence. The crowd hates intelligence. The person who has that simple shrewdness and sense of reality which are the sign of a really superior mind often causes an uneasiness of which he is quite unconscious. He disturbs other people in their delusions. He makes them feel like fools. What is the most obvious common sense to him is inexplicably disturbing to others. Many an intelligent child in school is troubled by this reaction. He has only to say the simplest truth—and usually it is the truth—to get everyone, from the teachers to little Junior, down on him. But even in school the bright ones soon learn to manage themselves. They don't study very hard, and so they give teacher the advantage of scolding them. They learn to joke and cultivate odd ways. They sit on the side lines at athletic games and pretend to be fatally weak and incompetent. Every big university has a few intelligent students going along very happily by ingeniously cultivating various forms of dumbness. And we have had our Shaw, our Mark Twain, our Will Rogers, and even our Einstein, who have handled the great public in the same way.

Though beauty and charm have to be managed lest they leave unsatisfied attraction that turns to bitterness, and brains are a dangerous possession under any circumstances, simple oddness is often very popular. People like you to be different, if, in being different, you are not superior. The queer duck who comes to a big school, where one can see all the principles of popularity and unpopularity working in

detached simplicity, as in a laboratory, is usually set upon at first and tormented within an inch of his life. But if he survives this, people come to have an inexplicable liking for him and even a pride in him. His oddities make good stories. He is always something to plague or laugh at. And yet every man's secret desire to be different seems to be satisfied in appropriating this different fellow. Most intelligent children observe this and keep out of the difficulties involved in too much gray matter by cultivating oddity. Clever people who find a way of being agreeably and self-effacingly odd are, in any society, the most really beloved. With regard to beauty, charm, brains, or any superiority, one can only give the advice which the Czar of Russia gave to his children: "Always treat other people so that they will forgive you for being children of the Czar."

The High Heart of Devotion—XVIII

ON a little green shelf jutting out into the Pacific from a gray, waste, and uninhabitable island, a brave priest was dying of leprosy. "I knew it would happen," he said. "How good God is! Now I am one of them, and the work for the lepers is assured." So Father Damien died, thousands of miles away from home and country, surrounded by people of a primitive and alien race, themselves in the last stages of physical decay; yet men say that he was ardent and cheerful to the end, ready to laugh and to talk, happy in the life he had lived and yet contented to die.

Why do men do things like that? In the pride of health and of youth, with a vigorous body, a hearty love of life, and a full assemblage of man's appetites and desires, he voluntarily chose to go with a shipload of lepers to Molokai—the semi-desert island where these poor sufferers were shipped to live out their days in lonely confinement. They were creatures distasteful to sight and repulsive to love—untaught, sodden with despair, and ready to drown their last miserable days in the *ki*—the juice which intoxicates to madness. To the uncleanliness of running sores, the filthy and visible decay of leprosy, there would be added at Molokai an almost complete lack of water for washing. Water would have to be brought from long distances in jars and would serve mainly for cooking and drinking. To exiles on a desert island, with certain death on their heads, with the stench of mortal decay

in their eyes and in their nostrils, what motive could there be for living? "In this place there is no law," they said. "There is only the *ki*. Drink and forget."

Yet the vigorous young priest from Belgium went with them, taking on himself their exile when he had all the world to choose from, certain that their rot would ultimately penetrate his fine brawny limbs and that he would die with them their dreadful death. He took with him the "knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." But he took with him also the simple and healthy materialism of a Belgian peasant. As long as life lasted it was good. And the way to keep it good was to take care of it. So he set these dying men to work to build houses and raise gardens. He found a spring in the island, and sent to Honolulu for water pipes. "Here, my sons, is the great joy of washing." He opened a dispensary and gave out medicines.

There is a lot of comfort left in life, comfort of the flesh as well as the spirit, when you are horribly dying of an incurable disease on a desert island in the middle of the Pacific. The main thing is to get busy and find it. And so Molokai became a pioneer community, cheerily waving the white flag of civilization in the face of death and the vast Pacific. The lepers created for themselves little whitewashed houses with gardens. They had a chapel and a hospital. Two other priests came to work with Father Damien. Two lay brothers and three Sisters of Charity came to assist them.

Of course he had his critics. The hardest thing men like that have to contend with is the disappointment of others that they are not God and can't do everything. They have to learn to be humble, themselves, and to realize that, with all their efforts, they are still but men. Some said Father Damien was bigoted and domineering; that he was no executive; that, for all the building and washing and painting, Molokai was still dirty. Most of the praises that were spoken of him he never heard, and most of his glory came after he was dead. But for all that, he was a happy man. He had happiness in himself

and, with hammer and saw, with paint pot and water pipe, with garden hoe and medicine bottle, with cheerful talk and a happy laugh, with prayer and hymn, with bell and book and the blessed sacraments and the high name of God, he spread happiness. He spread it, on the worst sore the flesh of man is heir to, like a salve of healing. He painted the face of death with it and made it shine.

2

Who can explain the love to which such men as Father Damien give up their lives? It is not personal. Its immediate rewards are physical discomfort and pain, struggle and hate. It is often a fight to make men free when they want to be slaves, to make them clean when they want to be dirty, to teach them when they want to be ignorant, to heal them when they want to be sick, and keep them alive when they seem determined to die. And that far-off end to which such men move must always seem, to the eye of common sense, a very dubious social result. Though there are intense personal loves in the lives of such men and women, any one of them will leave husband or wife, children or parent or friend, at the call of this larger love. David Livingstone sent his wife and children home from Africa, but himself stayed. Catherine Breshkovsky left husband and baby and the life of a beautiful young noble woman to go from village to village as a peasant woman, with a dyer's pack on her back and her fine skin deliberately spoiled with acid for disguise, to spread the doctrine of revolution among the peasants, sleeping in vermin-infested houses, eating coarse black bread, facing, daily, death or exile to Siberia.

Yet what most of these devoted ones have fought and died to bring to men is not Paradise. It is usually only the most ordinary decencies of material existence, or some increase in man's control over nature.

Not all devoted ones are sustained by an avowed religion. All of them have disbelieved and hated the gods men have.

All of them have seen a vision of man delivered, delivered from obvious pains and miseries, from cruelty and insecurity, from crazy chasing of his own tail, and pitiful baying at the moon. Is it really so hard to see what is under our noses and use what is under our hands, that our best and greatest should have to martyr themselves to teach us? So it seems.

But those who live and die in this devotion have some strange happiness of their own. "Bear with me while I glory a little," writes Saint Paul to the Corinthians. And this is what he glories in: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils of the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. . . . If I must needs glory, I will glory in my weakness . . . for when I am weak, then am I most strong."

It is devotion like this that has made possible every least advance in civilization—the devotion of a Pasteur or a Clara Barton, of a Washington or a Lincoln, the devotion of a John Wesley or a Jane Addams, and behind them the devotion of innumerable nameless men.

3

Yet this great power of devotion has not always been turned to useful ends. Men have battled and suffered, with joy in their hearts, for bad causes as well as for good. They have gone to death, with smiles on their faces and songs on their lips, for cruel creeds and worthless kings. One of the noblest figures in the Civil War, one who knew to the full whatever joy there is in pure devotion, fought for a cause he did not even believe in—General Lee. And one of the most dangerous forces in civilization today is the resurrection of

pure devotion as a political and international force of incalculable power. Struthers Burt, writing gravely in *The American Mercury*, offers even to Americans an ideal of patriotism which has already set the Japanese marching through China, the Italians marching into Ethiopia, and holds Hitler's hordes ready for the "Forward! Go!" in any direction where there is loot for the men behind the scene. "I have already called attention to the need for a higher form of personification," he says, in phrases so prim that one forgets that they play with fire, "a personification which enables a man *to regard his country with the same subjective objectivity with which he regards those nearest and dearest to him;* a subjective objectivity which bids a man, *without further thought*, sacrifice his own selfish desires and pursuits when it is a question of the welfare of these people or of his country. But beyond this there is something else, a trace of *that mysticism which is part of every ideal*, and of all intelligent practical action."

And what this personification amounts to, in the land which has carried it to its highest imaginative appeal, is described in another article in the same number of the *Mercury*, entitled *The Man-God of Japan*, by Sydney Greenbie. "The Tenno of Japan holds in his hands the lives of seventy million subjects, their souls and their ancestors, not *by* divine right, but *as* divine power incarnate. Beauty, worship, murder, repression, suicide, aggression—seventy million tongues of praise, seventy million hearts of worship, seventy million lambs of submission, seventy million pigments of pageantry, seventy million swords of pride—a nation unified as no nation has ever been unified before in the person of one living man. No statesman's life is safe except in adoration of the Emperor, who is God in a land that has no word for God; no man's life is worth anything to him except in the grace of that Emperor. . . . Place behind the simple, naïve faith of the people the power of modern machinery, of naval and military establishments, of the radio and the press,

and the fates produce an international force of incalculable danger."

In two other states have dictators discovered the infinite wealth of belief and untapped love in the hearts of the young and the simple, in the love of women and the hero-worship of boys, and they, too, are seeing that, as Sydney Greenbie says, this capacity for devotion is "spoon-fed by prime-ministers and given oxygen by mechanical pressure." A sample of this mechanical pressure exerted on the heart of motherhood is the Fascist Decalogue for Italian women. "We wish," says the announcement from the Fascist women's headquarters, "the women of Europe and America to feel the *pure joy of our hour of trial springing from the ardor of our faith.*" The "hour of trial" is, of course, the war of "revenge," to be "carried, if necessary, to annihilation," against the poor black people whose fathers once successfully objected to Italians' taking away their country. To pay for this murder, women had *joyfully* stripped the wedding rings from their fingers.

And now there is this Decalogue, for the further guidance of the pure heart of motherhood. "Practice religious devotion *to Italy, to Fascism* created *by Benito Mussolini.* A proud, absolute devotion." "Live so that every living day will see a *luminous lyrical spirit arise to color our soil with optimism.*" "Live, *with splendid consent,* within the architecture of society. Discipline yourself humbly to its *profound* laws." "Maternity is a spirit; therefore an offering which should be perfected to completeness." By "architecture of society" is meant a political system in Italy run by Mussolini, according to his notions, and the "profound laws" of this society are what he chooses to decree. The perfection of the offering of maternity "to completeness" means sending a son to die painfully in an attempt to murder another boy with a machine gun.

Father Damien at Molokai, Florence Nightingale in the Crimea, went through suffering and sacrifice with faces

transfigured. What shall one say of the dreadful travesty of this transfiguring in the clear eyes, the young uplifted faces, the warm blooming bodies of hundreds of thousands of boys and maidens and young mothers, marching joyously to murder, when a mountebank or a rascal or an ignoramus gives the signal? In our day we are forced as never before to question the grand old rallying cries of humanity. There is no word so sacred that it may not be used to call men to cheap and dastardly mass action. There is no mass purpose so mean and worthless that it may not mask itself to the dazzled eyes of the young, the innocent, and the believing in the blazing white light of The Ideal.

4

Is there, then, no difference between the one devotion and the other? Probably very little in the feeling, in the joy of devotion and sacrifice. This is some latent power of the soul, another form of passion and of love. Only in the one case, devotion is justified by life, and time approves it, and those who go determined and lonely through their earlier years often find a new happiness for others spread serenely around them in old age as a result of their long labor. In the other case, the death and disaster so gaily courted usually come and cut off all danger of a dreadful awakening.

If the sentiment is pure, the joy of devotion wholly unselfish, how then is it so bewitched? The bewitchment is in the personification. The peril is the symbol and the word. Man is always the victim of his own inventions. If ultimately he destroys himself, the instrument of his downfall may not be mass machinery or poison gas or any of his latest toys, but rather his earliest invention—the word. It is the bewitchment of words that makes possible mass enchantment—the abracadabra of fine phrases which touch the feelings and arouse the will, but say nothing to the brain and present no immediate creative task to the hand. By words an imaginary person is presented to the mass mind. The state is imaged

as a woman. Or some poor ordinary piece of flesh and blood is rigged out in all the glamours of the ideal. And every thwarted impulse of passion or tenderness or sacrifice, unsatisfied in ordinary living, balked in the mutual relations of real persons by insufficient culture or economic limitations, rushes headlong to embrace this poor nothing—not only to embrace it, but, in the terrible glory of that embrace, to murder for it and to die.

True devotion is distinguished from false by the fact that it thinks in the concrete and applies itself creatively and benevolently to immediate tasks. When Father Damien went with the lepers to Molokai, he took with him a sustaining faith in God and the feeling that Christ was with him and approved. But, most of the time, what he was actually doing was following neither an imagined Christ nor a personification of duty and sacrifice. He was simply building houses, teaching leper boys, administering justice, and in a commonplace way making life good. So with Florence Nightingale. She would have said that Faith and Duty called her. But mostly what occupied her imagination, as well as her wits and her hands, were the individual soldiers to be nursed, beds to be improvised, bandages that must be begged or commandeered, and morons that must be taught to cook. Once a man thinks creatively in terms of the concrete, once he sets out to make any improvement in the visible scheme of things right where he is, devotion is safe and in the end will be gloriously useful.

The Russian Revolution was saved from its own ideology by the fact that it soon became involved in a tremendous task of farming, building factories, and mastering visible machinery. Once men are turned to doing something practically useful to help themselves and each other, their ideology takes care of itself. For matter, wherever we touch it, is our discipline, and takes the nonsense out of us. Only in murder and destruction and loot can idealism really run wild. Only by whipping men on to certain kinds of action which primitive men

did in hordes, like fighting and offering blood sacrifice, can the invincible desire of man to be comfortable and to run his own life in his own way be kept from asserting itself. Even if men are driven to collective farming by words, personifications, and ideals, the sanity of earth and sky, the stubbornness of the seasons, which will follow nothing but their own custom, turn it in the end into co-operation governed by common sense and the general inevitability of things. If one dies for an ideal, one can do it suddenly and in a grand flare of delusion. But really to live an ideal takes some time, and during that time one is bound to learn something about things as they are.

To take the hunger of awakening sex in youth, the impulse of kindness and self-giving, and turn it on some mass creation called a social or political ideal is a prostitution of all that is glorious and transfiguring in man's experience. What one clasps with ardor ought to be, not fair Italia or Germania or Columbia but a sweetheart of flesh and blood. What one gives to others ought to be given to men as one knows them, not to some spook called "the state" or "society." And when one makes an imaginary world, let it be wholly imaginary—the world of poetry, of music, of painting.

5

No personification is to be trusted, and every ideal is questionable. But some personifications are not to be mentioned in the same breath with these upstart phantoms that have set the nations marching. They have been too often revised and purified by the greatest minds and imaginations. They have been too often opposed to the folly and the fury of these homemade religions that begin in a whirl of borrowed words and end in bloodshed and battle. The highest creations of man's art have given them a body, and the purest intuitions of his love a heart. Such are the personifications of the four or five great religions of civilized man. To the Siamese this means Buddhism; to the Hindu, Hinduism; to the Egyptian,

Mohammedanism; and to the American and the European, Christianity.

It is true that every kind of evil under the sun has been done somewhere, at some time, in the name of Buddha or Brahma or Allah or Christ. Any religion can lapse into the vulgar or the grotesque. But every one of the great religions has been built and rebuilt by men who, beyond all personifications, truly worshiped that Ultimate which wears no human face. They have served the God which is beyond all gods, with the work of their hands and the use of their wits, in the belief that whatever seemed wrong with things as they were was contrary to some ultimate intention and could therefore, with knowledge and trying, be made right. Every comfort of civilization, every law of social life, every refinement of manner and charm of art, all cleanliness, justice, beauty, and kindness has been the offering of some devoted soul on the altar of this God.

Our life is rooted in an invincible faith. There is that in man which will triumph in ecstacy over torture and degradation, will court sacrifice, and go singing to death, if only he is appealed to in the name of something which, even in error, he may call a god. If in their search for a god the heart and the imagination need a personification, then the personifications of the great religions are the best. The highest thinking of the past has made them universal. The greatest art of the past has made them beautiful. And long and painful experience has encompassed them with social safeguards. Some things modern man can do better than his ancestors, but making a religion is apparently not one of them—not yet.

But personification is not the way to an enduring and saving faith. Cheap and easy personification is nothing new. We owe such civilization as we have to the fact that all the great religions have maintained a constant war against it. No image or likeness of living thing is allowed in the Mohammedan mosque or the Confucian temple, lest men forget that what is worshiped is nothing human. The greatest believers

of every faith have striven to remove the distracting and deceiving human image from between them and their ultimate love. When Buddha went out to seek a medicine for the pain of the world, his diagnosis convinced him that the chronic disease of man is the belief in gods. Turning men away from gods, he tried to teach them, instead, a "right rapture" in contemplating the universality and the inevitability of law —which the Orientals call *Karma*—and that ultimate perfection to which organic life appears to be self-directed. This was hard doctrine. Few men even yet have grown up to it, though something like it is now the faith of science. Baffled, the imagination of Gautama's followers immediately turned on him and made of the man who had repudiated the gods himself a god.

Along with the personification of tribal ideals, we are threatened with dictators ready to sprout into deity. The making of men into gods is, of course, an old human custom, but we had thought that political god-making was something we outgrew in the Stone Age. Now, in this great era of print and radio managed by ministers of propaganda, we are witnessing an appalling rebirth of godlings. No one can tell whether we, in our own generation, may not yet be offered up as blood sacrifice on the altar of some man-god.

Science and philosophy are helpless before this collapse of great societies to the first level of man's thinking. From our hard-won universality of moral faith and culture, we threaten to sink to the lowest worship of purely tribal gods and the silliest deification of ordinary men.

From the poor little divinities who call for "purging," and babble of race, it is a relief to turn the imagination to the only two beings, among the hordes that have walked the earth, who were truly worthy of godhood—Christ and Buddha —the one, the greatest moral genius, the other the greatest philosophical intellect, that ever tried to take hold of the common man's daily experience and give it sense, dignity, and joy. In the centuries since their time all men's strivings

and knowledge have brought no one to their height. What they must have been shines through all the obscurity of tradition. Here only the worshiping imagination of man did not go astray, because it came against a reality which mastered it.

Skeptics have questioned whether either Christ or Buddha ever lived. It would be a greater miracle if men had imagined them. When one sees what the mass imagination of man usually does in the way of devising gods, one can only be glad that above this present parade of grotesque and silly tribal ideals there still shines a memory of Personality, so serene and secure in its attempt to rescue man from his muddling that, in worshiping it as god, the imagination has never been able to make it less than man.

Leisure and the Ends of Life

When you have built your house upon life's shore
And filled your cellar with the winter's store,
When love sits smiling by the evening fire,
And all the fields are ripe with your desire,
Lo, how the waters sparkle in the vast
Unplumbed and salty distance, and a mast
On the horizon sets your dreams afloat.
Oh good is home, but better is a boat!
All life lies open, out beyond the quay.
Turn out the prow and face the open sea.

The Fun of Working For Nothing—XIX

THERE is a kind of people whom we used to refer to as "the leisured class," before the word "leisure" became a mystical term signifying an imminent state of general social blessedness which no one knew what to do with. These persons of leisure often had superb bodies, made shapely and brown on golf course and beach and kept in training by delicate but rigorous diet. They had wealth, and all its gracious appurtenances. They were intelligent, and apparently knew how to manage life. If they did not love and were not loved, they were apparently greatly pursued, and their pictures were constantly taken for the newspapers as bright stars in a constellation of adoring faces.

Yet many of these people were perpetually fleeing from themselves and eluding each other, coursing from place to place in cars, with beautiful homes that were just places to go from, restless, bored. This condition was, and is, by no means confined to the wealthy. It is the common state of persons without an industrial or professional job whereby they earn their living and to which they are tethered by a visible chain. It is the state of young wives who have given up wage earning and have been parked in a pretty apartment. It is the state of older women whose children have grown up, and of men retired from business, and of persons living on small incomes.

These are people who are afraid to face themselves and lack anything else to face. Within them is a yawning vacuum, haunted by vague terrors and uneasy memories. Often they feel that they have something to hide, without knowing exactly what it is, for they are unconsciously ashamed of being a blank in a busy world which has nothing for them to do. They have an impulse to get up and go, to run from here to there, the feeling that somewhere else they may be at ease. They constantly retreat from real experience, and yet seem to be in perpetual search of it.

These are the people whose inner life is not developed, to whom some special condition of economic security has been as a mother, keeping them childish and tied to her apron strings. The normal feelings and desires of maturity remain, as it were, in embryo. In their memories linger the debris of childish miseries, ideas of life half-digested, primitive notions not put by completely but laid aside as something not immediately useful, moral ideas not lived up to but exerting enough force to keep the conscience uneasy, grandmotherly decorum and old wives' tales of sex quarreling with enlightened experience and sophisticated habit. All modern education requires a constant growth in the appearance of outward adjustment, but no corresponding inner growth and discipline, no periodical purgation of the consciousness, no real fertilizing of the emotions, no direction of the will and the imagination to ends beyond the handsome but pasteboard façade of the present capitalist society.

So when leisure began to be offered to large numbers of people as the not far distant goal of industrialism, many were naturally uneasy at the prospect. They knew how tepid and futile a state of comparative idleness usually proved among their own friends. What were they to do? They must do something. And there was a scurrying about to find "hobbies." Anything to do with your time—so that only you killed it painlessly. So there was an epidemic of books, pamphlets, and magazine articles, suggesting that you could

cut silhouettes out of paper, or make toys out of tin cans, or collect junk. When leisure was offered to the jobless, in lieu of honest work by which they might earn an honest penny, the suggestion was sardonic. A man has no roof over his head. Very well, let him build a nice little house of matchsticks. A child has no shoes. Why bother? Just teach him barefoot dancing. The department store is full of clothes, furniture, kitchen utensils which no one can buy. Just have a hobby show and show a lot of bicycles, roller skates, and fishing tackle which no one can buy either. And between times be very pious and give these 21,000,000 people who cannot earn a day's living a long and solemn lecture on the "creative use of leisure."

With all this behind it, it is a wonder that we have any respect left for the word "leisure." Yet we have. It represents something so important to us at present that no amount of blah can keep us from trying to master its meaning and its use.

2

The reason why we are so concerned about leisure now is that man must work. Work is our hope and our salvation. It is our way of getting out of the dream in which we are bogged, our means of mastery over the inexplicable antagonism of matter to our minds. Man is himself a creative force. So long as he lives, he must do something, something forward-moving, creative, perpetually acting on materials, refashioning this sorry scheme of things and bringing it nearer to what he so inexplicably desires. People in long confinement in prison have found work the only thing that kept them sane. This was observed long ago. How tragic is the dependence of Doctor Manette upon his shoemaking tools, in *A Tale of Two Cities*. When he feels insanity coming back on him, desperately he reaches for hammer and awl like a man reaching for a floating spar in an engulfing sea. Work is the one sure medicine in intense emotional pain. It is something beyond man or woman to which one can give one's self utterly in love. So long as

man has health and energy enough to keep going, there are few situations out of which he cannot work; and health itself may be restored and preserved by work, and energy miraculously renewed.

We cannot have work taken from us. If we do not work for a boss, then we must work for ourselves. If we do not work for money, then we must work for nothing. When men begin to look for a new theory of leisure, what they are actually seeking is a new theory of work. Leisure isn't new. What is new is something that people are trying to manufacture out of it. They are trying to make a new religion of leisure to take the place of the old religion of capitalism.

For capitalism is failing us, not as an economic fact but as a way of life, a faith by which one can direct one's daily work and not be betrayed. So long as a small saving of seed from this year's harvest will grow a harvest twice as large next year, there is bound to be capitalism of a sort. The whole scheme of nature is capitalistic. Capitalism is implicit in all man's relations to the growing world. There was capitalism before the era we call capitalistic, and there will be capital and the use of capital when we are all calling ourselves by some other name and going socially in some other direction from the one we are now headed for.

But the absorption of the whole idea of work into capitalism is only a phenomenon of comparatively recent times, and one that may not last much longer. For, in any given era, men take what happens to be their paramount economic or social necessity, and build thereon a system of moral habits, a blind faith, which is really a religion, and to which the religion inherited from the past is usually shaped. Perhaps we are still too capitalistic to appraise this process with regard to capitalism. But we are far enough away from feudalism to see how feudalism was a religion. In a disordered Europe, when self-defense was the primal necessity, the figure of the defender became the center of man's moral life and the symbol of all security. The necessary virtues and disciplines of soldiers were

elaborated into a code of general conduct. God himself became a feudal lord, from whom the descending ranks of saints and angels drew light and glory as the descending ranks of feudal retainers drew security from their feudal head. But there were soldiers before feudalism, and there have been soldiers since.

When feudalism had done its work and established a comparatively peaceful Europe, men began to spread into other countries to find homes and to trade. The new necessities of men under new conditions became the mothers of new inventions. Then the provider of capital, the organizer of new industries and new sources of wealth, became the center of man's social thinking. Not fighting but trade and manufacture became his principal activity, and his reward not glory but a money wage.

Perhaps capitalism has now performed its mission, and, while its necessary function survives, it may cease to offer a complete ideal of life. Perhaps the "lack of confidence" which business men deplore is only a failing spiritual vitality in capitalism which no material machinery can now restore. Everywhere there is the feeling that the system of life under which we have been living has cheated us. It has promised us prosperity and left us with a lot of inflated bills to pay. It has promised us happiness and left us with frayed nerves and tired souls and a sense of drive which forces our flagging energies to more and more effort to get what we have ceased really to want. A number of people don't even want the prosperity of 1929.

This is where the new philosophy of leisure enters in. Disregarding all the trivialities, the care and feeding of hobbyhorses, the new salesmanship of new gadgets which will help you through an idle moment, what is it that men are seeking which makes this word "leisure" a word to conjure with? They are seeking a new chance to work, outside the industrial and financial machinery of the present. They want to work not only for a living, but for life and for personal happiness.

They are challenging the hypotheses of capitalism as men in the past have challenged other kinds of religious dogma.

3

The dogmas of capitalism are almost as numerous as the Thirty-nine Articles. But a few of them will serve to illustrate the old faith and the new heresy of leisure. One of these dogmas is that all work is inherently disagreeable. Therefore it is to be so organized that there will be the greatest production, in the least possible time, by people who do one kind of work and no other. The truly capitalistic idea of work implies a rigorous caste system, for to each is assigned the one and only task he may be permitted to do, this task to be paid for only in money, and the payment of money being the only means by which he will get food and shelter and the other necessities of this mortal life. When capitalism "freezes" into the Fascist Society, such a caste system, such a subordination of every type of "rugged individualism" to the social and industrial machine, is one of the first phenomena that appears.

This idea of the limitation of all work to an assigned task and all wealth to what may be bought with money is implicit in a great deal of popular economic discussion. If you are a lawyer who likes to come home and dig in the garden for recreation, there is an outcry that you are taking bread out of the mouth of the farmer. If you paint your own house, the criticism is two-edged. In the first place, the professional painter could do it better. Therefore it is foolish for you to abandon the task you do best to do something you cannot do as well. In the second place, you are depriving the painter of his job. A great deal of labor unionism works on the capitalistic theory, apparently seeking a crystallization of society into labor castes, each with a fixed cash income and a series of attendent circumstances which make this income the only economic resource.

Of course this kind of specialization is monotonous and joyless. It has therefore been necessary to support the capital-

istic dogmas with religious and ethical ideals that deny the right of man to joy. It is frivolous to be happy. You work for a career, for other people. You must get on in life. Your highest ideal is "service." This conception of service has latterly been enlarged by the Fascists, who are the ultimate proponents of the capitalistic religion, into a kind of revivalistic enthusiasm. But there is always some of this revivalism in capitalism. Rotary is only a second cousin once removed to the Holy Rollers.

Carried to an extreme, the capitalistic dogma of specialization with its corollary—that when you are not doing your specific and probably disagreeable work you are to do nothing—cuts out anything but purely passive recreation. You will not want to make your own music, since you probably do it badly, but will sit still and have the music of the great orchestras brought to you by radio. You will not get up your own plays, but will save your money and pay it at the box office to see the great professionals tread the stage.

To say that, as a religion, capitalism comes to its end in some form of state socialism—either Fascism or Communism, both of which are outgrowths of the ideology of capitalism—is not to deny its immense value heretofore in organizing life, nor its future importance as part of the mechanics of civilization. None of the great social work of feudalism was lost when the particular ideology and social routines of feudalism disappeared, for most of its ideals became part of the fabric of civilization. In danger, in defense of the weak, in the performance of all duty involving readiness to sacrifice life, men still act with precision and devotion by the old law of the knights. So capitalism—that is, the preservation and creative use of capital—cannot cease, nor can industrialism in any application which experience has proved to be of wide social value. It is only as a religion, a whole theory of man's life and activity, that it is failing. And the greatest protection against those late fanatic revivals which overtake failing religions, such as we now have in Fascism, is that

new point of view on life and work which is struggling to expression in the various discussions of leisure.

It is the way of the English-speaking peoples to start building a new political house, quietly, stone by stone, the minute there is a sign that the old one is shaky on its foundations. By the time the old roof falls in, they have moved themselves and all their intellectual and social furniture into the new one, and life is still going on very much as usual. This is the way the English-speaking races moved out of feudalism into democracy. So it may be that we are getting ready to build a new social order, and in this discussion of leisure are trying to settle on a corner stone for it.

4

The new religion of leisure involves a new attitude to work, a new attitude to wealth, and a new attitude to time. The idea is that work does not exist in a fixed quantity, to be paid for only by money, and that it is not necessarily disagreeable, but, on the contrary, is one of the greatest joys of man, a necessary stimulus, a delightful release, and at times an inexpressible solace. Some kinds of work are disagreeable. Some kinds are best managed by large-scale machinery. Some kinds of things may best be got for money. The job, the wage, the profit, the machine, merely have a place in life—a changing place to be determined by circumstance. But, outside of this, there is for each person an immense amount of useful and wealth-producing activity which may be too much fun for us to let the machine swallow it.

This psychic factor in work is variable, and one cannot be dogmatic about it. There are forms of hand-sewing and knitting that are, on the one hand, the cruelest drudgery for the underpaid sweatshop laborer and, on the other hand, the delight of the lady of leisure. Two knitted dresses may look exactly alike. But into one may be knitted pain, weariness, and poverty and into the other chains of happy memories, like a continuous thread of gold, blessing the wearer to the

last unraveling. It all depends on whether the dress was made by a tenement worker under the drive of starvation or by the lady herself, chatting with her friends, sitting in the family circle listening to the radio, coming back to her knitting for rest and quiet thinking, and feeling pride and satisfaction in her handiwork grow with the growing fabric. In both cases wealth is created. In the first case, the worker has a very small portion of the value of the dress as a reward for labor. The various persons through whose hands the dress passes have some portion of its money value, and in the end some lady has the dress, having parted with money which she or someone else has earned by some other work. In the case of the lady of leisure it is all much simpler. She has the fun, and she has the dress.

Anyone who tries to think this out in terms of general economics or ultimate social good will tie himself into intellectual knots. But fortunately we don't need to think. Most social good has been accomplished, not by people who believed a new dogma, but by those who stopped believing an old one. All one has to do is to be easy about the various economic propositions—to leave them, like the doctrine of the Trinity and the Immaculate Conception, to the initiate to worry over and just to go ahead and use life as it comes. And when we are not blinded by some economic dogma, we know that it is fun to work, and that one of the best things one can do, when bored, disappointed, or miserable is to get to work on something.

But work of this sort cannot be done with the concept of time necessary in industry. The point in industrial activity is to get done. The point in leisure-time work is to have a good time while doing it. The point in industrial activity is to specialize, to work exactly to an established standard. The point in leisure-time work is to experiment, to branch out, to establish a new standard if possible. One must relax and spread one's effort; one must linger and be wayward. One must cultivate the reverse of the industrial virtues. Some organizers

of recreation and leisure import into the new activities the tensions of industrial work and capitalistic effort. They drive and organize. They visualize a result and push through to it with passion. And when they explain their philosophy they fall back on the old lures of capitalism. This avocation they say will lead to a vocation. You may in the end "make money by it." To use your leisure well, they explain, makes you more able to work—that is, to pursue a job for a wage or cash profit. Poor fools—even as we see fresh fields and pastures new, blooming and dewy, opening to our gaze, we become frightened and rush back to the old stall for the old harness.

The goods of life are health, wealth, and love, and beyond these some striving toward the infinite and the unrealized—the dream, and the vision. To obtain all these we may work in our leisure hours, work through sports and play, through dancing and sense experience, work at crafts, work at fine arts, work at learning, work at exploring, work in community theatres, work in giving dinner parties, work in developing conversation, work in improving our minds, work to attach a lover or keep a mate. Many of the material goods for which we spend money may be got just as well by expense of time. As for the immaterial goods—love, knowledge, the pursuit of beauty or of knowledge, the sense of achievement, the triumph of creative effort—all these lie open to leisure, without limit or satiety. What each man is free to take and to use and to fashion for himself is greater even than his dream and wider and longer than his allotted expanse of days.

Be Good and Will You Be Happy?—XX

JAMES BARRETT is one of the "last Puritans"—a fine, vigorous man in middle age, reared as the heir of an old New England capitalist family, in which the old Unitarian ideal of plain living and high thinking still had some dignity and fervor. He was educated in one of those famous old New England schools whose ideal of liberal culture is Latin in the class-room and sports on the playing field and no more than so many demerits a month. Thence he went to one of the great universities and pursued the classical course.

He was brought up neither to smoke nor to drink nor to dance nor to play cards. But this was no serious repression, for he was a high-minded boy, ready to accept any ideal of righteousness that was offered him, provided it did not run counter to his own real integrity and common sense. And the social life of his youth was still rather warm and pleasant, with innumerable family goings and comings among innumerable cousins, some of whom could not help being nice and pretty girls, and summers spent on the seashore in boating and swimming. After a boyhood of perfect innocence he married, quite uninstructed and inexperienced, a nice girl of his own class, as innocent as he. When the marriage proved tragically insufficient and increasingly painful, he manfully set himself to live out his half of the bargain, dividing his property, courteously making any arrangements his wife

wished, but without divorce; for divorce was one of the things not done in this high-minded circle.

Then he settled back in his own old home to care for his mother and, after she died, to live on there alone, occupying himself with various local philanthropies. He endowed and took a share in supervising several useful community projects. And unlike some philanthropists, he did a good deal of quiet personal good, because he took the trouble to know everybody and everything in his own part of the world.

James Barrett is a good man, good by any standard. He has not only followed accepted codes of conduct, but he has, in himself, a genuine ethical passion, as absorbing and compulsive as the artist's passion for beauty, which, in an austere way, it resembles.

One day he dropped in to see his favorite cousin, Mary. The young son of the family was cramming Latin. James looked over his shoulder and construed a few lines. "They drilled so much of this into me once," he remarked, "I have never forgotten it." Then he stood by the fire, thoughtfully repeating *Integer vitae*. "Some tags of Latin, a few passages of Shakespeare, a few dates, and a bad habit of reading too much—the sum total of a liberal education," he remarked to Mary.

After the boy had gone to bed, Mary said, "What is the matter, James?"

"Everything."

"For instance?"

"I am miserable."

"Why?"

"Nothing to do, no point to living."

"But you do a great deal, and all of it unselfish and useful."

"It isn't enough."

"James," said Mary, "what you need is to learn to use your leisure."

"Impossible. My leisure is illimitable. It reaches out on all sides like a howling vacuum. Ghastly to think how much there will still be of it before I die."

"Nonsense. Just start anywhere, with some little project—something to interest you, to make life sweet and pleasant."

"What?"

"Start a rose garden."

"I don't know anything about roses."

"Well, learn a craft, something to use your hands."

"Never learned to use my hands. They are fins."

"How about music?"

"Don't know a thing about it. I had some piano lessons once but dropped them to cram for college. I wouldn't know how to take them up again."

"You have so much money to spare," said Mary, hopelessly, "why can't you realize these dreams that people who haven't money live on—travel, buy beautiful things, find rich and strange social and human experiences?"

"Just because I have the money," he said gravely, "I haven't the dreams." And then he said as sad a thing as any man can say. "Mary, what I have discovered about life is that by honestly accepting and living up to the best one has been taught, by keeping one's self above mean acts and cheap dissipations, one may, in the end, only narrow one's heart and put a roof on one's mind, and wake up in middle life to find that one has gone straight up a blind alley, with nothing in front but a blank."

2

There are a good many people who have made this discovery in modern life. James Barrett represents ethical codes which were sound and good in their time, but from which the life has departed. Though he has the best classical education, he is an uneducated man, for he has no arts. Though he was strictly brought up to an ideal of utilitarian goodness, he has no faith. Denied all outlets for love and emotional adventure

outside of the family and the prospect of marriage, he and his bride were brought up in an ignorance which made it impossible for them to realize the very ideal for which they had been kept innocent. Trained to responsibility to the family and pleasure in the gatherings of the tribe, he belongs to a family whose members have died or scattered, and of whose former life nothing remains but the handsome shell of an old house in a community whose best life has gone elsewhere. The virtues and negations which kept his immediate forebears busy working hard and piling up a fortune he now has to practice in the softness and idleness which this inherited fortune makes possible.

In all this he is only an extreme example of something that has happened to the best ethical tradition of our immediate past. Whether their fathers were Unitarians, Quakers, or Baptists, most of the Americans who chafe uneasily against an inherited moral code belong to families in which this so-called "Puritanism" was warm and lively enough in its best days. Though smoking, dancing, and drinking were frowned upon, there was plenty of family and community fun. The impulse to life was well exercised in struggles with immediate hardships and in the triumph of simple and obvious self-betterment. Only a few odd and especially gifted souls were unhappy within the harness of the old virtues. Great personal love was often aborted, as in the case of Emily Dickinson, but, for many, the large households, the care of increasing families, the coming and going of kinsfolk, and the kindly occupation of doing one's duty by innumerable individual persons, served as a compensation. For the rare and the special, there was the comfort of an intimate, personal religion, a faith that could sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus," and cry out of the depths of agony, "Nearer, my God, to Thee." Even Emily Dickinson, with her essentially skeptical mind, found this great solace.

The shift from the household and tribal organization of life in country communities to urban conditions, and from the

performance of many kinds of tasks by hand to the collective mechanisms of the modern age, has the same effect on peoples of all religions. What we call Puritanism is not Christian. It is just as characteristic of old-fashioned Chinese households, whose ethics are Confucian, or of Mohammedan households. In Cairo if one talks to a cultivated Arab pursuing a professional or business career and with some smattering of general European education, one discovers that his feeling about the virtues and restrictions of his original home under a palm tree in a desert oasis parallels the feeling of the escaped Puritan of New York City. There were the same limitations on the amusements and the arts and on personal affection, the same ideals of work for and with the tribe. Often he is seeking through the same confusion of drink, sex, and radical social and political ideas a new pattern of living.

Contrary to general opinion, most people want to be good. The shabbiest and silliest people, people without any consistent moral or religious life, will put themselves to all sorts of trouble and self-denial for some idea or other which seems to them "right" in the circumstances. Even if what rules them is an absurd or perverted fashion, or the opinion of thoroughly worthless companions, or loyalty to a bad gang, they must have some pattern of behavior. There is usually some level to which the most good-for-nothing fellow won't sink. There is a satisfaction, a happiness, in goodness, without which life is confused and insecure. But to know how to be good—that is another question. All sorts of models of goodness are offered us, but very few of them fit.

There is a virtue which in all lands and times has been recognized as the source of serenity and personal power. It is what we call principle, or character, or integrity. It makes a man able to stand foursquare against all the winds of chance. It is a lamp to scare away the ghosts and goblins that juggle money and mislead love and to guide the feet amidst the pitfalls of social life. But this integrity itself may be soured and rendered sterile if, instead of adapting itself to the human

needs of present life, it is forced into some old framework of behavior which no longer has any reason for existence. All periods of great and sudden change are accompanied by moral misery. Everywhere now one sees a suffering moral consciousness imprisoned in some structure of outworn ideals. In some, the spirit just sickens and fades away in ennui and a sense of the general futility of things. In others it makes violent attempts to escape—in dissipation, in lawless sexual adventures, in extreme opposition to any inherited pattern, in grasping at any idea that seems sufficiently new and strange and shocking to Grandpa.

3

It is easier to find a model of behavior that makes one really happy in modern life if one can discard the old models with a good conscience. Most people feel that the old ideals don't fit, but they don't know why, and still have an uneasy feeling that the fault may be in themselves. As modern social persons there seems to them no harm in a cocktail, and every reason in the world for a divorce. They are not sure that keeping up social relations with Aunt Emily does her or themselves any good. But they also feel that they may be wrong. Perhaps their moral notions are low and there is some superior standard of goodness in these matters which they ought to respect and teach themselves to look up to. An honored judge, who has this kind of psychology, is always saying in private life, "I know I ought . . . but—" What he knows he ought to do is usually trivial and useless. What he really ought to do, he usually does. His genuine ethical judgment, as exercised on the bench, is sound and true. But in social and domestic life he is always confused and troubled.

Some of these confusions have to do with current social dissipations. There is a change in social conditions which makes a change with regard to them entirely normal. In primitive and struggling societies a taboo has to be placed on drink, cigarettes, dancing, cosmetics, and flirtations, not

only because these lead the weak astray and make social trouble, but because they waste time and money which are necessary for serious business. All groups that are making an extraordinary effort to raise themselves to a higher economic status are Puritanical. The Communists are. The Fascists are. When a ship is sinking and all hands are needed to get out the lifeboats, one has to stop dancing on deck. So in pioneer or frontier communities, or in submerged social groups trying to get out, these things fall under the ban. Usually the ban is indiscriminate. Smoking and drinking are put into the same class. A lipstick is in the category with adultery. There is no time for fine distinctions. Rules must be simple, universal, and absolute. But the minute the situation eases, there begins to be a surplus again, just for fun. Already one can see the Communists and Fascists easing a bit. Russian women begin to import cold creams. Fascists need no longer attend social functions in boiled boots. Soon even alcohol and some ease between the sexes come back. Society begins to be so secure that a cocktail or a kiss can't wreck it.

Most modern people have arisen to their present social comfort through the strenuous negations of a former social or economic state. The negations were all right. But they weren't the rule of the universe or the will of God—only the necessities of a given emergency. The ship may be safe again. Put back the lifeboats and strike up the band.

So with the domestic responsibilities which keep clinging and irking long after individual persons are really free of the family and looking after themselves. In primitive circumstances, and in economic misfortune, the most natural banding together for mutual aid is the banding together of blood kin. Even in our late depression many people fell back on this. Sons and daughters went home to mother. Uncles contributed to unemployed nephews. This union of economics and domestic feeling is fundamentally a discomfort. Every civilized society works out of it as soon as opportunity affords. But it

serves in emergencies. But because the family is the nest for the young, and these ideas of family responsibility are worked into the conscience early, many people carry an uneasy feeling of family responsibility long after the necessity has ceased. Barrett lived at home with his mother, though neither he nor the old lady enjoyed it. She was a highhanded old person who loved going about and would gladly have spent evenings with friends or have stayed in town for some club meeting. But always she was at home promptly at half past five, "because I always have supper with my son." And Barrett curbed any little tendency to harmless roving, never even took his boat and went sailing along the shore for a few days, because "Mother will miss me." It would simplify many of these family entanglements if one could realize that the other person is probably as bored with this game as one's self.

Under reasonably good modern social conditions there is no reason for keeping one's neck under the old yoke of the economic household. Except in rare instances, it is now a painful yoke. It sacrifices the well to the sick, the unselfish to the selfish, the gifted and hard-working to the lazy and the shiftless. Those who have, give; and those who have not, take and fret for more. Many people are still bound in useless services to the household—sons and daughters waiting unnecessarily on mothers, fathers and mothers sacrificing themselves unnecessarily for children, husbands and wives with chains around each other's neck, ready to pull and strangle at the slightest sign of independent action or even of self-motivated happiness. The real obligations can be met. The genuine duties of husband and wife to each other, of parents to little children, are transformed by affection. There may be happy friendship among kinsfolk. It is not the real obligations which hurt. It is mainly the ghostly ones—the ones left over from the ideals and necessities of the past, retained out of cowardice or weakness of will or subservience to some one person's selfishness.

4

Most people whose inherited virtues have landed them in ennui and futility or turned them to scatterbrained revolt are suffering from two obvious conditions. They lack a training in the social arts and in the fine arts adequate to the present because the former taboos on drink and sex have spread like a pall over all the arts that make life pleasant. Or they have missed adequate sexual and emotional education, and so have failed to find that fulness and intensity of personal love which alone can make the individual happy when he is moved out of the tribal household into the complex impersonal organization of the city. This quarrel between the tribal and metropolitan organizations of society has always existed, wherever any high degree of urban culture was attained. It was just as characteristic of Athens and Rome and of eighteenth-century London and Paris as of New York or Shanghai. The only difference is that modern means of communication and transportation tend to make all life urban in character, and so to spread the conflict over the whole green face of the country.

If the individual could really think things out, in larger social terms, he might break that inhibition which keeps him from full acceptance of new conditions for himself. If James Barrett had started a rose garden, and taken up music, and, meanwhile, had left his old home, and faced down the difficulties of divorce, and in new social situations had sought a new wife, he might have broken the pattern that was binding his splendid moral energies and so released them for larger social effort.

But in this case, as in others, there were greater difficulties. He lacked work and he lacked faith. His ancestors had been workers. With faith and hope and continual triumph they had followed the ideals of rugged individualism into large capitalist organization. They had an economic and social faith which was justified by their obvious usefulness in or-

ganizing materials and opportunities for work. Thrown back into primitive circumstances, Barrett would himself have been a simple and heroic figure. But in this period of economic and social confusion there is no adequate gospel of work for such men. Everything one does is controlled by large forces beyond one's own knowledge or will. All the individual can do is to get life right on that level which is within his control, in his immediate social and personal adjustments —to the mate, to personal friends, to social life as it directly touches him—and in the use of money, and then with faith and fortitude to try to think further. Undoubtedly there is some release for the suppressed desire for creative work in the various leisure-time activities, in the arts, in anything which may be actively done to adorn one's own life, and in learning. By laying hold of these and going ahead we may find our way out.

There is also the unhappiness that comes from lack of religious faith. The obvious barrenness of heart and sense of being helpless amidst the masses of men, which the failure of religious faith has brought about, is one of the great dangers of our time. Men seem to be so hungry for religion that they will grasp at any shoddy god or ideal. Nor is the difficulty that the great religions of the past are outmoded. They are no more outmoded than the great works of art. It would be easier to find a second Shakespeare than a second Christ or Buddha or, on a much lower moral and intellectual level, a second Confucius or Mohammed. But the old religions need reinterpretation, and this interpretation most men must now find for themselves. Lacking the intimate, naïve, personal faith which gave joy and purpose to former believers, we must build something to take its place by really attempting to understand the emotional, imaginative, and ethical problems of the modern social scene. In the release of the imagination through the arts, in the disinterested pursuit of science, in an attempt to think honestly and concretely in terms of our own experience and to interpret and revise our dreamworld

through trying to do something, we may come again to that fervor of feeling and that imaginative reconciliation to the great mystery of existence which is, in all ages, men's genuine religion.

Meanwhile, if the old suit of virtue does not fit, there is at least the adventure of trying to find a new one. Being good is no safe, stodgy, stuffy state of mind, no uneasy withholding of one's self from the pleasures and experiments of life. The old virtues perish. Let them. Lay them away in the sands with the dinosaur and the dodo. Let the dead bury their dead, for amidst all the clamor of our times, the wailing for lost causes, the mourning for dead loves, the mutual recriminations, and the walking of the ghosts, there is some clear voice of forward-marching knowledge which still says, "Follow me."

A Thing of Beauty—XXI

A thing of beauty, wrote Keats,

> . . . . *still will keep*
> *A bower quiet for us, and a sleep*
> *Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.*

And very soothing is a promise like that in our dynamic age. But beauty is far from being a soporific. It is rather the expression of a high vitality, and—fatally American as it sounds to say it!—one also reaches it by making and doing.

In moments of exuberant health, of love, of joy, we triumph by some creative power of our own over the pains and obstacles of life and turn them to instruments of delight. This is obvious even in a simple physical skill like swimming. The waters of the Maine coast are cold and deep and a little treacherous, and many is the dead body they have washed ashore. But leap from some rock, in the glory of health and skill, and, through the electric shock of hitting this melted ice, you emerge into a brilliance of sensation which bland and kindly waters cannot give. The great cold waves break over you, keen, with edges like knife blades, and wake in you hidden centers of vitality, with sharp little releases of joy. Wherever the human spirit reaches a certain level of vitality, it ceases to question and to argue and to be oppressed.

It lays hold of whatever is by, and finds it good. It takes the material of life, with bleeding hands if need be, and reshapes it to its own dream and desire with skill and with art.

Art, like nature, is incorrigibly joyous. Even its darkest records, its most mordant realism, have a glow in them, like the light in Rembrandt's pictures. However this moon may turn its dark side to you, you know that the other side is bright. Something there is in man which makes even sorrow sweet in remembering, and "Memory," said the Greeks, "is the mother of the Muses."

A man is an artist just in proportion as he can find in the raw and often painful stuff of life the unworked mine of pleasure that is always there and turn it into the coin of the realm of culture. So Wordsworth, among his cloud-swept northern hills,

> . . . . *would stand*
> *If the night blackened with the coming storm*
> *Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are*
> *The ghostly language of the ancient earth*
> *Or make their dim abode in distant winds.*

So Walt Whitman, amidst the miscellaneous hordes of Manhattan, discovers the joy of fellowship with the human horde. Standing on the deck of the ferry and seeing the towers of Manhattan move nearer, he is one with the visionary throngs of all who will cross these waters in the years that stretch beyond the appointed limits of his own life.

Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from shore to shore,
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide,
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and east;
Others will see the islands large and small;
Fifty years hence others will see them as they cross,
the sun half an hour high,
A hundred years hence or ever so many years hence, others will see them,
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring in of the flood-tide,
the falling back to sea of the ebb-tide.

Even the lesser poets, whose discoveries are not so wide-reaching and so fundamental, find new joys in the ordinary stuff of our life. Vachel Lindsay stands on the corner and watches the Salvation Army, and, imagining the lame and the blind and the halt going thus redeemed into Heaven, feels a sympathetic triumph touched with humor as tender as pity.

The hosts were sandalled, and their wings were fire!
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
But their noise played havoc with the angel choir.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Oh shout salvation! It was good to see
Kings and princes by the Lamb set free.
The banjoes rattled and the tambourines
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of Queens.

And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer,
He saw his Master through the flag-filled air.
Christ came gently with a robe and crown
For Booth, the soldier, while the throng knelt down.
He saw King Jesus. They were face to face,
And he knelt a weeping in that holy place.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Like the poet, the painter and the musician go hunting continually for joy. How Corot has touched those long willow-lined roadways of France, flat and dusty enough when you walk them, with a wistful and fairylike beauty! So the modern artist etches the skyscrapers of New York, and gives them the fantasy of architecture in the clouds. So the painter represents the worn, misshapen bodies and lined, distorted faces of the industrially downtrodden, and makes their dull eyes look into yours in a poignant sharing of the ineffable woe and undefeated spirit of our humanity.

So with the musicians. The great musician takes the odds and ends of man's perpetual and spontaneous song and builds

them into an architecture of sound that is like the interrelated harmonies of the circling stars and the swinging sea, and the rhythmic march of the seasons. Out of many small suggested designs he makes one large design and takes the hearer in reverie through a variety of agitations to the peace of the closing chord. But the common man also records in song his small delights—telling how "I met my girl in the rain," or inviting her to wear a little white gardenia, or cheerfully caroling, "I have plenty of nothing, and nothing's plenty for me." There is a good deal of cheap commercial noise in the popular music, but, among the makers of these strains that forever go round and round, there are also the genuine folk songsters who keep finding the true melody of current feeling.

So also, in his crafts, man adorns his houses and his articles of common use with the prodigality of Nature, who paints every flower and shapes the rocks to fantasies of form and color. So he perpetually weaves the enchantment of living into his social customs, his gestures of friendship and affection, finding odd glamours even in the flavors of meat and drink, scenting even his soap with the borrowed perfume of the rose.

2

Art is the normal expression of man's dream life. The release of the imagination through art is not only an abiding joy. It is a necessary safeguard. In our times we are being awakened to the ghastly perils of the imagination. As the great controlling forces of modern life become increasingly intangible, immaterial, anonymous, the imagination is set dangerously adrift. Too little intervenes between the fantasy and its fulfillment in action. Too much may be done by telephone and motorcar. So, among simple people apparently living commonplace lives, there are outbreaks of crime that might make even gangsters blush. From imagination run wild nothing is safe. It snatches the baby from its crib; it murders the wife in her boudoir. Drama and story of unutterable hideousness mature to action, without social knowledge or check,

in commonplace heads, behind apparent adaptation to our facile social scheme. And imaginations undisciplined, freed from the checks and difficulties which material conditions formerly presented to the realization of fantasy in action, are stimulated lawlessly by a gaudy display of the goods of life, and by instruction, in tabloid and motion picture, in all the superficialities of criminal procedure.

We must face the training and control of the imagination as man has never had to face it before. Modern mechanisms are swift and deadly tools in the hands of delusion. Delusion threatens us in the carpenter who works on our house and the upholsterer's boy who enters to repair a piece of furniture. It may get itself elected to high office. It may gather the young and the believing together in a youth movement and lead them, singing, to destruction. For social safety, alone, there must be some new alignment between the present knowledge of psychology and such development of the arts in education and in leisure-time activities as will offer release to the myriads in our civilization whose dream grows larger and larger behind an enclosing wall of economic limitation and social and cultural ineptitude. If delusion is a congenital disease, this, of course, cannot reach it. But a great deal of preventable delusion and social maladaptation is undoubtedly due to our present type of education.

Most healthy and active people keep themselves sane by an instinctive correlation between their inner dream life and their various physical, social, and artistic activities. What they think of doing, they try to do, and so check and revise the desire against the difficulties and consequences of its realization. For dreams that cannot be actively realized they have found a release in music, in art, in literature, in drama, in social life, in some kind of impersonal thought or activity. The more resources of this sort the individual has, the more truly sane he is likely to remain in all the ups and downs of life. Man needs a number of different arts, exercising different faculties, just as he needs a number of different vitamins.

Delusion begins when the inner or dream life begins to grow quite out of proportion to any means the individual has of realizing it. The most dangerous condition for anyone is the condition in which the dream life is stimulated to activity while the body remains in a state of comparative passivity, and no exercise is given to the senses and no outlet for the will through the acquisition and use of skills.

This is exactly the state of affairs that modern mechanisms tend to bring about, beginning with the great invention of print, and the preponderant part it now plays in our education. Until printing was widely used, education was mainly training in the various arts of current living. An early Greek, a medieval knight, or a medieval craftsman might be truly an educated man without knowing how to read. Literature was mainly oral, and its transmission was accompanied by music and sometimes by acting. But eye and ear, and hands and feet were variously trained. The memory was well-stored with poetry and tradition and the reason often well-exercised on current affairs or even on abstract discussion. Language was a matter of the spoken word, which, as Socrates says, "is the true word, of which the written word is properly no more than an image." The man gifted in words was supposed to be able to make a speech, to hold his own in dialogue and discussion, and, if his imagination reached higher, to make a song and accompany himself with music or dramatic gestures. Simple as such education was, it was education of the whole man. The genuine superiority of early Greek and medieval art and literature on many levels may have been due to the fact that man's dream life was realized through all the senses and through a variety of techniques which brought his whole human apparatus into play.

But the invention of print had, in some respects, the same dulling effect that is often credited, with less reason, to the motion picture and the radio. It made men passive and allowed the dream life to expand without the normal checks of active triumph over physical limitations. There was an added difficulty, only recently realized through the remarkable in-

vestigations conducted by Dr. Samuel T. Orton into the reading ability of children, that the orientation of print from left to right is unsuited to a sizeable minority of capable people, who tend to see from right to left and to perceive printed letters in reversed positions. One of the greatest geniuses who ever lived, Leonardo da Vinci, may have been of this type, for he wrote his notes in mirror writing. Many such people do not learn to read at all; others, with more literary background, learn to read after a fashion but may be debarred from any great satisfaction in literature. Public-school systems founded solely on the principle that education consists in taking in print through the eye probably drop a considerable number of children who might have been good medieval craftsmen or all-round Greek citizens into the discard of the socially maladjusted. In most cases people of this type of vision can learn to read by methods suited to them, but, hypnotized as our whole intellectual life has been by print, we have not even learned to teach it properly.

3

Regardless of these special cases, which may comprise as many as ten per cent of the population, the ability to read is, of course, an absolute essential in our civilization. A man cannot drive a motor-car if he cannot read the signs. He cannot telephone if he is unable to find names and numbers in the telephone book. Culturally he is now no longer starved, as he was a few years ago, because the radio and the motion picture now bring him much that the peoples of former and less print-ridden civilizations got through public discussion and song and communal drama. But books must remain a principal source of information and a means to intellectual and imaginative life. They merely need to be better integrated in education with other forms of culture.

Though literature is one of the great arts, and the most readily accessible and inexpensive of all forms of imaginative satisfaction, it fosters the dream life in more complete detachment from general physical and sensuous experience than

the other forms of art. Our habit has been to make it as passive as possible, detaching it even from adequate training in the spoken word and the drama. Where other arts have been taught, they also have been made passive. Most of the colleges have given credit for courses in art which consisted in looking at innumerable pictures and some printed remarks about them, but no credit for an attempt to paint anything. So with music. You were educated to the point of credit if you knew about music, but not if you tried to make it.

In many cases the imagination of the child has been deliberately thwarted and thrown back on the old dry husks of printed ancient and foreign languages when it tried to embrace new arts or new visions of knowledge or find a wholesome release from personal limitations. Incredible as it sounds, the following is a case which I vouch for in every detail. A capable boy of cultivated background entered one of those fine old New England private schools to prepare for entrance to Sheffield, the scientific school of Yale University. Though he read English not incompetently, he had a mild case of reversed vision which made it very difficult to master foreign languages through the eye (though he picked them up readily by ear) and somewhat slowed up his preparation of all lessons. In other respects he had remarkably fine sight.

Apparently finding himself slightly balked by print, he had sought imaginative release in other objects of knowledge that presented no such difficulty, and so had developed a particularly vivid, living curiosity about science, a great pleasure in laboratory experiments, and many mechanical skills. Despite the fact that he needed only one foreign language for advanced education obviously suited to his interests and aptitudes, he was promptly loaded with both Latin and French, an almost intolerable strain on his visual adaptation to print. Baffled and somewhat unhappy, the boy seized on anything that offered peace and release from the continual nagging about grades in languages and discovered, with all the wonder of expanding imagination at adolescence, the marvels of modern

scenic and lighting devices on the stage. He attached himself to the school stage crew and was passionately happy in exploring the imaginative possibilities of electricity in drama. But he soon failed to pass in Latin. There was an obvious punishment. He was taken off the stage crew!

Later, while he was still trying to work off points against him accumulated in a struggle with these languages, the very beautiful motion picture showing the life of Louis Pasteur came to town. He was fired with excitement—a story of a great scientist, who really found out things, the life story of one of his heroes! But he was refused permission to go to town to see it. He didn't have enough points!

If this can happen in a great private school, how much of this psychic murder goes on in other schools, and how many victims of a dream life deliberately thwarted in all normal and wholesome outlets and forced to abnormality lie at the door of the present educational system? We rightly deplore those shallow souls who are so hypnotized by our newer inventions that they surrender all other use of their faculties, who sit before the radio all day or live from one motion picture to another. But theirs is nothing to the folly of a world which has let its intellectual and artistic faculties and all the various skills by which man can translate his dream into beauty and truth be enslaved to an ideal of education which begins and ends in the printed word.

When Sydney Greenbie took distinguished professors from the universities around the world with Traversity, there was this perpetual difficulty. They always wanted to shut the students up and have them learn something from a book, instead of going out and seeing the living original of what the book said spread before their eyes in Canton or Cairo. One of the famous quarrels of the institution was the quarrel over the vote of the faculty to deny shore leave to students who had not learned what was assigned in a book. They had come thousands of miles to Hawaii, to see as a part of education, to find knowledge and beauty by really going out on

their feet to look for it, and they were to be shut up on the ship and left behind because they had not earned this opportunity by studying out of some book first.

Now books are truly blessed things. But this enslavement to print as such really means that people do not adequately learn to read. Books would be much more alive to many people if, from childhood, the various faculties of ear and hand and the stimulation of observation had been brought to reinforce the eye. Of late years there has been an effort to break the spell of print and release children from the physical and sensuous passivity of the earlier education. This has been the theory of all forward-looking effort in education since Froebel. The progressive schools have carried this to the eighth grade, and two of the women's colleges, Bennington and Sarah Lawrence, have now put the various fine arts on the level with literature. But the high school, whether public or private, is still enslaved to the printing press through the College Board examinations. All effort at really all-round development stops short at adolescence, at the very moment when training in the fine arts, the social arts, and the practical arts is vitally necessary. For at thirteen or fourteen the child's dream life enormously expands. It reaches out for beauty. It makes all sorts of tentative efforts to be decorative, to be interesting, to improve its environment and itself. It thinks in social terms. It wishes to show off, to whoop things up, to enjoy a "thrill" and find or create "glamour."

This is just the moment when the work often so well begun in the lower schools should be consolidated in a thorough grounding in the techniques of music, art, crafts, supplemented with opportunities for the display of skill and for doing things creatively in company with others. But however much the high-school principal might like to do this, he runs against the snag of the College Board examinations. Many of the students have to drop music lessons, just at the moment when they begin to be significant, to settle down to the cramming for college. There seems to

be some sacred reason why, just at this minute, young people should be taken through long hours of algebra and Latin grammar and Caesar. There is no going into this question here. As one who has looked at the college board examinations many times from both sides of the fence, I just want to register a purely personal opinion for the benefit of harassed parents who watch their children in high school and wonder humbly whether there can be some profound and esoteric reason for just this collection of preparatory subjects. Well, there isn't. They merely represent intellectual superstition. And now, my friends in all the colleges, come out and fight!

And what could one do? One could very nicely select five of the these fifteen sacred units for college entrance and let them stand for a genuine grounding in the theory and practice of at least two arts besides literature, and for a demonstration that, out of all the faculties with which we are furnished so prodigally, the student can do something, to some intellectual and artistic purpose, except use his eye on print.

4

The scurrying around for something to do to fill leisure time has brought home to us the barrenness of a cultural background founded on print alone. What we really mean by training for leisure is what was once meant by a liberal education. This meant some education beyond immediate vocational or professional needs, something which made a man happy and free just in himself, food for the imagination, patterns by which to direct his purposes, activities to be pursued for their own sakes. This noble ideal formerly suggested by the free and various life of the Greeks has latterly been gagged with grammar and strangled by print. The only justification for what remains of the old classical education is now its professional value. A lovely and talented young girl who was preparing to enter a theatrical school was taking a great interest in working up a recitation in verse, speaking

the lines beautifully, responsive to every phrase. "My dear," sighed her high-school teacher, "how you can memorize when you want to! Why don't you memorize the rules about transitive and intransitive verbs like that? Won't you ever put your mind on grammar?"

"But I do put my mind on grammar," said the girl, proudly. "I like to speak well. You never hear me say, 'He don't,' or 'I did that real well.'"

"I don't mean that kind of grammar," said the teacher. "I mean technical grammar. I mean the rules about parts of speech. You can never give them."

"I look at them and think what they mean," said the girl. "If they tell me anything that helps me to say things right, I remember it and forget the rest. I like to remember poetry, but why load my mind with junk?"

"Junk, my dear! What an idea! You will never learn Latin grammar if you won't learn technical English grammar."

"But why should I learn Latin grammar?"

The teacher was stumped. Finally, though she knew this girl was preparing for the stage, she said helplessly, in a small voice, "You may want to get an M.A. and teach!"

What we need is a new liberal education, one which liberates, which releases man's dream life in forms of beauty and makes him a man in the joyous and creative use of all the faculties of a man. To keep this life from expanding dangerously under the present mechanical pressure on it of language in radio, in motion pictures, in print, it must be submitted to the ordered discipline of actually acquiring personal skill through the eye, the voice, the ear, the hand, the feet, the whole body, in making something excellent one's self. One must build up a fortress in one's own faculties against the tremendous force of mass suggestion. For centuries man has sought to use his mind to discipline his body. The time may come when he must use his body to discipline his mind. Else, his human spirit may evaporate in a dream or blow up in a delusion.

5

When people turn hopefully to suggestions about leisure-time occupations, they are usually baffled because they have no fundamental skills. They'd like to do something with music, but how begin now at the beginning? They have always wanted to draw. If only they had had some training when they were young! The basis of technique is best laid in youth. If it is well laid, any art may be neglected for years but can be quickly recovered. Even if you have not touched a piano for twenty years, any real knowledge of music laid away in your consciousness has hardly suffered at all. It has gathered to itself something all the time. It has ripened in enjoyment and unconscious thought while listening to music. The fingers are soon limbered, and out of them comes pouring something that was not there in youth. But if you have not this basic knowledge, there has been nothing for enjoyment to cling to, and to begin now—it seems too absurd!

Everyone who touches the question of leisure knows this baffled middle age, with its rusty academic education, its algebra not only laid away but never used since the examination long ago and never to be used now, its pathetic and wistful looking at a pencil, or clay, or a musical instrument, at people taking part in a play, at dancing or games, and saying, "If only I had been able to learn a little about these things when I was young!" If you ask them why they never learned, they say one of two things. Either they had no opportunity to learn anything. Or else they went to college and then into a profession, and there never was time except for the studying. Educated and uneducated are on the same level of ignorance, for neither have arts.

Ever since leisure became a word to conjure with, all sorts of selfish interests have been rushing in to capitalize idleness—dispensing silly and childish information about such important arts as making toys out of matchsticks, carving on beans, collecting old nails, or whooping up artificial enthusiasms to sell more gadgets. A little of this may

be amusing. But to spend any large portion of life solving puzzles or collecting things is to be a human insect.

People don't want just to be amused. They want their lives to be really filled. Nothing will fill a life except something that brings a man's dream home to rest on one of the few great ultimates of life. There is no arguing about these ultimates. They cannot be explained to reason. But we know them when we turn home to them by the peace and gladness of the going. One of these ultimates is something we call Beauty—beauty perpetually pursued, never quite reached—something which Plato says "cannot be taught like other subjects, but, after much communing and constant intercourse with the thing itself, suddenly, like a flame kindled from a running fire, it is born in the soul and henceforth nourishes itself."

Beauty, like joy, is inherent in our own consciousness of our world. It is in the upturned face of the pansy in the window box, and in the far-off twinkle of city lights. Beauty is space, making what is ugly grow lovely in the distance. Beauty is time, making what was painful sweet in remembering. Beauty is the day, and beauty is the night. There is beauty in the shimmer of dust at our feet, and beauty in the traveling light of the farthest star. There is nothing that is really important to us that we are able to understand. But what does it matter? When we seek beauty or realize it in any form of our own creation, we assert within ourselves and bring to release in joy our human kinship with whatever it is that runs this great miracle of things.

Why should we strive for what is not our own?
Life is too much for us. So let it stand.
We live on islands each, and live alone.
But when aloneness hushes all the social din,
We hear, reverberant on ledge and stone,
Through leavings of life's picnic on the sand,
The sea of the eternal Beauty washing in.

The Best Is Yet to Be?—XXII

IT is the tragedy of human life, as lived at present, that no sooner do we begin to be emotionally and mentally alive than we begin to be physically dead. Life does truly begin at forty. There is some crisis in the late thirties, or during the ten or fifteen years that follow, when a man comes to his true Commencement. He graduates from the long schooling of youth and early manhood. He comes into something like full economic control of his environment and full social freedom. The bonds of the household loosen. The apprenticeship to his business or profession is served. If he is fortunate in love he has come through the emotional tumults of youth to some deep and settled devotion. This should truly be the beginning of life. It is the end towards which all his fury of activity has been working. The storms, the frosts, the chills of springtime are past, and ahead lies the long summer and slowly mellowing autumn. It is the gathering in, full and ripe, of fruits long tended and sprayed with no reward.

The grace of youth is very brief. What follows is mostly disappointment and hard work. For every mild, delicate hour of blossoming, there are days of wet and cold; every promise of sun is chased by the recurring frost. The flowers of spring are hopeful and numerous, but fragile and brief. Any wind shatters them. Any rain lays them in the mud. If life is to be worth living there must be something beyond this

long period of our unripeness—this social and emotional and economic apprenticeship to which modern civilization subjects every aspiring soul.

Youth, say the newspaper headlines, is in revolt. Youth is always in revolt. And much good revolt does it! Any country in which the young get a chance to assert themselves, to take over the helm of government, is a country already on the rocks. Shortsighted people often recommend to American boys and girls the seriousness and strenuousness of those misguided children of Europe who, with dictators at their head, think they are getting ready to rule the world. But one day a wise old statesman of one of these youth-ridden lands, watching some American college students touring his country and behaving as American college students do, said to me, "Happy is the land whose youth are still children!" When I looked slightly surprised at this reflection, so different from those which our amiable youngsters usually inspire in the old lands that think themselves wise, he went on, "It is a sign of health in a land and its people that the middle-aged and the old can still hold the helm. It is the best hope for the young themselves. Youth in Europe—bah! Every land with a strong youth movement confesses itself thereby a failure. These American boys and girls are babies because their fathers and their grandfathers are still young."

The sounder a civilization is, the higher its opportunities and the more complex its demands and varied its satisfactions, the more the control of it moves into the upper age groups. This is very different from saying that the rule of the aged, as such, is good. It only means that conditions of health and good functioning tend to prolong the period of activity for all men. Fewer fall by the wayside. Competition is keener, advance slower, and those tough organisms that keep surviving and holding their own are not easily dislodged from their places once they get them. In America the age of the group that is in fullest control rises all the time. It is possible that

by 1965 we may have a society more predominantly controlled by and adapted to older people than any great civilization of the world hitherto.

This would be a tragedy if older people continued to be what many of them now are. For what we call old age is not age at all. It is a degenerative disease which attacks before maturity and hinders and aborts it. That physiological decay which is the most unpleasant symptom of age is no natural ripening. It is specifically a disease of the tissues, with its origin mainly in a bad cuisine. It is increased by a kind of social and personal carelessness and a stiffening of the mind and habit, which is due partly to the premature physical failure, but partly also to the fact that our ideals of appearance and of social life, and our whole system of education are created for the immature. Behind this kind of old age, in the past, were the cruelties of the social system. The industrial machine, like the earlier owners of men, is a slave driver. Its idea is to catch men young, use them up, and throw them out. As for the supply of men—women were to be got cheap, and there is nothing easier than breeding.

Naturally the young rise in revolt against the great degenerating mass of their elders. They are still in a state of comparative health, and they think they will remain so. But they won't—not till they are wiser than we are. But what is hindering youth is not that their elders keep on living but that they do not grow up. If they grew up, they would get out of youth's way. There is plenty to do in this world that can be done better by the young. And all young people ought to be left free by their elders to do what they usually want to do most—to found their own households. They could do this if we would leave the apprentice jobs to them and grow up in middle age to more independent activity. Much of the work that is dull and stultifying to the mature is hopeful, interesting, and educational for the young person who hopes to grow out of it.

2

But if we are to grow up we must conquer the physical disease of age in the tissues. We shall never eliminate ultimate old age, and perhaps no wise man will ever want to. But men may very easily be healthy, handsome, and increasingly happy to the last moment of life. It requires more science than is as yet at our disposal, but enough is known, and has always been observed, to encourage any individual not only to cheat decay, but to enter into the long golden fulness of those later days which only a few of the blessed ever reach.

Obviously the germ of this disease of old age is in our food. Science, which has done much to rescue babyhood and motherhood from its former horrors, has done little as yet to salvage middle and old age. But now, it is said, the project is to be seriously tackled. A study reaching over the next six years is to be made at a great university, with the purpose of finding the diet which averts fat and wrinkles and stiffening of the arteries and allows the face and form to ripen normally. The whole theory of diet has been based too much on the needs of growing children. That is where father and mother first get caught. The dinner they set for Jane and Johnnie they eat themselves. But it is a question whether this feeding is necessarily good even for the children, whether the disease of old age is not already started in the strong robust limbs by the food that seems to make them so. These puffing, beefy, middle-aged men who return to the big boy's boarding school for Father's Day and alumni celebrations, grizzled and florid, squat and tubby, and generally damaged by the twenty or thirty years out of school, were headed for just this state by the school itself. The rich feeding, the wild rush between times for the food kitchen at the gates, the long and violent hours on the playing field—all that made them fine young brutes in their late teens—was preparing them for just such middle age.

Our knowledge of food and the degeneration of the human tissues is still not sufficient for dogma. But it is obvious that a few already work miracles by keeping their weight and outlines to a standard and following such dietary wisdom as is now available. There are women who at fifty and sixty still have the figures and bright eyes and fair skins of girlhood—not without some indefinable ripening, to be sure, which is not a decay of beauty but only its alteration. Most of the loss of looks with age is due to added pounds. Even ten pounds additional will blur the outlines of a lovely face and take some of the purity and delicacy out of the skin.

There is also the question of exercise, which the college specialists are about to consider. Probably we have inherited far too violent and specialized an idea of physical exercise. This does little harm in youth, for the generally wayward, experimental, and miscellaneous character of youth's activities gives a good deal of general exercise, too. But as we settle to our lifework and to a control of our environment, all physical activity becomes extremely one-sided. This is true of the business man who religiously plays gold, no less than the miner and the housewife. Even our sports and plays are specialized. Many people, feeling the weight creep on them, make the mistake of trying to work it off with exercise, instead of stopping the increase at its source at the dinner table. They are often very vital, lively, and cheerful people. This steaming up to a continual carrying off of excess gives them an apparent well-being, a stout and busy rosiness. Then some morning you hear that Brown has been found dead in his bed. The overworked heart has stopped.

For next to the degeneration which is obviously of alimentary origin, the worst difficulty with advancing years is the unequal breakdown of the organs, which is not natural but is induced by artificial conditions of activity. No one has yet worked out a system of activity and exercise which will keep the body equally developing and make sure that, like the "one-hoss shay," it will go to pieces, at some remote date,

all at once. Probably most of our notions of exercise, derived from old notions of sport and combat, and inculcated in youth on the school playing field, really do more harm than good, making for one-sided development, which leaves some spots weak just in proportion as others are made strong. The best a sensible man can do is to keep himself lithe and limber by doing a little of everything, but mildly and pleasurably—the more different kinds of physical things the better, but none of them violently or continuously or to the point of serious weariness. This physical machine has to last us all our lives. People ought to begin early in youth to see that it comes to real maturity in middle age, in a sound and handsome condition.

For those who can reach middle age with no signs of the disease of old age about them, there are many physiological advantages in the middle and later years. The senses grow more discriminating, and there is an awareness of the present moment, a savoring and tasting of life which the greediness of youth makes impossible earlier. There is less physical irritability and, if one has learned to manage one's self, there are fewer minor discomforts. There is a better adjustment of energy, which seems to make it easier to stand hardship and to endure and keep one's mental equilibrium.

3

One of the reasons for keeping health, looks, and social charm into middle and old age is that these are essential to the beauty of those emotional relations which ripen much later in life than popular tradition has led us to expect. There is an old idea that the teens and the early twenties are the time for love. Mother, who had looked like a fairy dream in tulle at eighteen, was expected to put on a cap at thirty-five and settle down with her knitting by the fire. Of course this was the expectation only in primitive and immature societies. In all the most elaborate social periods, the great charmers and lovers were likely to be middle-aged. One could make

quite a roster of the ladies whose loveliness was never really discovered till forty, and was then made historic by the lifelong passion of some mature man. There was Nurmahal, the great siren of the East, who rose from a lowly widowhood to be queen of the great Mogul Empire and ruled in her fifties a social life of incredible splendor. There was Vittoria Colonna, the star of Michelangelo's old age. There was the much publicized Elizabeth Barrett. There were the ladies of the great *salon* age in France, many of whom never seemed to get a look-in on the social scene till they were thirty, who really bloomed in their forties, and were adored to indefinite antiquity. In the great periods of civilization the lady comes into her own, not before but long after motherhood and her apprenticeship to the household.

This apple of love is much better ripe than green. In youth there is intoxication in the rind and sweetness in the juice, but the core is sour and bitter. One pays for rapture then with many a cruel humiliation and passionate failure and unavailing regret. Happy marriages and lifelong love affairs can show a lot of scars, most of them acquired in the earlier years.

The fact that passion does not end with the advent of the cradle burst upon the American civilization with a loud shock to our social mores. One of the tragedies which the American divorce laws constantly make manifest is that the true awakening of love and of full sexual desire may come long after the bloom is off the springtime of life, and sometimes after a man has been playing house very happily for years with a sweet girl and her babies. Who of us has not been disturbed by seeing some mature man or woman of our acquaintance, long an exemplary husband or wife, a substantial householder, an excellent host, a trustworthy friend, a responsible parent, walk out and slam the door of the domestic dollhouse? They do extraordinary things. They go to Reno, sometimes in company with the wife or husband whom one is divorcing, and the husband or wife of someone

else whom the other is marrying. Ex-wife and wife-to-be may even have dinner together to celebrate the rearrangement. Or they openly take lovers or mistresses. Men turn over most of their income and the house with equanimity to the original wife and the children; they accept social ostracism and throw away careers. And they do it with a certain firmness and conviction, as having found the way of life at last—and sometimes, strangely enough, they have. And for one who thus plucks out an eye or cuts off a limb, and enters maimed for life into his own kingdom of happiness, there are a dozen who would do it if they had the courage. Instead, they offer up the too-late beloved on the altar of the social gods.

Love is no bonbon for children. If we are to live long and merrily we must stop pretending that love blooms at eighteen and dies with the dear clutch of baby fingers. Genuine passion often comes late. Many women of the northern races know practically nothing about it till they are twenty-five. Men of a certain intellectual idealistic type do not wake up and know themselves for the men they are till they are in their thirties. Many, both men and women, wake much later. Popular tradition has played on this fact in the superstition about the "dangerous age." The dangerous age is no passing phase. It may easily last till the end of life.

Much of the intimate tragedy of maturity could be avoided or at least worked out to a peaceful solution if we were not all handicapped by the childish and immature ideas of sex and mating inherited from societies that had half of our actual life span. Blessed are those in whom mature passion and lifelong welding of person to person in security and tenderness follow naturally upon boy and girl "romance" and young housekeeping together, and one beloved is rediscovered on each successive level of life with an increasing poignancy of feeling. There is no one who does not deplore these shifts at Reno. But the passionate and dramatic rearrangements of middle age are something to be taken into account in our pretty pictures of June brides and starry-eyed

lovers. As the various illusions, and possibilities, and imaginative substitutes for reality are killed off in a truly maturing person, love settles to its real channel with concentrated and moving force. Only the settling is likely to be painful, and may be socially disastrous, because we are not emotionally educated for it. And in too many people the emotional life, like the body, decays before it ever matures. The period of intensive child-rearing and housekeeping and "supporting the family" is much the smaller half of that long love-life which modern social and domestic conditions make possible, and ought to be only a preparation and schooling for the years of companionship and emotional and spiritual adventure and co-operation on many social levels which lie beyond it.

4

As life lengthens and love lengthens, the period of wage-earning shortens. President Roosevelt aroused considerable discussion when he proposed that the wage-earning years be limited between the years of eighteen and sixty-five. This seems long enough, except in the case of persons of rare capacities whose work beyond sixty-five would naturally be more of a public service than an economic necessity.

Of course, sixty-five is no end for the genuine working life. A number of professors, retired at sixty-five from college teaching, have built up their true careers after that, as witnesses the case of Governor Cross of Connecticut. How many of the Sons of Eli were forced to sit up and rub their eyes, as dear old Uncle Toby, through whose blandly humorous lectures on novels they used to sleep so comfortably, suddenly underwent an intellectual metamorphosis at sixty-eight and turned into the shrewdest, most stubborn, and most nobly disinterested governor the state of Connecticut ever had! Every year his enemies begin to suggest that this is surely the last of the "dear old gentleman," and every year he sardonically tells them that his health is still excellent.

But careers like this, in politics, in business, in the arts, may be wide-reaching and disinterested just in proportion as they are really free from slavery to the pay envelope. Nothing need stop us from working as we grow older. But if we can be released from some of the restrictions and limitations of the daily job, we ought to feel like students released from the grind of classroom attendance and credits into the freedom of the graduate school.

From middle age on, one must prepare for the widening of activity in later life and the simplifying of physical existence. "What I regret most," said a wise old lady of eighty, "is that at fifty I did not realize that I was still a young woman. If I had only done then some of the things I thought I was too old to do, if I had taken up some studies I was interested in, if I had not depended too much on the judgment of the children and had just made my own life as I wanted to, I could have had a beautiful time these later years." This old lady had been set up in an elaborate house by her prosperous son. She had a cook, a butler, a chauffeur, and a gardener. "It was my son's idea," she said wistfully. "He likes to have home like this with Grandma in it to bring the children to for holidays. It is a little bit of pretending on his part—to make it look as if he had always had it, instead of having made it himself. But what I wanted was a little house with a bit of garden I could work myself, and a little kitchen to do things in. If I'd known how long I'd live, I'd just have dug my heels into the ground ten years ago and got what I wanted. Ten years is an awful long time to have spent just doing nothing," she ended, with a sigh.

Probably, for really intelligent people, activity grows more important as they grow older, and possessions increasingly less important. The happiest provision for the older years is one which allows for as much various activity as possible, under conditions which are physically simple and wholesome. But the basis for this various activity needs to be laid in ever-widening interests through the middle years.

5

The most difficult thing for the person who truly matures in our society is the struggle with current opinion, which seeks to force on him adaptations and conditions applicable only to the many who suffer, not from true old age but only from the disease of senility. Because the majority of people decay when half-developed, our whole social scheme is adapted to the young. Health is for the young. Beauty is for the young. Love is for the young. Education is for the young. Social life is for the young. These goods properly belong to man all his life. There is only with increasing years, a necessary shift of emphasis, which should make health more really secure, beauty more truly expressive, love far deeper and richer, education wider and more philosophical, and social life more complex and brilliant. The general immaturity of our social tradition is reinforced by the self-assertiveness of the young. The young are dream-ridden. They push on headlong in pursuit of illusions and are ready to jostle anyone off the path to their vision. And their elders, unless they have outgrown their own dreams, are very easily bulldozed by the various ideas and ideals of the younger members of the family. On the other hand, it is a mark of true maturity to accept with interest whatever is new and valuable. Conservatism is very far from being the mark of the elder person. Many an older person can draw rings around the young radical when it comes to thinking things out fearlessly to their conclusions.

But the difference with regard to illusions is fundamental. Illusions are proper to youth. They are like the bright-colored pictures in the baby's storybook, which help the little tot to learn to read. Allured by these gaudy images, which the imagination projects upon the world, one slowly, and sometimes with disappointment and pain, learns to read life as it is.

Many people suffer acutely when, in middle life, their illusions begin to fail. Sometimes they realize that something

they have striven for—reputation or wealth or influence—they will probably never reach. Sometimes they have reached it and discover that it was not worth the trouble. It is as hard to give up these gaudy pictures of what one's life was going to be like as it is for the little girl, sometimes, to give up her dolls. But let them go. For when they are gone, for the first time in your life you know peace. How often one hears a middle-aged person remark with a kind of wonder, "I seem to begin to know what it is all about." When the dreamworld begins to fade, there is darkness only for a moment, like the change of scene on a stage. Then slowly a new light begins to dawn and brighten over some new prospect of reality that is greater and lovelier than the dream.

This is the real beginning of tranquility and clarity in life—the delivery from those visions which one's own ignorance has generated, and the reconciliation to the great world that lies all about—the willingness to work with it, to explore it, to experience it. Our social theories of life, inherited from days when man's expectancy of life was twenty years less than now, do not train one for this ripe enjoyment of the world as it is, the sense of being *with* one's environment rather than *against* it. Youth is normally incurious and blind and deaf. Only simple and violent stimuli reach it through its own bright shell. But older people, even those who are degenerating under premature physical decay and social suppression, seem to have feelers reaching out. It is often the grandmother, rather than the young granddaughter, who is willing to move the indicator on the radio and find something more than jazz. It is often father rather than son who is curious to go traveling. And in proportion as we are able to reach out and take possession of our world in physical adjustment and sensuous enjoyment, in mental adventure and artistic sympathy, in personal love and social co-operation, we increasingly live, and each moment is rich not only with its own goods, but with the wealth of all the years that have gone before.

The End of the Quest—XXIII

Is there not, then, an ultimate, an absolute, in life—something which, when found, makes one content for evermore? There is such an ultimate, and many men have found it, but it is neither a thought nor a dogma nor a scheme of life. It is a personal experience. There are two fantastic and visionary states of mind, both alike incredible to reason and outside the pattern of ordinary experience, which seem to illuminate life with a clarity beyond any intellectual truth, and to give it intelligibility beyond the reach of common sense and a joyfulness utterly transcending anything we call pleasure. And these experiences are closely related. They draw from some deep inner spring of instinctive life.

One of these experiences is the very common one of falling in love. It is utterly unreasonable, but no one would miss it. In this experience one very ordinary specimen of humanity miraculously acquires a value transcending all other human values. He or she is the centre, ruler, arbiter of a new and glamorous world of sense, of imagination. Even when the madness of passion is gone, the importance of the beloved remains. So long as one loves, life is focused, and carries at its heart a secret, transfiguring glow.

This change, which occurs through what the Freudians would crudely refer to as a starting up of the machinery of sex, is comparable to changes in our vision of the world which

might occur through other organic alterations. Dr. Carrel in *Man, the Unknown*, says that if the eye became sensitive to infra-red rays all nature would assume a different aspect. "The color of water, rocks, and trees would vary with the temperature. In July everything would be obscured by a reddish haze. In winter men would be vague phantoms against a clear, precise background, their faces hidden by a red mist issuing from mouth and nostrils. After violent exercise, the tennis court, for example, at the country club would be filled with figures grown strangely larger, on account of the heat released from the body and surrounding it with an aura."

Any quickening of the physical life works magic on the external world. It is not strange that the quickening which is an impulse to transmit life itself—to expand and make more of it—should be so amazingly glamorous. But this great illusion of love, when turned upon one who may become an enduring mate, has this advantage over most of man's illusions—that one can take hold of it and live on it, and if one does, it enlarges and directs life and makes it seem important. Not all who fall in love and found a household find their destiny in common. But many do, from the simplest to the most aspiring and complex personalities, and the finding of this "heaven" is the dream of all lovers and the ultimate of human love.

But there is another experience, very much like this, which has no human object at all. It is the acceptance by the human being of his destiny without even asking companionship on the way. It is what has been called "conversion," though many have experienced it without giving it a name or crediting it to the power of any god. Perhaps it is no more than the coming of genuine maturity. The descriptions of this experience are as numerous as falling in love. They vary as little in detail and are often quite as lyrical. Sometimes the experience is dramatic, with a flash of light before the eyes, a visionary form, a sense of inexpressible sweetness through the body. So the mystics of old have often described it. Often in the past

it has meant the acceptance of a definite religion, in a very personal and intimate way. Jesus, thus discovered, has been the supreme friend for life.

But, in modern times, the experience is just as common and may seem prosaic to the outsider. It involves no particular system of faith. But it is a no less permanent and joyous organization and illumination of life thereafter. Such an experience is described in a current book that has been widely read, entitled *Wake Up and Live*. "Two years ago," writes the author, Dorothea Brande, "I was a failure. Oh, nobody knew it except me. I held an interesting position, lived not too dull a life—yet there was no doubt in my own mind that I had failed. For I had been in a deadlock: I had known what I wanted to do, equipped myself for my profession—and got nowhere. Then, between one minute and the next, I found the idea which set me free. I came across a sentence in a book which I was reading, *Human Personality* by F. W. H. Myers, which was so illuminating that I put the book aside to consider the possibilities suggested in that one idea. When I picked up the book again, I was a different person."

She goes on to tell how every aspect of her life was altered, how, within the next year, she was able to pour forth books and magazine articles which she had long wanted to write but had been unable to. And she adds, "Nor are these the only results of my formula. All the tentativeness and timidity which had crippled me in almost every aspect of my life dropped away. Interviews, lectures, engagements which I had driven myself to, going against the grain every minute, became pleasurable experiences. I was on good terms with myself at last, no longer punishing and exhorting and ruthlessly driving myself, and so no longer unnecessarily bored or tired."

What she had conquered, she believes, is the "Will to Fail." The interesting thing about this statement is that, without conscious religious faith, with an idea of the good life which represents only the simple American idea of success in a com-

petitive capitalistic world, she nevertheless reproduces all the phenomena of the great religious conversions. If the sentence she had read had been a sentence in the Bible, or some words of the liturgy in church, or something said by a priest, if she had then accepted some current religious and social ideal of the good life, instead of the simple notion of practical success which is our current ideal, and if, in thinking it over, she had felt that she was released from her original sin, or the curse of Adam, or the thrall of the devil, instead of the Will to Fail, she would simply have been another of the many who in the past have found God. Theologians have exhausted themselves in trying to tell how it is that one is saved by faith, not by works, and why righteous living and attendance on church has been unavailing to produce that illumination and joy and ease of good living which comes in the moment of conversion. And what they have said is really what she says: "I was on good terms with myself at last, no longer punishing and exhorting and ruthlessly driving myself, and so no longer unnecessarily bored or tired."

Dorothea Brande's description of her experience is interesting because it is at once so genuine and so naïve. There is no philosophical reaching for some ultimate explanation of the mystery of life, no great imaginative synthesis of feelings and thoughts, such as the genius of the great converted has associated with the experience. She is no Buddha or St. Augustine, not even a Bunyan or a Mary Baker Eddy. She is like some simplehearted savage who, looking at the familiar idol of his tribe, suddenly sees the face of God shine out of it and, without question or further thought, falls on his knees in happy wonder, and thereafter goes joyously and contentedly through all the routines of the tribal life—asking nothing, seeking nothing further, but adapting himself to his social framework with intelligence and good humor. American Indians have been converted in this way, and South Sea Islanders. Conversion cannot lift the individual above his own capacities and the level of his environment, but it

does bring to focus and joyous functioning the best that is there.

A much more philosophical account of conversion is given by Havelock Ellis, in *The Dance of Life*. Its form, also, is determined by the intellectual environment, but it is interpreted in the terms of a great intelligence. He tells how his original Protestant Christian beliefs faded away under the earlier assaults of scientific thought. He read widely in the new scientific literature, not with any acute distress for his loss of former faith but with a feeling that the new world of ideas was one which he was prepared to accept, "and yet a world in which I felt I could only wander restlessly, an ignorant and homeless child."

One day he, too, was reading. His book was *Life in Nature* by James Hinton. "He was a man of highly passionate type of intellect, and what might otherwise be formal and abstract was for him soaked in emotion. Thus while he saw the world as an orderly mechanism, he was not content, like Strauss, to stop there and see nothing else. As he viewed it, the mechanism was not the mechanism of a factory, it was vital, with all the glow and warmth and beauty of life; it was, therefore, something which not only the intellect might accept, but the heart might cling to. The bearing of this conception on my state of mind is obvious. It acted with the swiftness of an electric contact; the dull aching tension was removed; the two opposing psychic tendencies were fused in delicious harmony, and my whole attitude towards the universe was changed. It was no longer an attitude of hostility and dread, but of confidence and love. My self was one with the Not Self, my will one with the universal will. I seemed to walk in light; my feet scarcely touched the ground; I had entered a new world.

"The effect of that swift revolution was permanent. At first there was a moment or two of wavering, and then the primary exaltation subsided into an attitude of calm serenity towards all those questions that had once seemed so torturing.

In regard to all these matters I had become permanently satisfied and at rest, yet absolutely unfettered and free."

2

There have been many attempts to define this phenomenon of conversion in scientific or philosophical terms. But modern phraseology comes no nearer to it than the old religious imagery. All that can be done here is to stick to the observed facts about it, which are remarkable enough. Among the common features of all conversions are these: The conversion follows on a long period of uneasiness or mental distress, in which the individual unconsciously quarrels with the systems of beliefs to which he has grown up from childhood, trying to accept them, trying to fit his behavior and his theory of living to them, sometimes confused, conscience-stricken, sometimes righteously fanatic in doing what he has been told, but in any case both miserable and struggling. The liberating experience is instantaneous. In the old days it came most often by way of some religious belief, because religion represented the whole life of the mind and imagination. Now, it is likely to come by way of a book or some abstract or scientific proposition. But it may be a moment of decisive action, in which a man shuts the door on his job or his home, and walks out, with wings on his heels, free. However it comes, the change is swift, permanent, and joyous. The exaltation fades, but only into serenity and peace. It survives through a period following, in which the individual often radically changes his life, invents and submits himself to new disciplines, cuts himself off decisively, though often not without momentary pains, from former habits and relationships, and builds a new life in which he is increasingly happy and usually increasingly useful to the end of his days.

The beliefs rejected and those accepted and integrated into a new happiness are necessarily limited by the environment. Saint Augustine, living in an age when sexual life was promiscuous and refined on a low level of physical pleasure,

when men spent too many of their days amidst perfumed baths, and dancing attendance on charming courtesans, in a graceful but vapid idleness, found his most difficult discipline in cutting himself off from his mistress. He found also in asceticism a tonic and a release. But in the later ages of the church, Luther found the good life in breaking his monastic vows and marrying a nun. In our own time the Freudian analysts have induced many a genuine conversion by forcing the individual to pry around among the debris of inherited restrictions on sex, till the emotional life suddenly reached an unselfish integration in a sexual release. So the Christian Scientists have brought a release of the whole personality through a changed attitude to physical health involving a whole new vision of life. Undoubtedly there is a good deal of genuine conversion in German and Italian and Communist political revivalism. This is the fatal strength of those political religions. Many a downtrodden, anxious person, feeling that he belongs to a defeated or ineffective race, is released to genuine happiness and effective functioning by a new racial or economic ideal which subordinates his selfish desires to what he thinks of as "society." If the state of the sufferer is low enough, even a partial truth may be wonderfully regenerating.

This fact of conversion has been obscured by the tendency of the intellectual to look, not to the psychic and social revolution involved, but only to the limitations of the particular set of ideas which the released person embraces so fervidly. One might as well tell John, who is in love with Mary, and has given up the poolroom and settled down with fervor and concentration to making a household, that this girl is snub-nosed and underbred and not very bright. It is one of the curious facts of conversion that while the individual concerned may be henceforth possessed by what seems to the outsider an illusion, he becomes thereby wonderfully free from all the other illusions which befuddle other men. The great converted leaders of religion have been, in practical

affairs, exceedingly shrewd and realistic persons. In general, religious sects like the Methodists, the Quakers, and latterly the Christian Scientists, whose ranks have been filled by men who underwent a sudden change of heart, have flourished in the management of the things of this world. Genuine faith has a wonderful way of taking the nonsense, the false expectations, the bedeviling glamour, out of everything else. It concentrates the fervor of imagination and desire elsewhere, and leaves one free to deal in a spirit of good will with things as they come in this world, pretty much as they are. So it becomes literally true that, if you seek the kingdom of heaven, everything else will be added unto you.

When science began its war on the old ideology of the Church, and the older churches themselves grew careful and reticent in invading the private sanctuary of the heart with intimate exhortations to "accept Jesus," it seemed that the whole world was about to come out into a new peace of mind and clarity of vision. But nothing of the sort has happened. Instead of cherishing the image of "Our Father who art in Heaven" the average man is merely left free to set up the boss as his father image. Instead of having a "friend in Jesus" one may worry about the opinion of Jones. And genuine emotional release, conversion, individually and en masse, now comes about, all around us, through the acceptance of ideas and ideals which, in comparison even with the limitations of some former theologies, are, imaginatively and intellectually, pretty poor stuff. A great deal that seemed to our fathers a new scientific truth now begins to appear as just another set of notions. Men can make religion out of any idea which subordinates the self to some great whole—out of the doctrines of an economist like Karl Marx or the observations of anthropologists with regard to the Nordic race. But some religions are nevertheless far inferior to others. One of the things we must face is the breakdown in our time of a number of ideas and ideals which seemed to the enlightened of even a generation ago to offer a fair substitute

for the old satisfactions of religious faith. Now that some of these intellectual propositions are going through a process of canonization and being set up behind altars, one must look at them again and see that, as gods, they are not much.

The tragic insufficiency of modern modes of thought is not, however, due to their intellectual content. There has been a genuine advance in our understanding of ourselves and our world and an extension of the moral feeling of men to problems too long outside of it—such as the problems of economic security. The insufficiency is due to the lack of imaginative and artistic genius which could bring the new thinking home to the thought and the imagination. Language is one of the oldest of man's inventions and the closest to the needs of his own psyche. But the true gift of language is comparatively rare, and rare, too, is the personality that can make behavior a supreme art. Prophets and poets, artists and pastors of the highest quality we have long lacked, and therefore much of modern thinking is not really available in forms in which the heart and the imagination can lay hold of it. All the material for a more truly adequate, a more really blissful reconciliation of man's consciousness to our human destiny is at hand. But we want a prophet or a saint to breathe into this dust of the laboratory and the specialist's workshop the breath of a living soul.

3

Yet it is a comfort to realize that individual men still find their personal release by simple means, by sentences in books, by moments of personal insight, by moral choices. Conversion is nothing rare or special. It is just one of the facts of the human consciousness. It is as if all of us are born sick, but a few, by some miracle, get well. This is what theology has also perceived; for the word "salvation" is but a Latin word for health. The old idea of original sin or the curse of Adam is only an expression of an obvious human fact. But one may put it into terms of common observation.

Out in the garden, in the spring sunshine, stand the wrecks of last year's flowers—dry stalks that once held perfumed petals, old leaves still clinging to the parent stem. But in their midst new fresh green shoots are thrusting upward. They push, perhaps they struggle, but they keep growing, and, some day, the old leaves will be lost under a bush of new foliage and fall into the ground and die and be fertilizer. And, some day, rather suddenly, the flower will burst into bloom, and the end of this growth will be achieved. Will this sudden blooming be for the plant a moment of exaltation, of release, followed by long peace of flowering and seeding under the summer sun? Every individual grows somewhat as the flower does. He must push off old sheaths of former human growth. He must find his own way and appropriate his own food from soil and air. And, obviously, when he comes to his own personal blooming, he finds both joy and peace.

What is beyond our human consciousness we can only guess. Even light has for us no illumination until it is transformed by our own eyes. But within the human consciousness there is hope and comfort. Our own capacity for joy, for triumphing in exaltation over pain, our own perception of beauty, our own immense impulse to love—these are our witnesses. They are as true a guide to that reality beyond, whose character apart from ourselves we can only surmise, as the testimony of our eyes with regard to light or our ears with regard to sound. Existence, alone, is strange and to our minds not yet intelligible. But human experience has shown that it may be very beautiful and very happy. And is that not enough?

Though instantaneous conversion is not rare and is obviously a supreme experience to the person involved, it is not the only way of attaining to look on the beginning of peace. Some people fall in love at sight, but some hardly know when love began. They wake up some day and find that it has been with them for a long time. It is consoling to reflect that while our own inherited Christian faith is founded in religious inspiration, while the beauty and assurance of its great

central figure has the absoluteness that alone satisfies the highest intuitions of the heart or the imagination, the faith that occupies a comparable place in the other half of the world, in the East, allows for a simple and plodding kind of search for a good life that is cheered by no real vision and rests the heart on no divine person. Yet the peace and beneficence of the great Buddhist tradition of the East offers some comfort to the human mind in its perpetual quest. The founder of Buddhism was only a great philosophical genius lost in the mists of ancient tradition, obscured by a magnificence of later temples and images. He made no claims for himself. He was no god, and he tried to release his followers from belief in gods. He saw life only as law, universal and eternal, and the individual as only a momentary ripple in the great stream of time. He grasped, what the theory of evolution has demonstrated—the unity of all organic life and its upward progress to some far-off end. But this vision was to him peace and illumination, and he made it peace and illumination to untold generations of the best men of the East. Thinking like his is hard to make intelligible in any age. It is still harder to make it human and lovable. But this he was able to do. The wonder is not that it was obscured with so much hocus-pocus, but that it should remain essentially so clear, and so tranquilizing and beneficent.

And now, as one stands before one of those great images of Buddha, in some still, forest place, he seems to look out in eternal commentary on man's quest for peace. He is not in opposition to that bright inspiration of the West which found the answer to life in a single personality. He seems rather to stand for those who are not capable of instantaneous imaginative faith. If that great Buddha at Kamakura could speak to some wandering Christian, perhaps he would say, in behalf of the seeking heart of all humanity:

My peace I give you. Even so
Another promised long ago,

Attaining by a single leap
The heart of God whereto I creep,
By slow mutations through the years,
From life to life and soul to soul,
Washing my spirit in the tears
Of Time and Space till I am whole.
Christ gives you peace? Oh take it then!
My peace remains for slower men.